



# Bronwyn Bishop MP

*Chairman*

House of Representatives Standing Committee on  
Family & Human Services

## MEDIA RELEASE

13 June 2006

### **Economic success, partnering and fertility – are the less educated having fewer kids?**

Population adviser Dr Bob Birrell will give evidence to the House Families Committee tomorrow (14 June) as part of the current parliamentary inquiry into balancing work and family.

Dr Birrell is the director of the Centre for Population and Urban Research at Monash University. Over the last 20 years, he has advised the Commonwealth Government on a range of population and migration issues.

In 2004, Dr Birrell co-authored *men + women apart* for the Australian Family Association. The report found that lower educated people are less likely to cope with the recent structural changes in the Australian economy. This leads to reduced income, reduced partnering, and reduced fertility.

He also argues that people with a higher education are enjoying more secure relationships, which supports fertility. They build their relationships around “collaborative partnering” ideals where each partner takes on both paid and domestic work.

Committee Chairman Bronwyn Bishop said, “The work/family debate is often portrayed as being women against men or employers against employees. However, we should also remember the role that education has in helping families meet life challenges”.

“Lone parents face a difficult struggle in doing an important job. We need to understand why the number of lone parent families is increasing to promote stronger families for the future,” Mrs Bishop said.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics will also attend. The Bureau will provide evidence on the data they have generated in relation to balancing work and family.

#### **Public Hearing Schedule for Wednesday 14 June**

**Venue:** Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra

**Witnesses:** Australian Bureau of Statistics: 9.45 am – 10.30 am  
Dr Bob Birrell 10.30 am – 11.30 am

**For media interview:** Please contact Damien Jones on **0409 147 247** at the electorate office of the Committee Chairman, the Hon Mrs Bronwyn Bishop MP.

**For further information on the public hearing:** contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4566 or email [fh.s.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:fh.s.reps@aph.gov.au) or visit the website at [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fhs](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fhs)