General Comments for Students and Teachers

There were four sections in the examination with eight questions in total to be answered. Some candidates answered more than one essay question in Section D which put them at a distinct disadvantage. It is also important that candidates keep to the suggested time allocations on the examination paper and that each question is answered to the best of the candidate’s ability. Where there are a number of parts to a question, candidates should divide up the total allocated time to each part of the question to ensure they do not run out of time.

Candidates need to number the questions clearly and accurately on both the outside and inside of their answer booklets to avoid confusion in the marking process and they also need to remember to answer each question in a separate booklet. Candidates should also ensure that their handwriting is legible so that they can be given full credit for everything that they write.

Section A

Question 1

This question assessed Criterion 4 and candidates were asked to refer to the Information Sheet and the World Population (2014) Data Sheet.

For part (a) the better answers were those that were able to:

- describe Australia’s population distribution by referring to Figure 3
- use the Data Sheet to look up and record population size, urban % and density per square kilometre
- note major variations in distribution with reference to the east coast and capital cities and the interior of Australia.
- use terminology such as uneven distribution, sparsely populated/densely populated, ecumene and void

Some candidates made the mistake of describing Tasmania as being densely populated.

For part (b) better answers discussed physical and human factors affecting distribution and density and illustrated their information with some specific details and examples from the maps provided.

Several candidates, however, focussed their discussion of key factors and the maps part of their answer to (a) and were then unsure as to what to do with part (b).

Weaker answers were too brief and showed little (if any) reference to the Data Sheet and the Information Sheets. A few included a discussion of push/pull factors and some used indicators such as fertility rates and % contraceptive use which were not relevant to their response.

Candidates need to use correct terminology. For example, the use of ‘the bottom’ or ‘middle’ of Australia is not appropriate. Recreation, healthcare and education were also referred to as resources, when words such as, ‘services/facilities’ were more correct terms to use.
Question 2

This question assessed Criterion 6 and required candidates to discuss one challenge associated with increasing urbanisation in Australia, to suggest a possible solution and to evaluate its likely success.

The most common challenges selected were:
• urban sprawl
• transport problems and traffic congestion
• pollution
• loss of natural habitat
• affordable housing.

The best answers were those that named a city as an example, mostly Sydney or Melbourne, and were able to present specific information as to the nature of the challenge and the solution. Some candidates wrote about challenges facing rural and remote Australia and these were not satisfactory responses as they did not address the question. A reference to ‘sustainable urban living’ for Australian cities was a good comment to note in the evaluation for part (c).

Section B

Question 3

This question assessed criteria 3 and 4 and candidates were recommended to spend 25 minutes on their response. It required candidates to outline the key causes of anthropogenic climate change. In addition, candidates were asked to use specific examples from both More Developed Countries (MDC’s) and Less Developed Countries (LDC’s) to describe the key social and environmental impacts of anthropogenic climate change. Responses to this question were varied, with a number of candidates failing to mention specific impacts (e.g. Glacier and ice sheet retraction, sea level rise, desertification, coral reef loss and degradation). In addition, a large number of candidates confused anthropogenic climate change with examples of direct human actions resulting in land cover change.

The majority of candidates defined anthropogenic climate change, however, many failed to outline the key causes. The best responses were those that explained the enhanced greenhouse effect and how human actions are enhancing the processes that cause climate change.

A large number of candidates discussed the differences between MDC’s and LDC’s in causing anthropogenic climate change rather than the consequences of the phenomenon faced by MDC’s and LDC’s.

It was common for candidates to correctly identify specific consequences of anthropogenic climate change, but to list their causes as direct human actions. E.g. ‘Coral reef loss is the result of oil spills and ship collisions’.

The best responses were those that made explicit links between the causes, consequences and processes of anthropogenic climate change. In addition, the stronger candidates were those who also discussed the social consequences of anthropogenic climate change as this was something that was generally lacking amongst responses.

Question 4

This question required candidates to use specific examples from both MDC’s and LDC’s to briefly describe how two human actions are resulting in land cover change. In addition, candidates were asked to outline the consequences of these changes. This question assessed criterion 5 and candidates were recommended to spend 20 minutes on their responses.
Generally, this question was answered poorly with few candidates providing sufficient evidence to achieve an ‘A’ rating. As observed in question 3, a number of candidates demonstrated confusion between anthropogenic climate change and direct human actions.

The best responses were those that demonstrated a strong focus on two specific direct human actions and provided a definition of each direct human action (e.g. what it is and how it occurs). In addition, these responses included a combination of environmental and social consequences from both MDC’s and LDC’s.

A large number of candidates failed to outline consequences of their chosen direct human actions. These weaker responses were also non-specific in their choice of direct human actions and tended to list a variety of examples, often demonstrating candidates’ general knowledge as opposed to learnt depth and detail.

To enhance responses, future candidates should be informed on the differences between anthropogenic climate change and direct human actions resulting in land cover change. In addition, candidates should be able to refer to specific examples from both MDC’s and LD’Cs and ensure that sufficient time is spent discussing various consequences (both social and environmental) of each phenomenon.

Section C

The time recommendation for this section was 45 minutes. The Section assessed Criteria 3 and 5.

The unit was designed to consider the past impacts, present impacts and potential impacts of globalization. The reasons for these impacts were specifically transport, technology, branding, trade agreements, the role of the media and the contrast between less Developed areas and More Developed areas. Further consideration should have been given to the role of emerging countries. Candidates often failed to clearly give examples; failing to realize the difference between continents, countries and cities.

This Section should have been seen as a whole and a breadth in knowledge and understanding of questions posed was considered. Overall strong responses used appropriate terminology such as liquidity, trade barriers or transnational corporations (TNC’s).

Question 5

Definitions of the term “globalisation” were for the most part well done. However, many answers did not go further than the definition. These answers failed to explain what the definition actually meant – for example policies, environments, cultures and economies. Better answers went on to explain two chosen factors contributing to the growth of globalisation and linking the definition to the factors of growth. Most candidates, justifiably, related growth of globalisation to the two factors mentioned in Question 6, enhancements in technology and transport. However, the responses which mentioned such aspects as trade blocks, financial markets, investment strategies, urbanisation, media and others, were rewarded. The best answers eloquently explained why the world is interconnected with examples from LDC’s and MDC’s. Credit was given for use of appropriate terminology. Those who gained the best ratings clearly understood the question and answered it with examples to provide evidence for their answer.

Question 6

Most answers concentrated on the technology aspect of the question and drew upon their personal experiences. Mention of specific brands was imperative, as the question required this, but the range of examples should have widened to include examples from both MDC’s and LDC’s. On line Information technology is significant but communication, advertising and payment through the Internet are important. However, a successful answer should have discussed a wide range of technology, for example the movement of capital around the world. Candidates should realise that technology does not just mean that which relates to their own lives but also technology which has global significance. The best answers connected to Question 5 referring to transport and
technology as an essential element, but not combining them. Transport technology was mentioned in many answers as peripheral. The best answers discussed container shipping, the decrease in costs, especially in regards to air travel, trains and oil tankers. Each of these aspects needed to be related to specific examples.

Question 7

The major influences of economic growth were discussed in the best responses. Many candidates had an obvious understanding of the past, present and potential future of this country in the region and the World. It was evident that many candidates had not realised that this was a significant section of the course and they should, not only have analysed what was required, but also have had a strong idea of the background to the rise of China as a world power. Better answers provided a concise history of the economic development of China and the economic issues, especially in the last 20 years, as well as discussing the infrastructure and manufacturing investments. These responses made use of links with the Asia/Pacific region, especially related to Australia’s links with iron ore export. Some, however, went as far back as Marco Polo or beyond. This maybe relevant perhaps if the answer developed into the 21st Century. Some mentioned the opening up policies of Deng Xiaoping. Best answers considered the Chinese response to the GFC and more current reactions. Tourism from China was seen by some as an important link within the region and the World.

The best answers used examples throughout including information on trade partners and agreements, goods exported and imported and the internal politics of China.

Section D

Some candidates made the mistake of answering more than one question from this Section, hen only one was required.

Question 8

Candidates were asked to answer one question from Section D in essay form. There were 20 candidates who misinterpreted the instructions at the top of the page and wrote shortened essays on Question 8, either Question 9(a) or 9(b) and Question 10(a) or 10(b). At least one candidate did more extensive answers to Questions 8, 9 and 10. This would have impacted on the time spent on other sections of the examination.

The question assessed criteria 3 and 6. Overall the standard of the essays was good. With a choice of five essays Question 8 was chosen by over sixty percent of candidates. Of the five choices of essays drawn from the depth studies within the course this essay question was probably the most predictable. It was obvious many candidates had been prepared for this question and presented well-structured essays with relevant information to back up their arguments.

A large variety of megacities was chosen to explain the challenges and possible solutions facing large urban areas in developing countries. Mumbai, Rio de Janeiro, Lagos and Mexico City were the most popular. Other megacities used as examples were Dhaka, Jakarta, Shanghai, Beijing, Sao Paulo, Cairo, Istanbul, New Delhi, Buenos Aires, Johannesburg and Karachi. Major challenges facing these megacities ranged from rapidly expanding populations, inadequate housing, lack of essential services, poor sanitation, disease and poor health services, water security, traffic congestion, air and water pollution, waste management, lack of social and cultural cohesion, lack of educational and employment opportunities, climate change and economic inequality.

The better answers defined a megacity city and included a brief description of the developing country in which their chosen city was located. The specific challenges facing the megacity were clearly outlined with supporting evidence/data. Examples of strategies used to address these challenges were explained in terms of sustainability and again the better answers used supporting evidence to assess the success or otherwise of these measures. Although many candidates presented well-structured essays others were not as coherent or logical in developing their argument. Poorer answers contained little concrete detail to back up vague generalisations and opinions.
regarding the challenges facing megacities in the developing world and strategies that could lead to longer term sustainability.

**Question 9**

The question assessed criteria 3 and 6. Question 9a was chosen by over twenty percent of candidates. The choice of topic within this question was mainly ‘coral reef loss’, ‘glacier and ice sheet retraction’ and ‘rising sea levels’ though there were a small number of candidates who chose the other topics.

Most responses to this question were completed to a high standard. The better responses had a clear structure to cover all components of their chosen topic and included specific evidence/data and clear examples.

Some candidates discussed impacts that, whilst anthropogenic, were not due to anthropogenic climate change. This resulted in these candidates being unable to adequately address the question.

Some candidates used a large section of their response describing their chosen topic (for example glaciers and ice-sheets) rather than addressing the question by discussing the contribution of anthropogenic climate change to the topic and the various impacts this has on environmental, economic and social factors of the topic. This resulted in insufficient responses to the question.

Candidates were directed to describe the environmental, economic and social impacts of anthropogenic climate change on their topic. Most responses were able to address these impacts well, but potential solutions were missed by some candidates.

Some candidates responded to the question with two topics, which limited their ability to discuss the impacts and solutions in depth.

The examples of places impacted by coral reef loss and/or degradation included: Australia (The Great Barrier Reef) and the Philippines.

The impacts for this topic included: biodiversity loss, ocean acidification causing low calcification rates, increased ocean temperatures disrupting zone of habitation for coral, loss of food source for local communities, loss of tourism and coral bleaching.

Solutions for this topic included: reduction of CO2 emissions, protected marine environments to limit the damage and diversification of food sources for local communities.

Some of the examples of places impacted by glacier and ice-sheet retraction included: Alaska (USA), Antarctica, Greenland, Switzerland, Bolivia, Nepal and the Himalayas.

The impacts for this topic included: flooding, loss of water source and impacts on biodiversity.

Solutions for this topic included: artificial glaciers, relocation of impacted communities, alternative water sources.

Some of the examples of places impacted by rising sea levels included: The Netherlands, Venice (Italy), Bangladesh, The Maldives, Kiribati, Tuvalu, London (England) and Florida (U.S.A).

The impacts for this topic included: flooding; increased salination of cropping land and fresh water; coastal erosion; infrastructure damage; displacement of entire communities and countries (Climate refugees); health impacts; and greater impact from storm surges and high tides.

Solutions for this topic included: The use of physical barriers to prevent storm surges; relocation to unaffected regions; reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through policies such as the carbon tax or trading systems; and renewable energy targets to replace burning of fossil fuels.
Solutions to address impacts of climate change included: global initiatives such as the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Kyoto Protocol. Local and personal actions included reduction of energy use and using renewable energy sources.

**Question 9 (b)**

Candidates were asked to answer one question from Section D in essay form.

This question assessed criteria 3 and 6.

Seven candidates chose to answer this question. Their topics ranged from Mining, cropland/pasture loss, deforestation, urban expansion to land degradation. Better candidates were able to discuss the negative environmental impacts of their chosen topic. They were also able to discuss a program which has been used to restore and/or rehabilitate the land affected, including replanting programs, land reclamation programs and converting old mines to trampolining centres (such as Go Bounce) and diving centres. A range of environmental, economic and social costs and benefits were mentioned. The best answers were able to evaluate the success of the suggested program in leading to positive changes.

**Question 10 (a)**

Candidates were asked to answer one question from Section D in essay form.

This question assessed criteria 3 and 6.

Only three candidates chose to answer this question. The activities chosen were music, Uber and coffee. Candidates were able to satisfactorily describe the changing distribution of production and consumption of the activity. Responses would have been enhanced if a greater range of examples from various countries and regions were used as supporting evidence. All candidates were able to discuss some of the social and economic implications of the changes to production and consumption for their particular topic. Candidates also needed to include in their responses evidence of the political implications of the changes to production and consumption of their chosen commodity. This aspect was not covered very well and future candidates need to ensure they are informed in this area.

**Question 10 (b)**

Candidates were asked to answer one question from Section D in essay form.

This question addressed criteria 3 and 6.

Nine candidates selected this question to answer, and chose fashion, sport, music, religion and language.

In this question, candidates were asked to choose an element of culture and describe the geographical spread and the pattern of distribution with reference to the role of technology, transport, communication and the media in this distribution. Strong responses provided an overview of the current global context of their chosen cultural element and then discussed the influence of each process or driver in turn. Weaker responses repeated some explanation of the processes creating overlaps, such as with communication and technology.

Some candidates did not answer the question directly, and instead focused on impacts and consequences of the globalisation of their chosen cultural element. These did not adequately answer the question on distribution patterns.