

□ Blueprint for the future

Target 2 million by year 2027

“SA is performing better than any of the other states.

— MICHAEL HICKINBOTHAM



POPULATION

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TWO million people should call South Australia home by 2027, the Economic Development Board says.

The state was already tracking ahead of the Government's strategic plan's target of achieving this goal by 2050 and it was time to be more ambitious.

The new target date will require updating the now five-year-old population policy with additional strategies.

“We've got to make sure that migrants coming here stick,” EDB chairman Bruce Carter said.

Increased international migration since 2005 was the main contributor to SA's population growth.

SA now has 1.6 million people and grew at 1.1 per cent in the year to

September – below the national rate of 1.8 per cent, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported yesterday.

SA suffers from a net migration loss to other states. Stemming this flow was dependent on job opportunities as the economy grew, the EDB said.

“If we're right about SA's economy out-performing the nation, we'd expect that to stop,” report lead author Grant Belchamber said.

A review of population policy needed to address issues of land supply, housing affordability and the environment.

In attracting people to Adelaide, it was time to move beyond simply saying housing was more affordable.

“We're now getting closer to interstate housing prices,” Mr Carter said. “So we're doing a review of the issue in the EDB. Out of that comes a lot

of things – liveability, sustainability, safety.”

SA chairman of the Australian Population Institute Michael Hickinbotham, who also is an EDB member, said bringing the target forward was a huge vote of confidence in the state.

“SA is performing better than any of the other states,” he said.

While the target was ambitious, Mr Hickinbotham said people had scoffed at SA when it first set the 2050

deadline – yet it was now 20 years ahead of that trajectory.

He dismissed commonly raised fears such as SA not having enough water or services for more people.

“These issues are being addressed in the EDB statement,” he said.

Mr Carter said that with an ageing profile, South Australians must embrace a bigger population if they wanted economic growth.

Attracting migrants was a costly and time-consuming process for business,

the EDB said.

The Government needed to do more to assist business, including providing more publicly funded settlement services for migrants and their families.

One ready source of people was the increasing number of foreign students studying in SA. More effort should be made in encouraging them to study in areas of skill shortage to SA and getting them to stay.



1 Nick Stevens, 17, Commerce: I'm not planning on leaving Adelaide - I grew up here. I'd move for more money, or if friends were moving with me, though.

2 Hamish Tregagle, 18, Civil and Structural Engineering: There are better jobs over in Sydney and Melbourne for engineers - all the larger engineering projects go there.

3 Josh Boord, 18, Civil and Structural Engineering: Not just interstate, but also overseas; there are more and better opportunities.

4 Justine Callander, 18, Psychology (Honours): I'd definitely move if a good opportunity came up.

5 Alex Nicopoulos, 18, Commerce: The bigger banks are all interstate, and

that's where the jobs are. Plus, I'm angling for a music career, and it's just easier in the eastern states.

6 Kate Turnbull, 18, Psychological Science: All my family and friends are here in Adelaide. But I'd move for a pay rise.

7 Ali Smith, 18, Law and International Studies: I want to work in government and

foreign affairs, so I'd move to Canberra or even overseas.

8 Georgina Cavanagh, 18, Veterinary Science: I'm staying in Adelaide, at least while I'm studying. It's just easier. Plus, all my friends are here.

9 Daniel McCabe, 18, Economics and Science: Adelaide for me. We've got great pubs.

