

Building on migrant boom

SOUTH Australia's high population growth rate is, at face value, extremely good news for the state.

Fuelled by migration from the United Kingdom, China and other countries, the growth rate is at its highest for 14 years.

This influx of new residents delivers clear economic benefits to the state, most notably in the housing construction sector.

Yet, there are two key points which substantially temper the initial enthusiasm.

SA's population remains elderly and, therefore, the birthrate is quite low.

This means our state is not growing by natural means.

Alarming, economists are concerned about the high numbers of residents leaving for other states.

There is talk of a mining boom in SA, yet this is already happening in the strong economies of Queensland and Western Australia.

These are powerful magnets for people seeking better opportunities for them and their children.

Federal Government migration incentives, backed by Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone, a South Australian, have greatly helped the states campaign to find more people.

But the building blocks remain simple. People are attracted by opportunities, economic and social.

A vibrant and diverse economy is a vital foundation, as is affordable housing and high-quality health and education services.

In recent years, SA has become more confident as the economy has taken off.

Governments at a state and federal level are working toward increasing the state's population but the competition is fierce.

News of a high population growth rate is welcome but this is no time to rest on our laurels.

■ Responsibility for all editorial comment is taken by The Editor, Melvin Mansell, 31 Weymouth St, Adelaide, SA 5000