GENERAL COMMENTS FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

There were 301 candidates, a 50% increase in numbers over previous years, for the external examination of the present Geography syllabus, which is now in its ninth year. Criteria 2, 6, 9 and 10 were assessed twice and criterion 8 was assessed three times, on different questions. Candidates need to perform consistently in all 5 questions and satisfy the requirements of the criteria in each question to achieve the best possible overall award. Some candidates seemed to have spent too much time on one question, Question 1, to the detriment of their answer to Question 2 in Section A. It is important that candidates keep to the suggested time allocations on the exam 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 equally to each part of the question, to ensure that they do not run out of time for the last part of that question.

Candidates need to number the questions clearly and accurately on the outside and the inside of their answer books to avoid confusion in the marking process and to remember to answer each question in a new book, especially in Section A. Candidates should also ensure that their handwriting is legible so that they can be given full credit for everything that they write.

Question 1

300 candidates attempted this question, for which they were assessed on criteria 9 (part b) and 10 (part a). There were several tasks to complete: in such cases it is imperative candidates read and re-read questions so they accurately complete them. Please keep to the suggested times as some candidates wrote pages in part b (many of excellent quality); however this would have reduced time to complete the remainder of the exam. Finally, some candidates completed the tasks on Answer Sheet – Question 1 (a), and then in the answer booklet repeated or even expanded on the information. This left reduced time to complete part b.

a. Most candidates were able to select appropriate countries to serve as examples for each of the stages, 2-5. Better answers selected the most illustrative examples, where CBR, CDR and RNI/RND, and level of economic development (GNI PPP) clearly supported their choices. For example, Nigeria or Liberia (Stage 2), Bolivia or Laos (Stage 3), Australia or Canada (Stage 4), Bulgaria or Hungary (Stage 5). Some students had been taught that Stage 5 is hypothetical; it is real and the course outline indicates that there are 5 stages in the model. Leniency was extended to candidates with the sketching task. As long as the shape for the country was indicative of its population structure, candidates were rewarded. Some sketched; some used the data sheet to construct quite detailed age cohorts. The later obviously took more time. Sketching was the most efficient use of time.

There were a variety of reasons given to classify countries in the various stages. Given the Information Sheet contained a diagram of the Demographic Transition Model, candidates were advantaged in providing supporting evidence. As a result most candidates scored well on criterion 10. Reasons included:
- An outline of CBR and CDR (including an indication of whether it was low, moderate or high) as well as the RNI/RND. Better answers contained specific figures from the data sheet as requested. Some students included the GNI PPP figures as further evidence of level of demographic transition and this was rewarded.
- The most capable answers went a step further in providing brief dot points as to why CBR and CDR figures were so, and these received an A+ rating.

A number of students were misguided in thinking they had to explain why the population pyramid looked the way it did. This wasn’t the task. Those students who dealt with fertility and mortality and natural increase/decrease, and who then explained how this was reflected in the components of the pyramid were rewarded for answering the question. It is worth noting that the model presented in the information sheet clearly shows fertility being represented as CBR rather than TFR. There is a difference in discussing fertility at country level as opposed to an individual woman. The model is very clear about this.

b. The phrasing of this question demanded candidates ‘think on their feet’ because it didn’t specify ageing or youthful population. Most candidates responded credibly in applying knowledge from the course. Clearly Stage 2 countries have high CBRs and falling CDRs and therefore high RNI. They also have low levels of economic development. A range of actions were presented:

- A raft of anti-natalist policies intended to lower the birth rates. Countries used as exemplars of this included Thailand, Rwanda, East Timor, The Gambia, Nigeria, Iran, China, and India. Candidates were rewarded for using parts of these policies and applying them to the task, as well as indicating through TFR decline how effective these had been.
- The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were used as targets to lift countries beyond Stage 2, and the best answers used specific goals to specific actions such as lowering IMR to reduce the need for ‘insurance babies’.
- Some candidates discussed the need for transformation of Stage 2 country’s economy from primary-based to manufacturing and services. Further, that such a transformation (through aid, the MDGs, engaging in global markets) would lead to a demographic move from rural to urban. Greater affluence for many and urban living would see a drop in fertility and increased life expectancy.
- Finally, some candidates discussed actions to reduce the CDR: improve sanitation and housing, access to food, and improved sources of water. Further, improved medical infrastructure (rural health clinics, hospitals) and personnel as well as access to medication and vaccines would reduce death amongst the most vulnerable.

It is important to note that as the question only asked for actions, students were not penalised if they did not evaluate these actions. Students received extra credit if they did evaluate.

**Question 2**

This question was answered well by a majority of candidates. It asked them to explain how the three population characteristics, Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Total Fertility Rate (TFR) and Life Expectancy (LE) were connected. Some candidates only described the connection (or relationship) between the characteristics and consequently this limited their rating on criterion 6. The term “explain” in this context means to not only say how they are connected but also to say why they are connected – that is, to give reasons for the connections. Better answers were able to give a range of reasons for why these
factors were connected in both Less Developed Countries (LDCs) and More Developed Countries (MDCs).

Using the maps on the Information Sheet and the World Population Date Sheet, many candidates linked these population characteristics to the level of development of countries. In particular, that a high IMR, a high TFR and a low LE is typical of LDCs and conversely, that a low IMR, a low TFR and a high LE is typical of MDCs. Some candidates were able to describe the relationship between IMR and TFR as direct or positive and that both had an inverse or negative relationship with LE. Better answers incorporated correct definitions of the characteristics in their explanation and chose countries that were typical LDCs and MDCs, as examples to illustrate the connection. Candidates need to only choose one or two good examples of each and give the characteristics of the countries. This would leave more time to give reasons for the connection. Some candidates referred to the less developed country of Africa, when they should have said the less developed countries in Africa, because Africa is a continent, not a country. Too many candidates defined the population characteristics incorrectly. For example, IMR is the number of infants who die before they are one year old per 1,000 live births – NOT the number who die before they are 3 years or 5 years old per 1000 people; TFR is the average number of children born to a woman in her lifetime – nothing to do with death and dying; and LE is the age a person can expect to live to at birth – none of these figures are percentages!

In LDCs, better answers explained how factors such as poor health care services, limited access to doctors and health care in rural areas where the majority of the people live, poor sanitation and living conditions and lack of clean drinking water caused a high IMR as well as a low LE. This in turn led to a high TFR, as families had extra children because there was a high likelihood that some would die (some candidates called these “insurance babies”) and that many children were desirable for lots of reasons, such as, to help with work on the farm, to help earn income for the family and to look after the parents in old age; and because of cultural, religious and self-esteem reasons; and because of poor access to education and contraception and very low use of any forms of contraception.

In MDCs, better answers explained how factors such as very good health care, good access to doctors and medical services, very good sanitation and the provision of clean drinking water led to a low IMR and a high LE. This resulted in a low TFR, because children were no longer considered an asset, but were more of a financial burden for parents in MDCs; pensions and superannuation were available to look after the parents in old age; women were well educated, had high self-esteem, were wanting to pursue a career and had good access to and use of modern contraceptives. Better answers briefly summed up the connection or relationship at the end.

**Question 3**

The Grampians (Victoria) Topographic Map Extract and the accompanying legend were printed on glossy paper which made them clearer and easier to read and interpret compared to previous years. The map contained sufficient physical features and human activities to allow well prepared candidates to demonstrate their topographic mapping skills.

The question was in three parts (a), (b) and (c). Each part of the question was clearly written and should not have held any surprises for candidates. Candidates were recommended to spend 40 minutes answering this question.
(a) **Describe the main physical features of the area**

Better answers described the three main physical features of the area: the relief, the drainage pattern and the natural vegetation. The two mountain ranges, the Mount William Range and the Wonderland Range and the valley in between are the major features of the relief. Some candidates spent too much time describing the location of every spot height they could find when the location of a couple of the highest spot heights would have been enough.

An overwhelming number of candidates correctly identified Fyans Creek as a dominant feature of the drainage pattern of the area; however the majority incorrectly had the creek flowing in a SE direction into Lake Bellfield. Also, many candidates mistakenly described Lake Bellfield as a natural feature rather than a man-made feature.

Most candidates correctly described the dominant natural vegetation as scattered timber with some patches of scrub.

(b) **Describe the human features**

This section of the question was generally well answered. The majority of candidates were able to identify and describe the location of the two major settlements: Halls Gap (AR3488) and Bellfield Settlement (AR3684); and the linear settlement alongside the major road, Grampians Road, running between the two major settlements. They also described the other minor roads and 4WD tracks, which tended to be in tourist/sightseeing locations.

Most candidates correctly identified many of the human features in the area as being connected to recreational/eco-tourism pursuits. These included the Grampians National Park, Telopea Gardens, a golf course, motels, Novel Convention Centre, camping grounds, caravan parks, tennis courts, picnic areas and walking tracks.

One human feature that was missed by many candidates was the man-made Lake Bellfield and the associated dam, spillway, outlet tower and pipeline.

(c) **Explain how the natural environment has influenced people’s use of the land. Use specific examples to support your answer.**

There were some excellent answers to this section of the question. Those candidates were able to clearly explain how the major features of the natural environment, namely, the two mountain ranges and valley between had influenced the location of settlements, communication & transport links and recreational and eco-tourism infrastructure. The construction and positioning of Lake Bellfield was also explained in terms of the natural environment. These candidates selected appropriate examples to support their answer. The other major influence on human activities has been the recognition of the natural beauty of the area. With limited land suitable for agricultural activities, apart from some cleared land in the valley and flatter land in the NE quadrant of the map, the majority of the land has been left largely in its natural state. Human activities have focused on providing access and facilities for visitors for recreational and eco-tourism activities. There are many good examples to explain how the natural, rugged beauty of the area has influenced human activities.
A number of candidates answered parts (a) and (b) of the question by providing lists of key features of the natural environment and human activities. This made it difficult to assess because both parts of the questions asked candidates to describe these features. Recognition was given to candidates who described these features in part (c) of the question. In terms of the two criteria, criterion 6 was assessed on the candidate’s ability to analyse the map extract to gain the information in the three part question. Criterion 8 was assessed on the candidate’s ability to refer to relevant examples from the map extract.

**Question 4**

Responses to this question were generally of a good standard with many candidates demonstrating a sound knowledge and understanding of their chosen natural hazard. Causes were discussed with good use of technical terms and many supported their written answer with the use of diagrams. The majority of candidates were able to discuss a variety of impacts with reference to examples from both more and less developed countries. As in previous years, some chose to write about one example from each in detail, while others used more examples with briefer comments for each. Both approaches are acceptable. Better answers distinguished between primary and secondary impacts and were also able to draw some comparisons between MDCs and LDCs when discussing impacts and responses. Weaker answers were generally those that were too brief and showed limited knowledge and understanding of the topic or failed to use specific examples.

It is recommended that candidates use recent case studies/examples: events such as the eruption of Mount Vesuvius and Pompeii and even the 1906 San Francisco earthquake do not allow for a successful discussion of responses and management strategies.

If candidates choose to include a map (optional for this question) it should show some information.

Maps with only a few pencil lines and without any naming or labelling, are of little value.

It is also recommended that when referring to a specific event for the first time in their essay, candidates also state the country and date, for example, Sichuan (China) 2008. Some named Sumatra as a country rather than as an island of Indonesia.

**Question 5 and Question 9**

Thirty one candidates answered Question 5 and thirteen candidates answered Question 9. Once again the majority of candidates discussed the enhanced greenhouse effect with only a few responding to acid rain, ozone depletion and El Nino/La Nina. Most responses were of a good standard. The best answers were well written, had a logical structure and demonstrated a thorough understanding of the causes, impacts and responses to climatic change in both MDCs and LDCs.

Question 5 was assessed on three criteria. Criterion 2 requires effective communication of ideas and information. Using geographical terms appropriately enhances this communication. Criterion 8 requires selection and justification of relevant geographical examples and all candidates used examples of causes, impacts and responses to climatic change from a range of MDCs and LDCs, which was most pleasing. Criterion 10 requires the ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of geographical
concepts and processes. The candidate’s discussion of the causes, impacts and responses to climate change demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of this issue.

Question 9 asked candidates to evaluate the level of success of their proposed responses to climate change; unfortunately, once again this year, some candidates forgot to do this. This has a detrimental effect on their rating for criterion 9, which includes evaluating the level of success of the responses. Better answers demonstrated a clear understanding of the causes of enhanced greenhouse effect, ozone depletion, acid rain or El Nino/La Nina including what constitutes ‘greenhouse emissions’, reasons for ozone depletion, acid rain and El Nino/La Nina.

Various aspects of climate change were discussed in the impacts, including:

- Sea level rises
- Increased melting of sea and land ice
- Decrease in Arctic ice thickness
- Impacts on delta regions and low lying islands
- Coral bleaching
- More frequent extreme weather events (including the recent Haiyan Typhoon which caused massive destruction in the Philippines - not only from the wind but from storm tidal surges too)
- Increased average temperatures
- Increased bushfires
- Increased drought
- Increased desertification
- Loss of stock and crops
- Increased soil erosion
- Food security issues because of drought
- Species extinction or endangerment
- Species movement eg. Tasmanian giant kelp
- Spread of insect borne and other diseases
- Acid damage to the built and natural environment
- Estimated 50 million environmental refugees by 2020
- Winter comes later and spring earlier allowing invasive species to intrude and disrupting migration and breeding patterns
- Acidification of oceans and plankton
- Oceans as carbon sinks are becoming more acidic endangering many aquatic species and ecosystems
- Coral bleaching
- Civil unrest and forced migration
- Changed disease distribution, eg Nairobi – malaria, Dengue fever
- The poorest billion contributes 3 % of the world’s total emissions
- Greater risk of cancer for animals and humans

Some better answers also mentioned that MDCs are having a much greater impact than LDCs and they referred to economic, social and political impacts such as the production of goods towards obsolescence, in that goods are made to break which leads to an increase in consumption; increased insurance burden; forced migration; shortages of land and water and the potential for civil unrest and international conflict.
Responses to climate change included:

• personal responses (such as recycling, walking and using public transport)
• reduction in emissions of pollutants that result in acid rain
• reduction in emissions of pollutants that result in ozone depletion
• greater use of alternative cleaner energy sources (such as wind and solar)
• national/regional responses (such as carbon offsets, taxes and rebates for using solar energy)
• international responses (such as the Kyoto Protocol, the Montreal Protocol and the international climate discussions in Copenhagen and by the United Nations)
• Storm shelters
• Concrete homes built on stilts

Question 6

Approximately fifty candidates answered this question, choosing an even distribution of choice of river basins, coasts and mountains. The question assessed criteria 2, 8 and 10. The question was generally answered better than in the previous year, with a higher proportion of students who had prepared very well and were rewarded for their efforts. Many responses were, however, still too brief overall.

Students must be prepared to produce a significant volume of information and examples and demonstrate a good level of understanding of the issues associated with human impacts, in the time available. As a guideline, the stronger candidates were generally able to produce a minimum of four pages of informative text, with several filling a booklet of eight pages with good writing. Although most candidates provided an adequate description of relevant erosion and deposition processes, many did not follow the instruction to describe the formation of two landforms, instead describing several landforms that they had prepared.

Many responses provided only a limited description of impacts of and responses to human activity in the selected environment. Better responses were well prepared with traditional essay format, although some responses that included diagrams were also fine. Many candidates unadvisedly included diagrams without explaining them adequately or referring to them in the text. Candidates who selected river basins included meanders, ox-bow lakes, waterfalls and deltas. Coast candidates included headlands, sea-caves, stacks, arches, beaches and dunes. Mountain candidates most often discussed pyramidal peaks (horns), arêtes, glacial troughs, cirques, corries and moraines and generally did so well.

Better answers were well prepared with detailed description of a range of human impacts on their selected environment and used a broad range of examples from More Developed Countries (MDCs) and Less Developed Countries (LDCs). Candidates who chose to use only one example from each category of nation generally did not demonstrate as much understanding as candidates who were able to discuss in depth a greater number of examples (criterion 8).

Question 7

Ninety five candidates answered this question and most essays were well written. It was pleasing that most candidates remembered to refer to cities, not countries in their examples. Once again a wide range of case studies were used both for LDC and MDC cities including Lagos; Curitiba; Beijing; Jakarta; Shanghai; Loja; Rio de Janeiro; Sao Paulo; Bangkok; Dhaka; Mumbai; Cairo and Lima (in LDCs) and for
cities in MDCs: London; Glasgow; Paris; Malmö; Copenhagen; Stockholm; Tokyo; Seoul; Singapore; Sydney; Melbourne; Vancouver; New York and Los Angeles. Using a number of examples for both MDCs and LDCs ensured a better rating for criterion 8.

The question asked candidates to describe the causes, impacts and responses to urbanisation. The ability to do this fluently using appropriate geographic terminology determined the rating given for criterion 2. Once again many candidates started with a definition of urbanisation. Most candidates were able to give a range of reasons for urban growth. Many described the difference between those MDC cities that evolved during the industrial revolution compared to the rapid expansion of modern day LDC cities. Most described rural-urban drift and used a range of push and pull factors as reasons for the growth of cities. Once again a few responses included the SHEEP factors (social, historical, environmental, economic and political) explanations for settlement.

The impacts and responses to urbanisation that were discussed were varied and included:

- housing shortages
- overcrowding
- transport problems
- traffic congestion, problems and solutions
- pollution (including water, sewerage, air and rubbish)
- high levels of poverty
- the formation of slums
- lack of clean water supplies
- lack of medical resources
- lack of educational opportunities
- lack of employment opportunities
- satellite cities
- green belts
- urban planning
- re-gentrification
- counter urbanisation
- some good evidence of positive responses in both LDC’s and MDC’s such as the urban planning successes in Curitiba, Singapore, Tokyo, Loja, Malmö and Glasgow

Criterion 8 requires the candidate to select, use and justify relevant geographical examples. It was pleasing to see some candidates using the blank map provided to locate the examples they had given.

Criterion 10 requires the candidate to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of geographical concepts and processes and the discussion of impacts and responses to urbanisation indicated the candidates’ depth of geographical knowledge and understanding.

As in previous years better answers included both positive and negative impacts and concluded with a discussion on sustainable urban planning.
Question 8

Answers to this question highlighted the need for candidates to read the question and to respond accordingly. Many wrote (some at length) about the causes of their chosen natural hazard, when part (a) of the question asked them to describe the distribution. Almost all associated the hazards with tectonic plate boundaries, particularly the Pacific Rim of Fire. While the use of a map in this question was optional, better answers did show distribution on a map and this added value, provided the map was clearly marked and labelled.

Most were able to discuss impacts with reference to events in both more and less developed countries. However, some concentrated on discussing a full range of impacts without specific examples. Most candidates dealt with responses after a disaster, particularly disaster relief. More could have been made of hazard mitigation, e.g. seismic monitoring, hazard mapping and evacuation plans.

Most candidates successfully contrasted hazard management between MDCs and LDCs. It is recommended that candidates use recent events as their case studies/examples as they allow for a more successful discussion of responses and management strategies. It was pleasing to note that many candidates made an effort to address the evaluation part of the question in part (c).

Question 10

Approximately fifty candidates answered this question, choosing an even distribution of choice of river basins, coasts and mountains. The question was assessed on criteria 2, 8 and 9. In general, criteria 2 and 8 were well handled but some candidates demonstrated only limited understanding of impacts and responses (criterion 9). The evaluation component of the question was well handled by those students who had prepared thoroughly for it.

(a) Better answers demonstrated a strong understanding of the erosional and depositional processes that produce their two described landforms, and incorporated well prepared diagrams of the processes and formations concerned. Landforms described included deltas, meanders, waterfalls, headlands, tombolos, beaches and dunes, pyramidal peaks (horns), arêtes, corries, glacial troughs, moraines and associated glacial features.

(b) Many candidates were able to identify relevant specific examples of the impact of human activities in their selected environment. Impacts discussed included dune and beach damage, canal estates and coastal settlement (coasts); agricultural impacts, settlement, damming, diversion, weed infestation and pollution (river basins); and mining, forestry, agriculture and grazing, anthropogenic climate change, tourism and recreation (mountains). As in question 6, candidates who choose to use only one LDC and one MDC example must prepare to do so at a deeper level than candidates who choose to discuss a greater number of examples (criterion 8). Either approach is acceptable; however a reasonable amount of detailed discussion is expected to be delivered in the time available. A pleasing number of candidates made mention of specific examples of landforms or impacts of human activity in Tasmania, although given the ready access to highly relevant information and case studies within this state, it was surprising that many candidates did not discuss these local issues in any great depth. The Ganges and Yangtze Rivers, and the coasts of the Africa and Bangladesh were often mentioned, but many candidates were unable to discuss their impacts in significant detail.
(c) Many candidates did not handle part (c) as well as parts (a) and (b). Better answers included discussion of specific real places and issues and were able to provide evaluation of historical solutions and potential solutions for current and future problems. In summary, more candidates than in the previous year had prepared well for this part of the question; however, it remains an area upon which future candidates should focus their exam preparation.

**Question 11**

163 candidates chose this question. Given the scope of parts (b) and (c) of the question it was probably wise to spend less time on part (a) than on the other parts. Most candidates showed a reasonable understanding of what urbanisation is and the reasons for why it occurs, referring to push and pull factors and giving a broad range of those. Not so many pointed out that rapid urbanisation is a feature of the developing world today, and that the developed countries had achieved a high urban/rural ratio over a hundred years ago. Some candidates did make use of the World Population Data sheet to point out the differences in the % urban between MDCs and LDCs.

As in previous years, there were a lot of different impacts discussed and a number of different case studies used. Many of the impacts were seen as common to both MDCs and LDCs (traffic congestion a favourite, and the associated air pollution, as well as a shortage of affordable housing leading to either slums or urban sprawl) but candidates recognised that responses could be quite varied.

In part (b) if candidates chose to only write about one city from an MDC and one from an LDC they needed to have a detailed knowledge of those impacts and responses to score well. Otherwise it is good to be able to refer to more cities as case studies. A few candidates did not write about any specific cities at all, which was not adequate for criterion 8. Curitiba remains a popular choice as a city which has achieved success in a number of areas, though few candidates offered any real evidence for that success. A simple example could be that, in the case of traffic congestion, their Bus Rapid Transit program has been adopted as a model for many other cities, such as Bogota in Colombia. There are also quite a few statistics available which show the success of the system, such as the estimated 28% savings in car trips per year, and the similar lowering of CO₂ emissions. This is a better answer than just saying it has been successful.

Likewise, London was a popular choice for an MDC city which is affected by traffic congestion, and again there is statistical evidence readily available about the success or otherwise of the 2003 LCC. In other cases, where new policies have been put in place, or are being considered, it is reasonable to make a general prediction about their likely success.

There was recognition that cities in LDCs struggle more to cope with the constantly increasing need for services such as clean water, sanitation, education and health services due to their less robust economies, but it could also be as a result of the faster pace of urbanisation. Not many candidates used terms such as town planning or sustainable development which was a little surprising. It was good to see candidates briefly point out some of the positive impacts of urbanisation before they focussed on the ones which were of concern. This question asked candidates to use specific examples in part (b) and to then in part (c) talk about human response to those examples. This was not always done.
## Award Distribution

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## Student Distribution (SA or better)

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