

## Tide has turned in regional SA

**S**OUTH Australians should celebrate the resurgence of the state's regional areas, which figures show are experiencing population growth for the first time in decades.

Latest official statistics reveal regional SA is undergoing an exciting period of sustained economic activity.

Established industries like mining and agriculture have been joined by new ventures such as aquaculture, viticulture and intensive livestock production.

This is not only providing new jobs but has boosted morale in many regional areas which are important contributors to the state's economy.

Port Lincoln, Murray Bridge, Roxby Downs, Whyalla, Port Augusta and Mt Gambier are just some of the regional centres reaping the



**Michael Hickinbotham says immigrants moving to regional SA are a significant fillip.**

benefits. Population drift into Adelaide from these centres, particularly by the young, has been a significant problem for decades.

Importantly, increasing numbers of young people now are deciding to remain in their home towns, helping to ensure their social fabric remains intact.

They are being joined by immigrants, who have been attracted by employment and lifestyle opportunities.

Australian Population Institute chairman Michael Hickinbotham argues Adelaide's favoured "regional" immi-

All of these factors amount to good news, not only for regional SA but the entire state.

For too long, regional areas across the state have been in decline.

There have been many contributing factors, including the rationalisation of farms and a decline in manufacturing.

South Australia is, arguably, the most centralised of all Australian mainland states.

New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia have had significant regional economies and populations for some time. It seems SA is now starting to catch them up.

The turnaround in regional SA is the result of determined efforts by a variety of councils, industry organisations, state and federal government agencies – and also the hard work of residents.

It is to be hoped that the revival of regional SA's fortunes can continue.