

# Population perplexity

## Coast tackles growing pains

by Lucy Ardern

MAYOR Ron Clarke does not advocate capping the Gold Coast's population but he would like to slow the rush of arrivals.

Cr Clarke made the comments about limiting the number of people moving to the area as the argument about population capping was raised again at state level.

Demographer Bernard Salt said a cap would harm business.

"Everyone on the Gold Coast is an immigrant - you cannot cap the Gold Coast's population," said Mr Salt.

"The Gold Coast's economy has been built on its population growth."

However, concern is still expressed about how the Gold Coast will house its rapidly growing population.

Midwood Report author Bill Morris recently reported work had started on only 3400 houses on the Gold Coast in the past financial year, when 15,200 people arrived in the same period.

"If you divide that number by about 2.3 people, that means construction only started on about 50 per cent of the houses needed here," he said.

UDIA Gold Coast senior vice-president Steve Harrison said capping the population was no solution.

"That will just drive the price up because we will have more people bidding for the properties," he said.

Mr Harrison commended the State Government for declaring Coomera a masterplan region and said more

### Chic city on cards

DEMOGRAPHER Bernard Salt believes the Gold Coast will travel even further towards a chic, metropolitan city in the next decade.

He described the next 10 years as a 'decade to look forward to'.

"I see the Gold Coast becoming a more metropolitan city, with more white-collar jobs and linkages into overseas cities," he said.

"I think Australians want sophisticated, cool, metropolitan cities these days and that is what I see the Gold Coast becoming, while still keeping the relaxed lifestyle it is known for."

Mr Salt conceded that planning by the government would be crucial in influencing how easily the Gold Coast managed the next decade.

"Things like infrastructure and water need to be appropriately managed by various levels of government," he said.

needed to be done to encourage housing development on the Gold Coast.

"We are falling further behind each year with housing and it is critical that everything is being done to address this," he said.

He said the council should speed up approvals for housing developments.

Cr Clarke said the biggest issue for the council regarding population increase was trying to ensure there was sufficient infrastructure.