



Australian Population Institute (SA) Inc.

"Dedicated to responsible and environmentally sustainable population growth"

NEWS RELEASE

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WATER CLAIMS DON'T WASH

Claims today that a necessary increase to South Australia's population would be 'environmental suicide' betray a total misunderstanding of both the water issue and the population issue.

Australian Population Institute (APOP) SA Chairman Michael Hickinbotham said the State's plan is for responsible and sustainable population growth to save our State as a living centre for generations to come.

Mr Hickinbotham says confusing the population issue with the water debate is naive and fails to take into account the small amount of water used in day-to-day living compared to commercial ventures such as irrigation.

"Clever South Australians of tomorrow will use water smarter and more efficiently than we do today," said Mr Hickinbotham.

"We must not limit sustainable growth. That would threaten our survival.

"The State population target of 2 million people by 2050 is a gradual, responsible and sustainable growth over nearly 50 years to prevent our State sliding into population decline and irrelevancy.

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

"A decline in population will hollow out the business base in South Australia, erode our tax base and put unsustainable pressure on aged care.

"Moreover, the big loser in this scenario would be the environment. The environment will suffer if we do not have the financial capacity to invest and protect it.

"Other States aggressively target overseas migrants like we do. If we stop being competitive, other States will trample us. We need considered, responsible and sustainable population growth in order to survive."

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

The double whammy for that confronts our aging population is poor fertility rate and the exodus of young talented people. It drives a vicious cycle that reduces the standard of living for us all.

South Australia needs to do all it can to prevent people relocating interstate and encourage more ex-pats to come home.

"We do not want businesses to close their State branches," said Mr Hickinbotham.

"We do not want shops and restaurants to disappear. We do not want our young people to have to move interstate for a career.

"Sustainable population growth will maintain our critical mass to maintain the lifestyle that we love and hold dear, for this generation and the next."

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