



Australian Population Institute (SA) Inc.

"Dedicated to responsible and environmentally sustainable population growth"

NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday 17 October 2006

SA records highest fertility rate in ten years

South Australia's fertility rate has reached its highest in more than ten years with more babies being born per woman than in 1995.

According to the latest birth statistic released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, there were 17,800 births in South Australia in 2005 registering a total fertility rate of 1.79 babies per woman.

Australian Population Institute (APOP) SA Chairman Michael Hickinbotham said the increase in the fertility rate was heartening, but warns that South Australia needs to do a lot more to boost population numbers to remain sustainable and competitive long term.

Mr Hickinbotham said the only two ways to achieve population growth are by increasing interstate and overseas immigration and through increased fertility.

"The latest ABS figures show we are heading in the right direction but we still need to do more to attract more people to South Australia," Mr Hickinbotham said.

"The lifestyle that we all love in South Australia can only be maintained in the future if we take action now to prevent a population decline.

"The double whammy for South Australia's aging population is that we have a poor fertility rate and an exodus of young talented people which creates a vicious cycle reducing the standard of living for all South Australians."

A recent surge in overseas migration to South Australia is helping to boost our population, bringing valuable skilled workers and investment to our State.

Latest population figures show a record 24 year high in the net increase of overseas migrants to South Australia over a 12 month period.

The latest figures also show a massive 87 percent increase in the number of skilled migrants with a total of 5,383 people arriving in South Australia in the year up to March.

South Australia's looming population crisis was highlighted by APOP in 2003 when it convened the National Population Summit at Parliament House. South Australia has the oldest demographic and lowest population growth of any State.

Following the Summit, the State Government set a State population target of 2 million by 2050. South Australia's population has recently grown to 1.5 million.

Media contact Michael Hickinbotham: 08 8366 0018 or 0409836601

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