

## CASE STUDY

### Australia – an under-populated country

With a population of only 21.7 million and a labour force of only 11.6 million, Australia is under-populated. It is very rich in resources, with large reserves of iron ore, coal, gold, copper, natural gas and uranium – and abundant potential for solar and wind power development. Australia therefore needs to attract migrant workers to exploit its many resources. The positive net migration rate of over 6 per 1000 is the 14th highest in the world.

The quantities of many of Australia's resources are greater than the country's needs, so any surpluses can be exported – particularly coal from Newcastle, iron ore from Iron Knob and gold from Kalgoorlie, meat, wheat, machinery and transport equipment. Australia's exports were worth over US\$200 billion in 2010. Its **gross domestic product (GDP)**

**per person** was US\$41 300. The service sector employs 75% of Australians. The unemployment rate is low.

Australia's low birth and death rates give a natural population increase of only 1.15% a year. Its population density is only 2.6 people per square kilometre and, although a large proportion of the country is desert or semi-desert, there is ample suitable land for an increase in settlements.

Education standards in Australia are high. 99% of Australians are literate, and education is available for 21 years of a person's life. Health care is also good, e.g. the infant mortality rate is only 0.46%.

With all of these different factors combined, Australia could support a larger population.