

Mining will help state to hit 2m

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ECONOMIC experts predict the mining boom will help South Australia overcome one of its biggest hurdles to continued growth – the lack of population.

THE Australian Population Institute says the state needs 416,000 more people to reach its target population of two million by 2050.

In its latest trends report, released today, the institute says to achieve this longer-term goal, SA needs average growth of 9674 people each year for the next 43 years.

In the 12 months to June 30 last year, the state's population grew by 16,300, the best performance since 1991.

Institute chairman Michael Hickinbotham said: "In reality, as we are celebrating our steady growth, other states are forging ahead of us at unprecedented speed.

"If, as predicted, SA continues to grow at a slower rate, each year the gap between us and the other states will increase."

In the latest economic update, ANZ Bank econ-

omists say the state is on the cusp of "revitalisation".

"While population growth has picked up marginally in recent years, the state maintains the second slowest rate of population growth in the nation," the report says.

"To address this, the Government will need to come to grips with why it consistently loses more of its citizens to other states and territories than it lures from them. There is some hope on this front over the next few years with the strengthening economy and the flow of jobs from the coming resources boom likely to attract people in greater numbers than before."

Minister assisting in Industry and Trade Karlene Maywald said while the mining boom would bring more people, key programs to attract migrants would continue. "We will also be starting a major interstate advertising campaign this year targeting people from Melbourne, Sydney and Perth," she said. "There will be major roadshows in India, the UK, Italy, South Africa, China, Korea and NZ aimed at stimulating more immigration."