



Govt must assist job creation to aid Wide Bay recovery

Federal and State Governments need to actively encourage decentralisation of economic activity and jobs to areas such as the Wide Bay Burnett to promote economic prosperity in regional Australia.

Colleen Coyne Property Research director Colleen Coyne told the Australia Population Conference on the Gold Coast last week areas like Hervey Bay, Bundaberg, Maryborough and Gympie faced ongoing challenges through the loss of young adults unable to find well-paid jobs locally.

"The Queensland Government's \$11,000 regional first home owner's grant will not benefit areas like the Wide Bay Burnett, unless strategies are also in place to ensure jobs

are available," Ms Coyne said.

"Governments need to be looking at strategies like targeted infrastructure spending, decentralisation of public workers and stimulating selected industries to bolster regional areas such as Wide Bay Burnett.

"In 2006, the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research found that rapid ageing in the Wide Bay Burnett region was a consequence of below average economic performance, not the dominant driver.

"The region's low paying jobs were leading to the loss of younger people, while the low cost of living appealed to retirees, low skilled workers and those moving from higher cost areas such as the Sunshine Coast to free up capital."

Ms Coyne said Regional Development Australia's Wide Bay Burnett Regional Roadmap 2010, which was recently released, confirms the ongoing demographic imbalance and economic weakness in the region, but also looks forward to a period of greater economic prosperity

"In Wide Bay Burnett, the Queensland Government is currently preparing an Economic Development Strategy to guide economic development and has identified two centres of enterprise – general aviation and unmanned systems and the transport equipment manufacturing industry to build on two key strengths."



Developing an aviation industry on the Fraser Coast has been identified by the State Government as a jobs creator for the region.