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17 MAR 2010

15 MAR 2010

Mr David B Allan
1 Larnock Street
PRAHRAN VIC 3181

Dear Mr Allan

Thank you for your letter of 12 November 2009, originally directed to the Prime Minister, concerning Australia's population growth and other issues of concern to you. Your letter has been referred to the Treasurer as he has portfolio responsibility for population. The Treasurer has asked me to respond to you. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The population projections that you refer to in your letter were prepared for the *Australia to 2050: future challenges* report, which the Treasurer released on 1 February 2010. The report is available at www.treasury.gov.au/igr/igr2010. The projections are based on assumptions around current trends in immigration and natural population growth. They are not targets, and they are certainly not set in stone.

The purpose of the report is to promote discussion around the challenges and opportunities that Australia will face over the next 40 years, particularly in relation to a growing and ageing population.

Over the past 40 years the population has grown at an average annual rate of 1.4 per cent per annum, taking Australia's population to an expected 22 million in 2010. Over the next 40 years, the rate of population growth is expected to slow to 1.2 per cent on average per annum.

This reflects a broadly stable fertility rate and continuation of net overseas migration at the same rate as over the last 40 years. Based on these trends, Australia's population is projected to reach 35.9 million people in 2050. While population growth will put pressure on infrastructure, services and the environment, it will also assist in managing the pressures of an ageing population by providing the skills and innovation needed to underpin continued economic growth.

The Government understands that a growing and ageing population will present both challenges and opportunities for Australia and the Australian economy. With the right policy settings, particularly around the environment, infrastructure provision and fiscal sustainability, the Government believes that it can meet the challenges while making the most of the opportunities.

I also note your concerns regarding climate change, asylum seekers and Afghanistan. I understand that your letter has also been referred to the Minister for Climate Change and Water, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, and the Minister for Defence, who have portfolio responsibility for these issues.

I trust this information will be of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



Matthew Brine
Senior Policy Adviser