



Sustainable Population Australia Inc.

Patrons: Hon. Bob Carr, Dr Kathryn Betts, Dr Paul Collins, Prof Tim Flannery, Em Prof Ian Lowe,
Dr Mary E White

Youth Ambassador: Ms Bindi Irwin

www.population.org.au

Media Release 05/06/2018

Sustainable Population Australia - World Environment Day

The world's population is predicted to climb from 7.5 billion to 11 billion by 2100. Given our impact is already higher than Earth's carrying capacity, such an increase in human numbers will make it impossible to improve or maintain any environmental objective.

Plastic waste reduction is the primary focus of this year's World Environment Day. While this is important, Sustainable Population Australia (SPA) believes this to be just one symptom of a larger problem. That is, on a global scale, both the per capita rate of consumption AND the total numbers of consumers have exceeded physical and biological limits.

SPA strongly advocates for an increase to Australia's overseas aid budget as the most effective way to address environmental issues in our region. Non-coercive aid directed to family planning and contraception results in smaller family sizes, improvements to physical and mental health for women, and more resilient local economies.

According to environmentalist Paul Hawken (Author of Project Drawdown), stabilising global population is the biggest single change we can collectively make to reduce worldwide carbon emissions. Stabilising human population is more effective than any technological fix.

Hawken is not the only environmental scientist who is aware of the relationship between population growth and impact. David Attenborough, Jane Goodall, David Suzuki and Australia's Tim Flannery have all spoken up about population as a leading contributor to environment issues.

When Hawken spoke of global population issues to a packed audience at Melbourne's Sustainable Living Festival, he received a standing ovation. The community is becoming increasingly aware that population is the most crucial issue facing the planet and is increasingly frustrated that our leaders are doing nothing about it.

Despite this, Australia's overseas aid budget declined once more in the recent federal budget. In terms of addressing issues holistically, our nation is going backwards. Our politicians are instead focused on aggressively growing Australia's domestic population, which is set to double to 40 million by 2050.

The houses, roads, and other infrastructure needed to cater for this growth is not only a drain on our budget but also environmentally damaging. Development around our growth corridors is drastically reducing populations of native species such as the koala, coastal emu, Leadbeater's possum and the black cockatoo. Australia now has the second highest rate of biodiversity loss in the world due to human impact. The *State Of The Environment Report* versions of which exist at both state and national levels, attribute environmental impacts to urbanisation and traffic congestion.

To make changes to current environmental trajectories, it is important that Australia's population growth slows. At the same time, we need to make a positive contribution to developing nations by providing accessible family planning services to allow them to make choices about their levels of impact.

Sustainable Population Australia (SPA) is an Australian, member-driven environmental charity which works on many fronts to encourage informed public debate about how Australia and the world can achieve an ecologically, socially and economically sustainable population.