



Australian Population Institute (SA) Inc.

“Dedicated to responsible and environmentally sustainable population growth”

NEWS RELEASE

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‘BRAIN GAIN’ FOR SA

South Australia’s intake of overseas students has nearly doubled in the past four years with more than 19,200 students adding to a ‘brain gain’ for the State this year.

Australian Population Institute (APOP) SA Chairman Michael Hickinbotham said this recent surge in overseas students to our State is giving a much-needed boost to our population and helping to compensate for the number of young people who leave the State – which is often referred to as the ‘brain drain’.

Latest population figures for September show South Australia is educating a record number of overseas students with higher education the main drawcard for more than 10,638 students.

Mr Hickinbotham said students who study in South Australia are more likely to look at settlement options after they finish studying, which creates benefits to a wide range of industry sectors.

“This increase in overseas students is great news for Adelaide because we need responsible and sustainable population growth in order for our State to survive and remain competitive in the future,” Mr Hickinbotham said.

“Recent population figures show we are heading in the right direction but we still need to do more to attract people and retain people in South Australia,” Mr Hickinbotham said.

“This year’s net interstate migration of 2700 people is better than last year, but more needs to be done to stop our young people from moving interstate and attracting more people to live in South Australia.”

Mr Hickinbotham said Adelaide can not be allowed to dip below its critical mass and go into rapid decline. Statistics have shown that our population will go into decline within 20 years if we do not act now.

The State population target of 2 million people by 2050 is a gradual and responsible growth over nearly 50 years in order to prevent our State spiralling into population decline and becoming the backwater to the Eastern States.

“A decline in population would hollow out the business base in South Australia, erode our tax base and put more pressure on aged care.

“The double whammy for SA’s has always been our poor fertility rate and the exodus of young talented people which creates a vicious cycle reducing standard of living for all South Australians.

“We understand young people will always want to travel and want an interstate experience – but we want them to return home to put their interstate and overseas experiences to SA’s benefit.

“The only way to achieve population growth is by increasing overseas and interstate immigration and through increased fertility.”

South Australia’s looming population crisis was highlighted by APOP in 2003 when it convened the National Population Summit at Parliament House.

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*Committee: Hon. Greg Crafter, Jim Curnow, Brenton Gardner, Michael Hickinbotham & Tim Jackson
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