



## **GARY HIGGINS**

### **OPPOSITION LEADER**

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*For immediate circulation*

### **Bring them here, don't bribe them**

Supporting and bolstering existing Federal government operations in the Northern Territory should be a core focus of the Territory's population plan, as should special migration arrangements, including an up to date Northern Territory Designated Area Migration Agreement (NT DAMA), which the Territory Labor government allowed to expire in August.

The NT DAMA is an example of Territory specific arrangements that suit our unique industry, population and opportunities. It was an initiative of the former CLP government.

Northern Territory Opposition Leader, Gary Higgins has met with and formally written to Federal Ministers to further the Federal government's intentions to ease growth pressure on the east coast and instead, encourage city dwellers to call the Territory home.

"I welcome the Federal government's partnership with states (and Territories) to manage infrastructure and population, to be announced today.

"The Territory needs a sensible and sustainable population plan that includes

- Regional migration
- Decentralisation of Federal Government personnel and services and
- Continuing investment by the Commonwealth on Defence and associated local service and supply, and construction opportunities service and supply is key to the CLP Defence sustainment strategy

"Growing the Territory's population celebrates our proud multicultural history and will bring a boost to our bottom line, through GST payments.

"The exponential growth of Melbourne, Sydney and south east Queensland, making up 66 per cent of Australia's population growth, is something the Opposition is very keen for the Territory to capitalise on as the Federal government furthers its regional migration initiatives.

"I have spoken to our Federal colleagues about decentralisation, and while there is a rigorous framework in place in determining which departments or agencies (are further decentralised), I am encouraged by the conversations so far.

"While the opportunities are broad, one potential avenue to explore would be uniquely Northern Territory focused government services, such as, for example, tropical health research and education, under the Department of Health.

"A focus on regional migration and decentralisation are both great news for the Territory as we aim to not only sustainably attract and retain the population we desperately need, but deliver the jobs for people to move here for.

"Labor's short sighted plan to bribe potential residents with a cash lure does not address the issue of retention and sustainable population growth.

“Incentives to encourage corporate decentralisation and investment and jobs from the private sector to the Territory should also be explored, and the Territory Labor government should scrap its hybrid mining tax and create the best regulatory environment for on shore shale gas exploration and production.

“Incentives to increase international education and an earnest and realistic focus to turn decreasing tourist numbers around should also be on Labor’s agenda,” said Mr Higgins.

Federal Minister for Cities, Urban Infrastructure and Population, Alan Tudge delivered an address to Menzies Research Centre (Melbourne) yesterday (Tuesday) on population growth to regional parts of Australia, including the Northern Territory.

**ENDS**

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