

## **2005 OMRRCA Conference The Demographic Imperative**

**We do it for whole populations  
Mr David Perrin**

*Mr David Perrin: following a career in business and politics, David is now devoting his time to writing and as National President of the Australian Family Association and Vice-President of the Family Council of Victoria.*

### **THE MOST CRITICAL ISSUE IN AUSTRALIA TODAY IS THE FERTILITY ISSUE**

- The Australian Family Association has identified impediments to our fertility with our recent research report "Men and Women Apart"
- This talk will mainly look at the medical impediments to fertility
- However the social impediments have their part to play
- Fertility is defined as the average number of children born of women of child-bearing age between 15 and 45 years.
- The total fertility rate of 2.1 children per women of child-bearing age is accepted as the replacement level.
- Anything below this 2.1 rate is a cause for concern

### **SOME AUSTRALIAN FERTILITY HISTORY**

- During the 1930's depression the fertility rate slumped to 2.1 which is the bare replacement level
- After the Second World War the rate peaked at 3.1 in 1947
- Between the end of the Second World War and the early sixties the rate declined
- In 1961 the rate again peaked at 3.55 as the baby boomers themselves had their own children
- But by 1971 the rate had eased to 2.95
- From this point the rate declined sharply to 2.06 in 1976 being below the replacement rate for the first time
- Since 1976 the rate has dropped in most years to 1.8 in 1996 to 1.73 in 2001

### **"THE" SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IS ABORTION**

- It is our contention that the significant drop in the rate in the early 1970's was due to the ready availability of abortion on demand
- Our association believes that the current annual rate of abortion is about 90,000 per year not the 100,000 presently bandied around
- This represents the abortion of one primary school of children every day of every year for the last 30 years
- This is clearly "the" significant factor in the drop of fertility as i have outlined
- Children of migrants born here are already taken into account in our figures
- This negative impact of easy abortion is now been influenced by major social changes as outlined by our research

### **MEN AND WOMEN APART**

- Our recent research paper prepared by the centre for population and urban research at monash university studied partnering trends as

disclosed by the 1986, 1996 and 2001 censuses

- Remember the census is what we have told the government and therefore has a high degree of credibility
- The study discovered two new negative impacts on fertility levels that in our view are yet to have an impact
- These new impacts are-
  - a decline in partnering levels particularly marriage
  - a significant proportion of men of marriageable age that cannot afford to marry

## DECLINE IN MARRIAGE AND PARTNERING

- Fertility is closely linked to levels of partnering.
- Married women have more children than defacto or single mothers.
- “Most” women will not choose to have a child until they are in a secure relationship
- This security of relationship is critical to the number of children a woman has in her reproductive years

### FACTOR 1 - MARRIAGE RATES ARE DECLINING

	1986	2001
MEN AGED 30 TO 34	65% WERE MARRIED	47% WERE MARRIED
WOMEN AGED 30 TO 34	72% WERE MARRIED	55% WERE MARRIED

### FACTOR 2 - MORE WOMEN ARE CHILDLESS

Most women would have had a child by 39 years

IN 2001 WOMEN AGED 35 TO 39 WITH NO CHILDREN	
MARRIED	13 %
DEFACTO	37%

### FACTOR 3 - MARRIED WOMEN ARE DECLINING

	1996	2001
WIFE	67%	62%
DEFACTO WITH PARTNER	6%	8%
DIVORCED	10%	10%
NEVER MARRIED PARENT	2%	3%
NEVER MARRIED SINGLE	14%	17%

### FACTOR 4 - HOW FERTILE ARE THE WOMEN IN DIFFERENT RELATIONSHIPS

1996 WOMEN AGED 35 TO 39 YEARS AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN		
WIFE WITH HUSBAND	2.23 CHILDREN	ABOVE REPLACEMENT
DIVORCED	2.32 CHILDREN	ABOVE REPLACEMENT
DEFACTO WITH PARTNER	1.65 CHILDREN	BELOW REPLACEMENT
SINGLE MOTHERS NEVER MARRIED	1.81 CHILDREN	BELOW REPLACEMENT

**These social factors combine to impact on our fertility levels and are yet to have a full impact**

## AN UNDERCLASS OF MEN CANT MARRY

- The research disclosed a significant underclass of men of marriageable age that cannot afford to marry and form families
- Almost one in three men of marriageable age do not have sufficient education, skills, job security and income to support a family
- This group of men are growing

### FACTOR 1 - LESS MEN ARE MARRYING

ALL MEN 35 TO 39	
1986	73% HAD MARRIED
2001	57% HAD MARRIED

### FACTOR 2 - A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF LOW INCOME MEN DON'T MARRY

IN 2001 FOR MEN 35 TO 39	
EARNING LESS THAN \$300 PER WEEK	40 % ARE MARRIED
EARNING BETWEEN \$300 AND \$600 PER WEEK	55% ARE MARRIED
EARNING MORE THAN \$1000 PER WEEK	70% ARE MARRIED

### FACTOR 3 - LOW EDUCATED MEN ARE PARTNERING LESS

FOR MEN 35 TO 39 WITH NO TRADE, DIPLOMA OR DEGREE SKILLS	
1986	75% WERE PARTNERED
2001	59% WERE PARTNERED

### FACTOR 4 - FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT IS DECREASING FOR MEN

FOR MEN 35 TO 39	
1986	80% HAD A FULL TIME JOB
2001	72% HAD A FULL TIME JOB

**Conclusion full time employment is the key to income and income is the key to marriage and marriage is the key to fertility.**

## THE IMPACT OF LOW FERTILITY ON OUR SOCIETY

- Low fertility is the major cause of Australia's aging population
- Australia needs children to stimulate our economy
- We also need children to protect us from perils from within and without our country
- We need children to assist us in our old age and to provide the services
- We need children to build and develop our infrastructure
- An aged Australia will weaken us
  - Physically
  - Morally
  - Spiritually

## WHAT MUST BE DONE?

## 1. ABORTION

- Our association believes that abortion should be reduced to the point of insignificance
- We are determined to change the culture of our society
- We are currently putting together a strategy to reduce abortion

## 2. PROMOTING MARRIAGE

- This means promoting marriage for its benefits for our fertility
- Married couples are more fertile
- Married spouses are happier, healthier, wealthier and live longer with less stress
- Children in married families are happier, do better at school, are less likely to be involved in crime and drugs and have less social problems
- There are over 100,000 studies world wide

## 3. ASSISTING MEN TO MARRY AND HAVE FAMILIES

- We will support programs that boost resources for young men that need skills, job opportunities and incomes that support families
- Significantly for all those single low income males that can marry there are single low income females waiting
- For the single high income females that are “apart” from the males the answer is to help the males to become attractive spouses
- This mismatch between men and women must be resolved as our national security depends on it

[▲ Back to Top](#)

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