Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates

1 June – 3 June 2010

Question: BET 128

Topic: Population Growth

Hansard Page: E113 (03/06/2010)

Senator JOYCE asked:

Senator JOYCE—What are the ABS's long-term projections for population growth? What does the ABS predict that Australia's population will be by 2050?

Mr Farrell—We do not make a prediction. We build a set of assumptions and we project the population based on those assumptions. It is not actually a prediction or a forecast.

Senator JOYCE—What is your assumption of what it will be?

Mr Farrell—What period did you say?

Senator JOYCE—2050.

Mr Farrell—Offhand I do not have it. We will have a look and get back to you on that. Offhand I cannot answer.

Senator JOYCE—That is all right. Can you also give me the assumptions of what you think the cities will be at that point in time?

Mr Farrell—We can. I do not have them at hand.

Senator JOYCE—Can I get that on notice as well?

Mr Farrell—Yes, certainly.

Answer:

ABS last published population projections in September 2008 in *Population Projections Australia 2006 to 2101* (ABS cat. no. 3222.0), available at www.abs.gov.au.

The projections are not predictions or forecasts. They are illustrations of the growth and change in population which would occur if certain assumptions about future levels of fertility, life expectancy at birth, internal migration and overseas migration were to prevail over the projection period.

The ABS produces 72 permutations of the assumptions in developing the range of projections that are published. Three of these series are selected to illustrate the outcomes based on these assumptions. Series B largely reflects current trends (at September 2008) in fertility, life expectancy at birth, net overseas migration and net interstate migration. Series A and Series C are based on high and low assumptions for each of these variables respectively.

The following table provides details of the assumptions that underpin these Series.

MAIN PROJECTION SERIES, Australia

ASSUMPTIONS

	Total fertility rate(b)	*Net overseas migration*(c)	*Life expectancy at birth*(a)	
			Males	*Females*
	babies per woman	persons	years	years
Series A	2.0	220 000	93.9	96.1
Series B	1.8	180 000	85.0	88.0
Series C	1.6	140 000	85.0	88.0

(a) From 2056.

(b) From 2021.

(c) From 2010–11 in Series A and C. From 2007–08 in Series B.

Source: Page 3, *Population Projections Australia 2006 to 2101* (ABS cat. no. 3222.0)

The following table provides the latest ABS projections for the Australian population in 2050 for each of the three Series.

Year	**Series A (assumptions high)** ('000)	**Series B (trends at Sept 2008)** ('000)	**Series C (assumptions low)** ('000)
2050	39,608.0	33,958.9	30,179.3

Source: Table 5.1, page 78, *Population Projections Australia 2006 to 2101* (ABS cat. no. 3222.0)

Assumptions of what populations in cities will be in 2050

ABS population projections are produced for Capital Cities, but not for other major cities. Projections for Australian Capital Cities in 2050 for each of the three series are:

Capital City	**Series A (assumptions high)** ('000)	**Series B (trends at Sept 2008)** ('000)	**Series C (assumptions low)** ('000)
Sydney	7,186.9	6,684.8	6,368.4
Melbourne	7,398.2	6,460.5	5,898.5
Brisbane	4,507.1	3,721.4	3,102.0
Perth	3,796.1	3,145.7	2,693.3
Adelaide	1,757.8	1,604.8	1,589.6
Hobart	346.1	274.3	227.1
Darwin	301.7	226.4	164.2
Australian Capital Territory *	635.8	492.1	377.2

* Projections for Canberra are not produced because the balance of the ACT other than Canberra has a very small population.

Source: Table 5.4 - 5.11, pages 81 - 88, *Population Projections Australia 2006 to 2101* (ABS cat. no. 3222.0)