

Stop exodus of young people: commissioner

MATT SMITH

SOUTH Australia's first Commissioner for Children and Young People has vowed to encourage pride in the state so young people do not leave.

Commissioner Helen Connolly, who has recently completed a tour of SA where she spoke to 1419 children and young people about what is important to them, said a common theme was talk about moving.

The call comes as new Census data - commissioned by the *Sunday Mail* - shows significant numbers of young people and families are moving interstate

with pressure growing on the political parties to develop population strategies ahead of the March state election.

Ms Connolly said she was concerned about the falling numbers of people aged under 25 in SA as compared to the over 50s.

The data shows there were fewer people aged 18 to 22 living in SA at the 2016 Census than there was in 1981.

"I definitely think there is a risk those making decisions, allocating resources and shaping our culture, are not necessarily in synch with what matters or resonates with young people,"

Ms Connolly said. "My plan for the next few years includes an agenda to grow pride in the state and retention of our young people."

"This includes showcasing the contribution from young people, developing a greater understanding of what it takes to sustain kids in regional communities, and building the opportunities for young people to have a greater stake in society."

"We need to work with our children and young people to let them see SA as a place of opportunity. This includes campaigns and platforms that celebrate achievements, possibilities and

talents, and the global citizenship of our young people."

Ms Connolly said campaigns needed to be designed by young people.

Premier Jay Weatherill told the *Sunday Mail* work was being done to keep young South Australians in the state.

"We're seeing some of the biggest companies in the world choose SA, like Boeing and Tesla," he said.

Elon Musk, a man who inspires millions of young people around the world, has praised SA as a global leader. We're investing in schools to equip young people with the skills to

get these jobs of the future. We've revitalised the city with small bars, live music and Adelaide Oval, which is creating a sense of excitement and pride."

Opposition Leader Steven Marshall said stopping the exodus would be a priority for a Liberal Government.

"We will drive jobs growth to enable more South Australians to work, buy a house and raise a family right here," he said.

"We will cut taxes to spark economic growth and South Australians will be less likely to leave and more inclined to return home than they are now."

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