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MEDIA RELEASE

Sensible heads required on immigration policy, says HIA

Sensible heads need to prevail regarding Australia's immigration policy said the Housing Industry Association, following COAG's determination yesterday to make population planning and management a standing item on their agenda.

"Australia needs to ensure a strong immigration policy to enhance economic and productivity growth, lock in an appropriately sized working age population in the decades ahead and generate growth in Australians' incomes and standard of living," said Harley Dale, HIA Executive Director – Skills and Industry Development.

"Governments must avoid the pitfalls of implementing significant cuts to Australia's net overseas migration intake. Skilled overseas migration, for example is already 15 per cent below its threshold."

"The Federal Government's own advice – from Commonwealth Treasury, the Productivity Commission and various Intergenerational Reports – provides compelling evidence of the benefits of migration. The government's population expert, speaking at the COAG meeting yesterday reinforced the importance of maintaining a healthy immigration program, a point the HIA has been articulating for some years."

COAG agreed yesterday that Commonwealth, State and Territory leaders (along with the head of the Australian Local Government Association) should consider a framework for national population and planning. All state and territory governments have until January 31st next year to submit their 'population requirements', ahead of the COAG Treasurers' meeting in February.

"It is vital that their submission reflect facts, sound analysis and strategic planning. Not ad hoc cuts to immigration based on the false premise that infrastructure bottlenecks, commuter congestion and stretched education resources are somehow the fault of migrants," said Harley Dale.

"The HIA looks forward to working with all levels of government in 2019 to ensure the nation's immigration policies delivers benefits, not detrimental impacts, to current and future generations of Australians," concluded Harley Dale.

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