

**NT's missing \$20 million easy to work out**

The Northern Territory is potentially missing out on millions of dollars of revenue because of possible underestimation of interstate migration, according to a Darwin-based researcher.

Speaking at an international population conference in Alice Springs, Ms Mary Beneforti, Adjunct Research Fellow with Charles Darwin University (CDU) said current methods assessing interstate migration to the Territory so far could have left the Territory \$20 million out of pocket.

Each Territorian counted in the population provides on average around \$10,000 of Federal GST revenue a year to the NT Government which relies heavily on this source of income.

The Commonwealth Grants Commission estimates populations primarily from Medicare data which is often not updated by the NT's transient workforce.

Ms Beneforti estimated the \$20 million shortfall on 2001-2006 figures, which showed a shortfall of 2000 interstate migrants over the five-year period.

"Making a claim at a Medicare office is a trigger for people's address details to be changed, but this often isn't enough to capture a highly transient workforce," she said.

Ms Beneforti suggested that motor vehicle registry and Australian Electoral Commission data provided further data to help verify the Medicare statistics.

"It's always a great challenge to track a transient workforce, but checking different data sets is needed to give a more accurate data," she said.

Ms Beneforti joined other researchers to tackle issues relevant to the Territory at the Australian Population Association 14th Biennial Conference, which wound up in Alice Springs yesterday. (Thursday July 3).

More than 100 experts from CDU and across the globe discussed issues surrounding demographic changes of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with particular focus on Indigenous demography, policy responses to demographic change, and demography of Australia's northern neighbours.

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**CONTACTS OVERLEAF**



Australian Population Association  
14th Biennial Conference

 **2008**  
Alice Springs

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### About the conference

The 14th biennial conference of the Australian Population Association (<http://www.apa.org.au/>) will be held in Alice Springs from Monday 30th June to Thursday 3rd July 2008 at the Alice Springs

### Convention Centre

The conference will share international perspectives on contemporary population issues. The keynote speaker program features highly respected international population experts, and a comprehensive program of concurrent sessions based on the conference themes of:

- Indigenous demography
- Policy responses to demographic change; and
- The demography of Australia's northern neighbours

For full details, including the conference program, go to [www.nt.gov.au/ntt/apa2008/](http://www.nt.gov.au/ntt/apa2008/)