

PRONATALISM AUSTRALIA

Supporting family formation and generational renewal

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Australia cannot outsource its demographic future as global fertility falls

For the first time in recorded history, the human population is no longer replacing itself.

New research from the University of Pennsylvania finds that global fertility has most likely fallen below replacement level during 2026, decades earlier than United Nations projections assumed.

Pronatalism Australia says the finding removes a key assumption of Australian population planning, that there will always be young people born elsewhere who are willing and able to move here.

Founder Andrew Glover said the logic holding Australia's population policy together no longer works.

"Every migrant that moves to Australia has to be born somewhere. When fertility is falling almost everywhere, and faster than many demographers expected, that cannot be our long-term demographic strategy."

Australia's total fertility rate fell to 1.48 births per woman in 2024, around 30 per cent below the replacement level of approximately 2.1. Net overseas migration contributed around 73 per cent of total growth in the year 2025.

Some of the most drastic recent falls in fertility have been in middle income countries, defying expectations that they will supply the world's young workers, and Australia's, for decades to come.

"Many poorer countries invest significantly in the upbringing, schooling, and training of their people, then Australia recruits them at the moment they become productive adults. The ethics of that arrangement are harder to defend when those countries' fertility rates are falling faster than ours and will need those workers themselves," Mr Glover said.

"Many countries have recently learnt of the vulnerability created by outsourcing too much of their industrial capacity, and we have been doing the demographic equivalent. A country that cannot reproduce itself becomes dependent on the reproductive capacity of other countries, and the new global figures tell us that capacity is shrinking quickly."

"Migration can complement a healthy Australian population. But it cannot be a permanent substitute for Australians being able to form families and have children," Mr Glover said.

Pronatalism Australia says Australia should treat the restoration of fertility towards replacement level as a core national objective, and should set about removing the economic, housing, workplace and cultural barriers that stop Australians having the families they truly want.

"Australia should do its part to respond to global fertility decline. We should aim to produce and raise future generations rather than assuming indefinitely that other nations will do it for us," Mr Glover said.

— ENDS —

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ABOUT PRONATALISM AUSTRALIA

Pronatalism Australia is an independent not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting cultural norms, public policies and community institutions that support family formation, childrearing and generational renewal. The organisation advocates for a more family-friendly Australia in which people are better able to achieve their family aspirations and future generations can flourish.