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South East Queensland : Australia's population powerhouse – what is the future?

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Abstract

South East Queensland (SEQ) has experienced a high and sustained level of population growth since the early 1980s, making it one of the largest growing regions in Australia. Currently, the region's numerical level of growth is at record levels being higher than growth in either New South Wales or Victoria. The region accounted for one quarter of Australia's growth in 2003. Can this level of growth continue?

The key driver of population growth has been interstate migration, but in recent years overseas migration has also provided a significant contribution. Movements from other regions of Queensland have also been positive over the last 20 years.

With this level of growth, increasing concerns have been expressed by the community as to the future of the region in terms of sustainability and not destroy the very attributes that attract people to the region.

This paper will examine the size, distribution and age composition of population growth in the region in the recent past and projections for the future. Data will be sourced from the 2001 Census, intercensal estimates of the population and the Queensland Government's latest population projections.

The paper will conclude by analysing planning mechanisms put in place to manage the high level of growth including the newly established Office of Urban Management.

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