



**GARY HIGGINS**  
**OPPOSITION LEADER**

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*For immediate release*

## **Population and migration for the Territory**

The Northern Territory's stalling population reinforces the importance of the Territory being top of mind for migration settlement, as Labor's much-hyped election commitment to grow the Territory's population has failed.

Northern Territory Leader of the Opposition, Gary Higgins said that the Territory government's failure to deliver a population plan nearly half way through the term reinforces the lack of priority to grow a prosperous Territory.

"In Estimates, when questioned by the Opposition, the Chief Minister advised that the plan would be released prior to the August sittings, which commence next week.

"We desperately need a population strategy to both attract and retain people, and this should incorporate targeting migrants that arrive in Australia.

"Increasing the Territory's population would mean a larger share of GST revenue and more services and infrastructure for new and current Territorians.

"The Northern Territory has a proud history as a vibrant multicultural community and it is clear if we are to grow the population we must look to our north and not just to our south.

"The existing Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA), established under the former government, is set to expire within months, so it is critical that the Territory government shows some urgency in securing a new DAMA deal for the Territory.

"The DAMA recognised the special circumstances present in the Territory and supports attracting and retaining skilled migrants," said Mr Higgins.

To our colleagues in Canberra, the Opposition has:

- Detailed to the Federal Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs how a new, special migration deal for the Territory should have more occupations, be driven by business and have pathways to permanency as well as keeping new migrants in the Northern Territory
- Raised the possibility of tax breaks and increasing remote and regional allowances
- Suggested possible subsidisation of HECs fees and creating additional employment opportunities, for example, with graduates who could secure their first job on graduation in the Northern Territory.

**ENDS**

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