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Melbourne to reign by 2035

ADRIAN TAME

MELBOURNE is set to become Australia's biggest city, according to a leading economist.

Our capital will steal the title from Sydney within 25 years if Brian Haratsis's predictions are correct.

In his latest forecasts, the futurist and economist also suggests big growth in regional centres including Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat, Shepparton, Mildura and even the Latrobe Valley.

But Melbourne would expand most, in terms of population as well as economic wealth, Mr Haratsis said.

"Sydney is dying now, and will continue to die as a service sector provider," said Mr Haratsis, who recently published *Australia 2050*.

In a wide-ranging interview, he said:

HALVING the number of politicians and doubling pay of those remaining.

REPLACING the Federal Government with three regional infrastructure providers.

RAISING GST from 10 to 12 per cent, using the extra 2 per cent to help fund the regional bodies.



Looking ahead: Brian Haratsis has a vision for Melbourne. Picture: TONY GOUGH

DISCARDING the National Broadband Network and using the \$42 billion to develop methods of water harvesting.

SOLVING our water problems before tackling climate change, and

FUNDING our future sporting success with a lottery similar to Britain's Future2.

Mr Haratsis expects Melbourne's population to have reached between 5-5.5 million by 2035, when it will have become bigger than Sydney. The

gap, initially, will be between 100,000 and 200,000, but will widen.

He said Sydney's decline is caused by its economic reliance on IT and finance, both of which face crushing international competition.

Melbourne and Victoria, however, will flourish because of their success as service providers in three key areas - freight and logistics, education, and health.

He said he believed Victoria would increase its share of the national freight sector from 30 per

cent to 50 per cent by 2030. He said a new port at Hastings, high-speed freight and passenger rail links between Sydney and Melbourne and new commercial "freight cities" across Victoria would help Victoria take control of the freight sector.

Mr Haratsis said Victoria's role as the major national and international centre for secondary and tertiary education would also be cemented within Melbourne, Geelong and the major satellite cities.