



2018-28

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Northern Territory  
**POPULATION  
GROWTH STRATEGY**

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**THE  
TERRITORY**  
BOUNDLESS POSSIBLE



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# Chief Minister's foreword

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The Northern Territory is Australia's next great opportunity.

Consider that our capital is the closest Australian city to the emerging and already-booming Asian middleclass.

Our plains and regional centres - always rich in the culture and languages of the First Australians - are now also rich in agriculture, cattle, mineral and tourism ventures and bursting with potential.

Our landscapes and lifestyles are the envy of the world.

We have space to grow and so much yet to build.

But we need more hands.

We have an incredible story to tell, so let's start telling it, let's start living it.

The Northern Territory Population Growth Strategy 2018-2028 provides the framework for attracting people to the Territory, and encouraging those already here to stay for the long term.

Industry growth, diversification and quality services like healthcare and education rely on the availability of skilled workers. This plan details how, with cooperation from the private sector and all levels of government, we get them here and how we keep them.

It involves creating vibrant, safe, liveable centres; smart, targeted marketing campaigns; and positioning ourselves as the best and most logical place for corporations to base their workforces and headquarters.

Sustainable population growth will not only be good for the Territory, it will be good for the nation.

Consider that Northern Australia, including the tops of Western Australia and Queensland, account for more than half this country's exports with only about five per cent of the population.

Imagine what we will do with more.

We love the Territory, and we know others who give it a chance will love it too.



HON MICHAEL GUNNER MLA  
Chief Minister



# Executive summary

The Northern Territory Government has a plan for boosting our population. More people mean more jobs, stronger growth and better services for Territorians.

Our vision is a sustainably growing population that supports a healthy economy and thriving communities. Our goal is to return the population growth rate to the historical long-run average of 1.4 per cent, from the recent low growth path of 0.6 per cent.

Research from Charles Darwin University (CDU) has identified the need to attract specific population

segments to move to the Territory and to encourage those that live here to stay for the longer term. In order to achieve this, we will focus on the following areas:

- Telling the modern Territory story
- Attracting investment and creating jobs
- Attracting and retaining migrants
- Enhancing liveability
- Understanding the drivers of population change.

## The Territory Government will invest \$50.4 million over two years in addition to existing activities to implement targeted population growth initiatives.

<b>Telling the modern Territory story</b>	<b>\$4.6 million</b>
Promote a new story – <i>The Territory, Boundless Possible</i> – which reflects the lifestyle and opportunities of the contemporary Northern Territory	
<b>Attracting investment and creating jobs</b>	<b>\$8.5 million</b>
Implement initiatives designed to encourage every business operating in the Territory to employ people who live here, rather than fly-in fly-out (FIFO) workers	
The Government is implementing the Economic Development Framework, 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy and Plan, Defence and National Security Strategy, Turbocharging Tourism, and International Engagement, Trade and Investment Strategic Plan	
Expand the <i>Our Life Out Here</i> marketing campaign beyond the NT Public Service to other levels of government and the private sector to encourage people from elsewhere in Australia and overseas to take up employment opportunities in the Northern Territory	



<b>Attracting and retaining interstate and overseas migrants</b>	<b>\$13.8 million</b>
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Deliver financial incentives to attract and retain people who enter occupations on the Northern Territory Skilled Occupation Priority List, become Territory residents and stay for at least five years

Develop and implement initiatives and incentives to attract and retain early career women and mid-and-late-career workers, and retain retirees

Implement the *Territory Expat* program to engage ex-Territorians and encourage them to return, and/or act as ambassadors for the Northern Territory, encouraging friends, family, colleagues and acquaintances to consider the Northern Territory as a destination

Implement the Territory Migration Strategy to attract and retain international skilled migrants by marketing the Territory in key international markets, enhancing the skills recognition program and developing welcome packages to assist their integration into the community

<b>Enhancing liveability</b>	<b>\$23 million</b>
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Making the Territory lifestyle greater through investing in safer communities, investing in the bush and regional communities and enhancing sporting, recreational and cultural experiences

Revitalising Darwin and Alice Springs CBDs to create cooler, modern cities to improve liveability and attractiveness for residents and visitors

<b>Understanding the drivers of population change</b>	<b>\$0.5 million</b>
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Support the Regional Australia Institute to assess drivers of regional population, economic development and transition in regional locations

Conduct ongoing research with CDU into the drivers of and attitudes to population change, including what attracts and keeps people living in Darwin and regional locations



# Strategy at a glance

## OUR VISION

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A sustainably growing population that supports a healthy economy and thriving communities

## OUR GOAL

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To return the population growth rate to the historical long-run average of 1.4 per cent, from the recent low growth path of 0.6 per cent

## OUR APPROACH

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- ▶ Evidence based strategy using more than 12 years of research
- ▶ Working with key stakeholders to continuously improve our Strategy and Action Plans – no one can do this alone
- ▶ Underpinning the Northern Territory Population Growth Strategy 2018-2028 with annual Action Plans
- ▶ Investing in jobs
- ▶ Investing in community and our kids
- ▶ Investing in the bush
- ▶ Providing stable government

## OUR KEY OBJECTIVES

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- ▶ Attract specific population segments to move to the Territory
- ▶ Encourage those that live here to stay for the longer term

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

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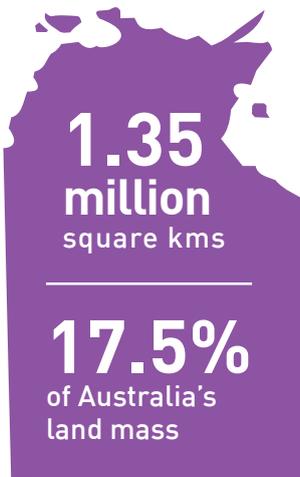
- ▶ The Northern Territory's population growth has been slowing
- ▶ There have been 21 consecutive quarters of net negative interstate migration
- ▶ Population growth for the Territory means a more diversified economy less reliant on 'that next big thing'
- ▶ More people is more jobs, more investment, more entrepreneurs and better services for Territorians

## STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS – HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR KEY OBJECTIVES

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- ▶ Telling the modern Territory story
- ▶ Attracting investment and creating jobs
- ▶ Attracting and retaining migrants
- ▶ Enhancing liveability
- ▶ Understanding the drivers of population change

# NT population snapshot



of Australia's  
total population



**246 726**  
NT residents

**30.3%**  
Aboriginal

**59.6%**  
live in Greater  
Darwin area  
(as at June 2017)

## Labour force gender composition (original) July



**53.0%**

95.3% employed | 4.7% unemployed



**47.0%**

97.0% employed | 3.0% unemployed



NT **4.0%** AUS **5.4%**  
Unemployment rate  
(trend) July



Median weekly household income  
(Census 2016)  
NT **\$1983** AUS **\$1438**



## Employment growth by industry (May 2018)



Health care and social assistance



Arts and recreation services



Information media and telecommunications



Manufacturing



Other services

## Labour force participation rate (trend) July



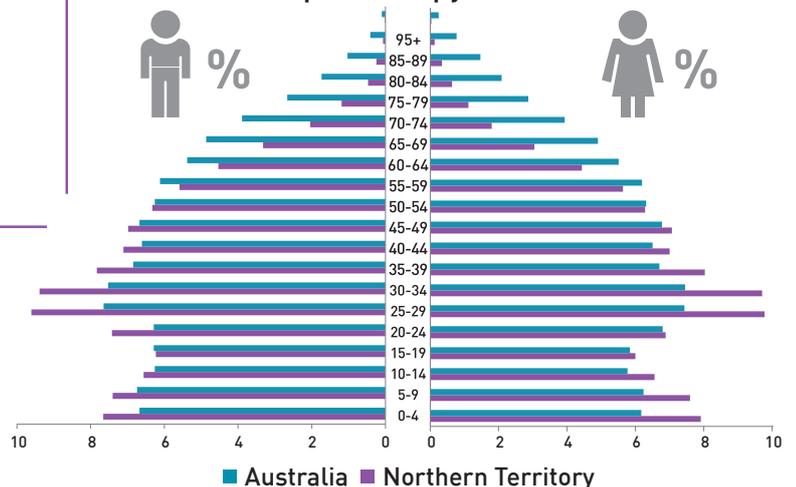
NT **77.2%** AUS **65.5%**

## Full-time workers July



NT **81.9%** AUS **68.5%**

## Population pyramid



**32.6**

NT median age (yrs)

**37.3**

National median age (yrs)



Figures are based on NT Government and ABS data as at August 2018

# The Strategy

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## OUR VISION

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A sustainably growing population that supports a healthy economy and thriving communities.

## OUR GOAL

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Return the population growth rate to the historical long-run average of 1.4 per cent, from the recent low growth path of 0.6 per cent.

## OUR KEY OBJECTIVES

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- Attract specific population segments to move to the Territory
- Encourage those that live here to stay for the longer term.

## OUR APPROACH

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### We have:

- Developed an evidence based Population Growth Strategy based on the synthesis of twelve years of research on the causes and consequences of population change in the Territory by the Northern Institute at CDU
- Commissioned new research, including a national segmentation study, national focus groups of target segments and baseline surveys of Territorians
- Launched a contemporary new story and Masterbrand, reflecting the lifestyle and opportunities in the Northern Territory
- Listened to Territorians through facilitated workshops and consultations with a broad range of Territory business and community groups
- Acted immediately to deliver population and economic growth initiatives based on evidence collected through the Economic Summits process and the development of the Economic Development Framework, Infrastructure Strategy and 10 Year Plan, Defence and National Security Strategy, Turbocharging Tourism, and other relevant strategies

- Delivered real jobs through a series of economic stimulus packages, a number of which are ongoing.

### We are:

- Underpinning the Population Growth Strategy with annual Action Plans that will focus on specific activities aimed at attracting and retaining key population segments and improving the Territory's standing as a destination of choice for tourists, students, businesses, investors, families, workers and retirees
- Working with key stakeholders, including the business community, all levels of government and community based organisations to strengthen our Strategy and Action Plans – we can't do this alone
- Investing in jobs – the research tells us jobs and career development are the primary drivers of interstate migration
- Investing in community and our kids – the research tells us that family and social factors are critically important in attracting and retaining interstate and international migrants
- We are placing children at the heart of government and investing in generational change, to create a brighter future for all Territorians
- Providing stable and trustworthy government – establishing an independent anti-corruption watchdog.

### We will:

- Continue to invest heavily in job creation and the development of a diverse and resilient economy
- Continue to work closely with key stakeholders like the Commonwealth Government, local councils, industry and community groups to pursue sustainable population growth in order to support a healthy economy and thriving communities
- Strive to change outdated and poorly informed perceptions of the Northern Territory held by some target migration market segments and instead, highlight the boundless possibilities.



# Why is this important?

## Population trends

Population growth in the Northern Territory has been slowing.

The Northern Territory has experienced five years of low population growth, including:

- 21 consecutive quarters of negative net interstate migration
- Large declines in our biggest in-migration 'market' of early career workers, particularly women
- Dramatic declines in children and teenagers migrating to the Northern Territory (linked largely to the changing migration patterns of families)
- Increased departures of key 'markets' like early career workers, those nearing retirement age and those who have recently retired
- Lower proportions of interstate migrants from key sources coming to the Northern Territory (South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria)
- Increased seasonal volatility for both interstate and overseas migration
- Reduced contributions to population growth from net overseas migration
- Uneven growth within the Northern Territory with Darwin growing and other communities declining.

Research by the team at the Northern Institute of CDU suggests that changes to people's migration behaviours are based around life stage transitions and have led to sustained negative net interstate migration.

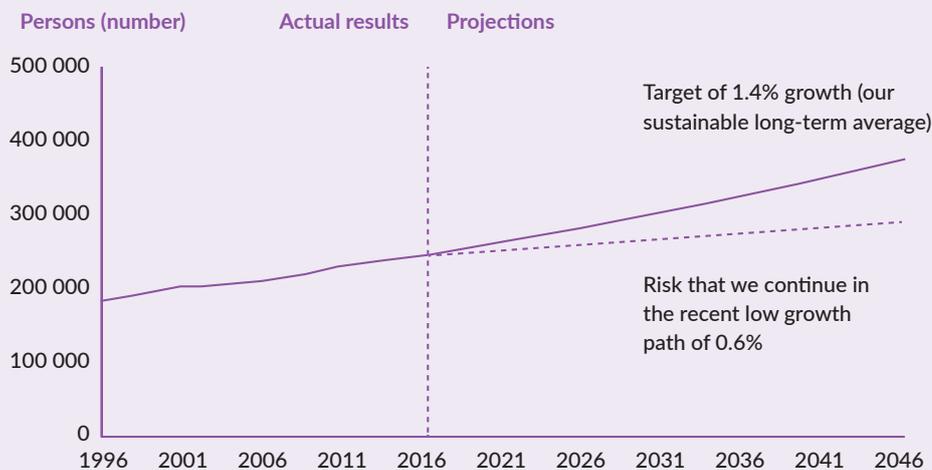
The Department of Treasury and Finance forecasts that population will decline by 0.7 per cent in 2018-19, which is largely attributable to the wind-down of construction of the Ichthys LNG project.

There is a need to stimulate the Northern Territory's population growth rate to improve the current low growth trend to at or above the long term average. This will support business and investor confidence in future economic conditions, which will in turn support stronger population growth.

A sustainably growing population that supports a healthy economy and thriving communities is essential to the future of the Northern Territory.

We are putting in place this Population Growth Strategy to ensure we return the population growth rate to the historical long-run average of 1.4 per cent, from the recent low growth path of 0.6 per cent.

## Northern Territory population trend graph





## Economic and fiscal impact

By making sure we grow at our long-term sustainable growth rate of 1.4 per cent, we will create more than 21,000 Territory jobs and add \$10.4 billion to the Territory economy over the decade from 2016-17.

Returning our population growth rate to 1.4 per cent will also help to offset the recent cuts to our GST.

## The national and international context

Australia's big cities are struggling to cope with rapid population growth, while in many of the nation's regional centres, population growth has slowed to low levels.

CDU research shows that northern cities and towns in America, Canada and Scandinavia are also suffering declines in population growth rates.

More and more people are opting to live and work in major urban centres over smaller regional towns.

Influencing sustainable population trends in regional areas is not an easy task.

Australia's regions are competing for people, and in many cases we are competing for similar target market segments e.g. early career females, retirees and expatriates.

The Northern Territory Government has limited scope to influence population growth on its own, but there are levers available at all levels of government and within business and the wider community that can influence population change and growth. A successful population growth strategy depends on cooperative engagement of business and community organisations, as well as local and national governments.



# STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS – HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR KEY OBJECTIVES

## TELLING THE MODERN TERRITORY STORY THROUGH THE NEW MASTERBRAND

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**Action: We will invest  
\$4.6 million over two years  
for the implementation of the  
new Masterbrand**

The Northern Territory Government has developed a new story which reflects the lifestyle and opportunities of the contemporary Northern Territory. *The Territory, Boundless Possible*, gives the people of the Territory a common narrative, a story that all can rally behind, something that truly articulates the essence of what it means to be a Territorian.

*The Territory, Boundless Possible*, takes us on a journey to shift outside perceptions of the Territory and ultimately encourage people and businesses to consider this as a place of opportunity.

This initiative, which has the support of Northern Territory businesses, provides the perfect opportunity to develop a unified whole of Territory approach through a cohesive and defining brand strategy that unites government, industry, business and other Territory organisations in promoting the Territory nationally and internationally and encouraging people to live, visit, invest and work here.

The need to tell the modern Territory story is real.



# THE TERRITORY BOUNDLESS POSSIBLE

McGregor Tan research conducted in support of the new Masterbrand has identified a distinct primary target market segment, “based on their attitudes and behaviour, who are most open to living, working, investing or studying in the Northern Territory, a segment named *Committed Opportunists*.” However, their research also identified “a clear demonstration of a lack of real knowledge of the Northern Territory, the cities within and knowledge of the opportunities that exist there.”

The research asserts, that “despite their limited knowledge of the Northern Territory, this group presents the best opportunity. Just one in four of the *Committed Opportunists* rule out moving to the NT for any reasons (25 per cent), this was the lowest of all segments identified...This group just haven’t thought about a move to the Territory or ever considered it as an option yet. But the majority could be persuaded to move to the NT if it would advance their career – they will move wherever work takes them.”

This group is also characterised as hardworking, values being rewarded for hard work and has a love of the outdoors.

## Key Findings:

“There is a lot of work to be done to communicate the opportunities in the Northern Territory, and much of this needs to overcome years of reinforced understanding of the NT as a place that has not changed in thirty years.

“The sense of community is a primary consideration for *Committed Opportunists*, who are looking for a community to be part of their life. There is a desire to be part of a progressive thinking community, and this is somewhat disconnected to their impression of the Northern Territory.”

Territorians already know that our lifestyle, environment, cultural diversity and vibrant, supportive communities are reasons to celebrate being a Territorian. But we need to promote our advantages to others in Australia and overseas. How Territorians see themselves and how others see the Territory and its people are critically important factors in retaining people and attracting new residents.

## ATTRACTING INVESTMENT AND CREATING JOBS

**Action: \$8.5 million is being invested over two years to attract investment and create jobs**

### Local jobs first

Initiatives to target interstate and international migration to the Territory will be based on the Northern Territory Skilled Occupation Priority List. This list is developed annually in consultation with industry and union groups to identify which occupations are suffering shortages of skilled workers.

As much as possible, the Territory needs to attract, develop and retain its own skilled workers. The Territory's 2018-19 Budget included a range of new initiatives designed to encourage every business operating in the Territory to employ people who live here, rather than fly-in fly-out (FIFO) workers.

These initiatives include:

- Introducing a two-year payroll tax rebate for Territory businesses that either employs a new employee who is an existing Territory resident or replaces an existing employee who didn't live in the Territory with a Territory resident
- Providing a new royalty deduction for the cost of buying, renting or building accommodation in the Territory for employees who live in the Territory
- Providing a new royalty deduction for the cost of building infrastructure that provides economic or social benefits to Territory communities near to and affected by a mine's operations
- Ceasing royalty deductions for FIFO-related travel and ancillary costs for employees who do not live in the Territory.

In addition to these budget measures, a number of government funded programs are available to support businesses in the Territory. These include:

- Funding grants to regional businesses, community organisations and local governments for economic initiatives through the Regional Economic Development Fund
- Supporting innovation and creative thinking through the Business Innovation Support Initiatives

- Funding businesses to upskill or reskill their employees
- Financial assistance to employ a trainee or an apprentice
- Supporting existing businesses to grow through the Business Growth Program
- Offsetting the cost of international marketing through the Trade Support Scheme
- Supporting businesses to reduce costs through provision of targeted advice and financial assistance to support uptake of efficient technologies and practices
- Make it easier to do business in the Territory through reducing unnecessary red tape and regulatory burden.

### Attracting investment

Further initiatives are being developed through the Economic Development Framework and will create jobs across a range of industry sectors.

These include actions under the following strategies:

- The NT Infrastructure Strategy and Ten Year Infrastructure Plan – guide and plan for investment in enabling infrastructure to encourage business investment, diversification and innovation, as well as provide infrastructure for communities and connectivity
- The NT International Trade and Investment Strategy - guides engagement with our international partners to grow trade, investment, partnerships and connectivity
- The Our North, Our Future: Developing Northern Australia Strategy – a framework for engaging our northern Australia partners to stimulate investment in infrastructure and attract and retain investment and a sustainable workforce in northern Australia
- The NT Defence and National Security Strategy – builds our capacity to support the defence industry, including attracting and retaining defence personnel and support workers and their families
- And other strategies from the Economic Development Framework including agribusiness, education, renewables and tourism.

As the Economic Development Framework emphasises, it is private sector investment that grows the economy and creates jobs. To attract investment and create jobs the Northern Territory Government is:

- Implementing the Economic Development Framework to support development across all sectors of the economy, and in particular the priority Growth Sectors and Development Sectors identified in the framework



- Strengthening regulation and oversight for hydraulic fracturing of shale gas resources in prescribed areas
- Delivering the Aboriginal Participation on Construction Projects policy to provide employment opportunities and build the capacity of Aboriginal businesses to successfully share in the delivery of projects in the Northern Territory
- Working closely with Australian and US defence agencies to maximise spending with Territory suppliers on infrastructure, goods and services.

## Encouraging employment in the Territory

To help encourage people to take up employment opportunities in the Territory, the Government is expanding the *Our Life Out Here* recruitment campaign.

The campaign was established to assist with interstate and international recruitment and tells the stories of Territory public servants and the opportunities available in the Territory. It has been successful in attracting front-line workers in health and other fields.

*Our Life Out Here* is being expanded beyond the NT Public Service to other levels of government and the private sector.

The Northern Territory Government will enhance vacation employment and graduate recruitment

across the NT Public Service to attract the best and brightest. Great career opportunities and public service employment conditions, alongside the measures outlined in the Northern Territory Population Growth Strategy 2018-2028 will help retain the people we need to deliver services.

The Northern Territory Government is also enhancing pathways to employment in the NT Public Sector for young Territorians, and building initiatives to attract and retain experienced workers in later career stages.

## Supporting defence in the Territory

More than 5000 defence and national security personnel are stationed in the Territory, many with their families. Defence families are a major contributor to the economic and social fabric of the Territory. Our Defence and National Security Strategy focusses on supporting the defence community, with the objectives of:

- Making the Territory a posting of choice for Australian Defence Force and national security personnel and their families
- Encouraging ex-serving defence and national security personnel and their families to choose to live and work in the Territory.



## ATTRACTING AND RETAINING INTERSTATE AND OVERSEAS MIGRANTS

**Action: We will invest \$9.3 million to attract more migrants to the Territory**

The Territory’s population growth is strongly reliant on interstate and overseas migration. Encouraging a skilled and diverse workforce who will call the Territory home will help us ensure the Territory has a more diversified economy that is less reliant on the next large wave of investment.

The Northern Territory Government is actively implementing strategies to attract and settle both domestic and international migrants.

To attract interstate migrants the Government is:

- Developing a suite of new incentives targeting early career women / Committed Opportunists to move to the Territory – this initiative is supported strongly by recent population research
- Developing a suite of initiatives to attract late career workers / Accomplished Optimists – this initiative is also supported strongly by recent population research
- Developing a comprehensive Territory web portal as a one stop shop for all information about the Territory

- Expanding the *Our Life Out Here* recruitment campaign to all Northern Territory Government agencies, defence and the private sector
- Changing perceptions of the Northern Territory through the Masterbrand and advertising campaigns; highlighting opportunity, rewards, lifestyle and diversity
- Utilising the Territory expats network to promote the Territory.

To attract international migrants the Government is implementing strategies including:

- Developing the Territory Migration Strategy to attract more international skilled migrants and more humanitarian migrants
- Facilitating migrants’ settlement in the Northern Territory with tailored programs for each national group, involving cultural associations
- Augmenting trade and skill recognition services to support newcomers to find meaningful employment
- Implementing the Multicultural Participation Framework
- Supporting multicultural events and festivals.

In addition, the Northern Territory Government will negotiate a refreshed Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA II) with the Commonwealth Government to allow Territory employers to sponsor skilled and semi-skilled overseas workers in areas experiencing skill and labour shortages.



## Incentives for target markets

According to the Northern Institute at CDU:

*“Strategies to make people feel welcome and attached to the Territory within a year or two of arrival will be critical to increasing retention rates”.*

The research recommends that *“a ‘welcome pack’ should be developed for interstate migrants both to encourage them to update Medicare and other records, and to lead them to an online and ongoing survey to track their experience of embedding themselves in the Territory in the first five years of their stay... and an opt-out email address should also be collected for the purpose of ‘staying in touch’ with those who leave the Territory”.*

The following, ‘welcome pack’ of financial incentives has been developed to:

- Encourage people to ‘give the move a go’ by providing relocation incentives
- Reinforce to new migrants that they have made the ‘right’ decision
- Encourage them to tell their friends and family members the modern Territory story
- Encourage them to stay for five years – the research says this is the tipping point.

### New Territorian Relocation Bonus

Cash payment to eligible applicants to meet relocation and transition costs, up to:

Singles = \$3000  
 Couples = \$6000  
 Families = \$7000

### Local Spending Benefit

One payment of \$1250 after 6 months of living in the NT. This may be used for a range of local spending, such as vehicle registration and licensing, local hospitality vendors, child care support

### 5-year Retention Bonus

Cash payment to eligible applicants after five years continuous residence, to be spent locally, for purposes that benefit a long-term resident:

Singles = \$3000  
 Couples = \$6000  
 Families = \$7000

These incentives will be available from November 2018 to people who migrate to the Northern Territory from interstate and enter High Priority occupations listed on the Northern Territory Skilled Occupation Priority List.



## TARGET POPULATION SEGMENTS

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### Early career women

Interstate migration to and from the Territory has traditionally followed distinctive age-related patterns, with large numbers of young adults arriving and high numbers of late 30- and 40-year old adults leaving in mid-career stages.

Attracting and retaining more women in the early stages of their career will help provide vital skills and enhance opportunities across a range of industry sectors. To attract more early career women, the Government will commence a program of incentives to support jobs growth and retention in the Northern Territory.

Workers will be targeted for selected occupations in demand that are hard to fill. The program will target retention of younger professional women but will not exclude professional women at later stages of their career, or professional men.

The Government will commission further research and respond to findings on drivers of attraction and retention of younger women.

### Mid-and-late-career workers and retaining retirees

Pre-retirees and seniors are the fastest growing group in the Northern Territory population, yet research indicates a progressively larger group in this age bracket is migrating out of the Territory each year.

Retirees, particularly those that are self-funded, offer a valuable contribution to the community through their retail and entertainment spending and providing services to the community through volunteering.

Retaining grandparents in the Territory helps young families settle for the long term and supports them to return to the workforce.

In addition to livelihood and lifestyle opportunities, planning transition to retirement and the availability of quality and affordable seniors' lifestyle accommodation will help the Territory retain this population segment.

The Government provides workforce development support to business and industry through a number of targeted business initiatives, including assisting the private sector to develop and implement career progression and employee retention strategies.

The Northern Territory Government is building a consistent approach to recruitment and retention of older workers across the NT Public Service, including career progression pathways and succession planning.

The Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment launched the Managing the Ageing Workforce in the Northern Territory Public Service (NTPS) policy framework in August 2017. The framework supports older workers in the NTPS to stay in the workforce (and consequently in the Territory) for longer.

Another initiative to be implemented in late 2018 will endeavour to attract older workers to the NTPS for short and medium-term assignments through registration on an employment “candidate database”. This will be aimed at Territory expats, and older, skilled workers from other jurisdictions more generally.

The Northern Territory also provides some of the most generous concessions for pensioners and seniors in the country, from interstate and overseas travel vouchers to energy and water rate discounts.

Available pensioner and carer concessions include discounts on electricity, water and sewerage charges; property rates; garbage collection; motor vehicle registration and free driver licences and prescription spectacles.

## Overseas migrants

Increased international migration is vital to population growth and building a skilled and diverse workforce. The Territory Migration Strategy is being developed to increase the number of overseas migrants relocating to the Territory.

Inspiring chain migration where overseas-born Territorians encourage their friends, colleagues and friends to join them in the Territory, will be a key feature of the targeted marketing campaigns.

International migration visa policies are Commonwealth-controlled. The Northern Territory Government continues to lobby the Commonwealth to strengthen the Territory’s share of international skilled and humanitarian migrants through favourable visa conditions and migration policies.

## Former residents

Every year, around 25,000 people are born in, or arrive to live in the Territory from interstate or overseas. In recent times, just under 17,000 residents each year have departed to other states and 4,700 departed overseas. Territory expats now living elsewhere are an enormous pool of potential returning Territorians and advocates for the Territory.

Almost half of the people who left the Territory stayed longer than they anticipated and the great majority are satisfied with their time here. Around one third say they are likely to come back at some stage.

Many are also likely to be enthusiastic advocates to others about the work and lifestyle opportunities offered by the Territory. Positive visitor experiences help encourage visitors to return year after year.

The Territory Expat program will actively engage frequent visitors, current residents and previous Territorians to promote the Territory to their friends, family, colleagues and acquaintances. The program will facilitate connections between expat Territorians and Territory businesses and industry organisations.

Through the program, the Territory will identify and keep in touch with its former residents, seek feedback on a wide range of issues, and keep them informed about the latest Territory employment, investment and travel opportunities.

The CDU Report also identified an increasing net outflow of Aboriginal Territorians from the Territory, and acknowledged there is little information currently available about the motivations of Aboriginal Territorians to stay or leave.

Staying connected with Aboriginal Territorians who move interstate or overseas, as with other Territory expats, will give us a better understanding of why they are leaving and enhance our opportunities to encourage them to return. A key focus of the Territory Expat program will be to encourage Aboriginal Territorians to return to share their knowledge and experience.

By staying connected, the Northern Territory Government can encourage previous residents to promote opportunities and encourage people to come to the Territory – as students, tourists, business visitors, researchers, workers, and long term residents.

Engaging Territory expats will also enable us to mobilise people to celebrate the Territory story with their friends, family, colleagues and social networks.

## Short-term workers for recruitment as Territory residents and facilitating local workforce participation in our regions

Seasonal and short-term workers are a well-established and increasingly significant feature of Territory employment markets, particularly in regional and remotely populated areas. They provide an adaptable and mobile labour force with a range of skills from fruit pickers to welders, managers to tour guides.

Seasonal and short-term workers provide employers flexibility in their workforce planning to adjust to changing workloads and periods of high demand.

Encouraging seasonal workers to make the Territory their home will grow our population and enable us all to benefit from population growth. More people in the workforce increases spending power, generating more revenue for businesses and helping increase consumer competition in the marketplace to lower the costs of goods and services.

Extending and expanding the *Our Life Out Here* recruitment campaign will provide short-term workers with a window to longer-term work and lifestyle opportunities.

The Territory Expat program will also provide short-term workers an opportunity to stay connected to the Territory and stay informed about employment, recreation, investment and other opportunities to encourage them to consider returning.

## International students

International education is a valuable emerging industry and is one of five growth sectors identified in the Economic Development Framework. The Northern Territory has high potential to grow the number of international students studying in schools, vocational education and training, English language training, and higher education. The International Education and Training Strategy will guide coordinated efforts to grow student numbers.

International students strengthen cultural, social and economic ties, and contribute to creating vibrant economic, social and cultural precincts.



## ENHANCING LIVEABILITY

### Action: We are investing \$23 million in new liveability initiatives

While jobs are the main reason people come to the Territory from elsewhere, many other factors help attract people to the Territory and encourage them to stay.

Liveability is a key consideration for people across all life stages in choosing where to settle. Initiatives to enhance liveability are central to the Government's economic and social agenda.

This includes promoting and enhancing work-life balance and promoting the Territory's liveability to attract and retain young professional women, young families, late career workers and migrants.

The Territory's lifestyle is enviable – with welcoming communities, a fantastic work-life balance, excellent schooling and health services, short commute times to and from work, and amazing recreation opportunities.

Improving liveability benefits the economy through retention of residents and a skilled workforce and enhancing attractiveness to investors.

## Making our lifestyle greater

The Territory lifestyle is a major factor in inspiring people to live here for the long term. The Government supports initiatives that will enhance our lifestyle through:

- Investing in safer communities and a brighter future for our kids
- Investing in the bush and our regional centres
- Providing stable and trustworthy government
- Revitalising Darwin and Alice Springs CBDs
- Building, maintaining and improving the Northern Territory sporting and recreational infrastructure to provide more positive experiences
- Investing in a Visitor Experience Enhancement Program to improve visitor experiences in Territory attractions
- Improving visitor experiences and safety at major events
- Establishing a Festival Support Program
- Funding arts and cultural organisations to provide unique experiences
- Attracting more national sporting events and bringing AFL premiership games to the Territory each year
- Delivering programs that increase participation rates of women in AFL and support grass-roots football programs in remote areas.





## Home owner incentives

Owning your own home can help foster a sense of belonging and support community harmony and social cohesion.

The Northern Territory Government provides a range of financial incentives to encourage Territorians to buy their own home including the first home owner grants; first home owner stamp duty discount; principal place of residence rebate for new home buyers; seniors, pensioner and carer stamp duty concession.

Supporting home ownership in the Northern Territory is one of the important incentives offered by the Government to increase our population for the long term.

## Affordable, accessible and quality health and education

Providing affordable, accessible and quality healthcare and education is key to attracting and retaining people in the Territory.

The Territory's first new hospital in 40 years, the 116-bed Palmerston Regional Hospital, will provide quality new facilities for the growing Palmerston and rural area populations and alleviate pressures on other health facilities in the Top End.

The Northern Territory has a variety of education options available from childcare through to tertiary education. There are approximately 50 non-government schools, including the Haileybury Rendall School

which opened in 2018, in addition to more than 150 government schools delivering education to students across the Territory.

CDU is the Territory's main tertiary education facility, with other options available at the Northern Territory Medical Program offered by Flinders University and James Cook University, Menzies School of Health Research and the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education.

## Strengthening the future vision for the Territory's regions

Territorians are blessed to live in an environment where some of the worlds' most remarkable natural attractions and breathtaking landscapes are on the doorstep of thriving and cosmopolitan population centres.

The Northern Territory Government is working to provide certainty to businesses and industry to plan for future growth, and ensure Territorians are confident our roads, education, healthcare, essential services and community infrastructure keep pace with a growing population.

*Planning for a Vibrant Future* describes a shared vision for the future of our cities, towns and regions and aims to ensure land use planning and future growth builds vibrant communities while protecting our lifestyle and character.

In addition we will work with local government to enhance liveability of regional towns.



## Darwin City Deal and Regions Deal

City Deals are place-based agreements between all three levels of government. The Darwin City Deal is currently being negotiated between the Commonwealth Government, Northern Territory Government, City of Darwin and CDU.

With a focus on sustainable population growth and liveability, a range of projects and policy reforms are being investigated for inclusion in the City Deal, including a city campus for CDU and initiatives to improve walkability, greening and cooling and activation of the city centre.

The Darwin City Deal is expected to be finalised in 2018.

The development of a regional deal for Tennant Creek was announced in July 2018, with all three levels of government to work together to identify the economic and social priorities and objectives for the region.

## Embracing community diversity

The Territory's thriving multicultural community is part of our identity. Embracing and celebrating community diversity is a defining characteristic of Territory life. It enables us to attract and retain more people who also value diversity and inclusion.

The Northern Territory is renowned for its cultural and linguistic diversity. Some 30 per cent of Territorians identify as Aboriginal, 20 per cent were born overseas (30 per cent in Greater Darwin), and 33 per cent have at least one parent born overseas (42 per cent

in Greater Darwin). Altogether, over 100 different languages are spoken in Territory homes.

The Government is working with community groups to promote cross-cultural harmony through support for multicultural groups, facilities and events. The Territory will continue to welcome migrants from across Australia and around the world to join us in celebrating our achievements and our opportunities.

The Northern Territory Government is committed to empowering Aboriginal Territorians to make their own decisions for their future and the future of their children, and to take the lead in developing sustainable and vibrant remote economies and communities.

Ensuring Aboriginal Territorians are actively engaged in the workforce and able to participate in and benefit from the Territory's prosperity requires a strategic and collaborative approach. The Government is developing a new Aboriginal Contracting Framework that will support Aboriginal employment and business opportunities.

The Government is working with Aboriginal Territorians to develop strong governance skills to ensure local people drive local solutions and are supported in the management of Local Decision Making. Providing improved housing choices for regional and remote communities through the *Our Community. Our Future. Our Homes.* program is a key element of local decision making including planning and local participation in construction and maintenance.



## UNDERSTANDING THE DRIVERS OF POPULATION CHANGE IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

**Action: We are investing \$0.5 million to support further research**

The recent synthesis of 12 years of Northern Territory Population Research conducted by CDU noted and recommended:

- There is no silver bullet solution. A multilayered approach is needed
- Meeting the challenge requires 'buy-in' from governments, business and the community
- Specific strategies should be employed to attract and retain women
- Those transitioning to middle and later career stages need to be retained
- Focus overseas migration efforts on countries with strong growth potential

- Creation of an expat database with details of past residents, identify when and why they may be interested in moving back to the Territory, and communicate opportunities to return to the Territory
- The Territory needs to promote its regions and the wide variety of lifestyle options that are available to new migrants
- Strategies to make people feel welcome and attached to the Territory within a year or two of arrival will be critical to increasing retention rates.

Masterbrand research conducted by McGregor Tan found:

- "Committed Opportunists" – people who are hardworking and excited to try new things – are a key target market, as they are the segment most likely to move to the Territory, are predominantly young and more likely to be female
- A focus should be on communicating the opportunities of the Territory as these are not well understood elsewhere
- The Territory's characteristics of a sense of community, and being welcoming and friendly are key attributes that people should be invited to enjoy and contribute to.



For the Territory's population growth and retention initiatives to gain traction and be as successful as possible we need to monitor progress, identify new opportunities and adjust the Strategy to suit. Accordingly, two research streams will be commissioned under the Population Growth Strategy.

We will support the Regional Australia Institute to assess drivers of regional population, economic development and transition in regional locations for the Council of Australian Governments' Intergovernmental Regional Policy Research Program.

We will also commission the Northern Institute at CDU to conduct further research. This may include:

- Focus groups with the growing international migrant communities (Filipino, Indian, New Zealanders and Nepalese)
- Research with newly retired Territorians who are considering leaving the Territory to identify what might make them stay
- Targeting and staying in touch with Territory expats – online surveys to identify when and why they may be interested in moving back to the Territory

- Ensuring that all Territorians are being counted - research into the extent of miss-enrolment in Medicare and its impact on official Territory population estimates
- Rolling surveys on attraction and retention.

Ongoing demographic research between The Department of Treasury and Finance and CDU will result in more accurate tracking of population movements, and better population projections for regions and the Territory as a whole.

Research data will be collated, combined with existing data sets and analysed to determine future policy responses to continue to put downward pressure on the cost of living, improve liveability, create jobs, facilitate investment and market the Territory.

# Measuring progress

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The Northern Territory Population Growth Strategy 2018-2028 will be supported by Action Plans, which will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain aligned with existing policy direction and emerging trends.

The first review will commence in January 2020 and will assess the effectiveness of the Strategy and Action Plan, and determine what needs to be changed in line with experience and emerging opportunities.

# Governance and reporting

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The Population Growth Strategy underpins a wide range of activities to be undertaken by relevant government departments in implementing actions outlined in annual Action Plans. Departments will coordinate closely to ensure activities align, are complementary, and interact to boost population.

In line with the annual review of the Action Plan, reports on progress will be published regularly on the Northern Territory population website. The Strategy and Action Plan will be revised in accordance with the results of the progress reports and population research.





**THE  
TERRITORY**  
BOUNDLESS POSSIBLE

