



Bronwyn Bishop MP

Chairman

**House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Family & Human Services**

MEDIA RELEASE

14 February 2006

Can Australia's fertility rate recover?

The Family & Human Services Committee will take evidence from Professor Peter McDonald of the Australian National University for its inquiry into balancing work and family in Canberra on Wednesday, 15 February 2006.

Professor McDonald is the Head of the Demography and Sociology Program at the ANU. He is co-Director of the Australian Centre for Population Research and a member of the Council of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. Professor McDonald was the head of research at the Australian Institute of Family Studies and also worked at the World Fertility Survey, London.

Australia's fertility rate has dropped from 3.5 in 1961 to 1.75 in 2003. The "replacement rate" is 2.1, which Australia last achieved in 1976. In Italy, the fertility rate in 2003 was 1.29.

Professor McDonald has made a number of recommendations to the committee, such as abolishing Family Tax Benefit Part B and using the savings to institute universal payments for all children aged 1-5 years.

Mrs Bishop said, "Many people today are frustrated in their attempts to have both meaningful work and a fulfilling family life. There is always a strong community response when work and family are debated in public."

"Australians, as a society, should be able to negotiate our way through this dilemma and still enjoy improving standards of living."

Venue: Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra

Time: 10.15am – 11.30pm

Participants: Professor Peter McDonald, Professor of Demography, ANU

For media interview: please contact Damien Jones on **0409 147 247** of the electorate office of the committee chairman, the Hon Mrs Bronwyn Bishop MP.

For further information: contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4566, email fhs.reps@aph.gov.au or visit <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fhs/workandfamily/>.