



NEWSLETTER

Sustainable Population Australia Inc

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Formerly Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population

Patrons:

Professor Frank Fenner Professor Ian Lowe

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Dr Paul Collins

Stop Press: Largest population increase ever: ABS

Australia recorded its largest annual population increase ever, according to figures released today (24-09-07) by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Australia grew by an estimated 307,100 people for the year ended March 2007, the largest increase since record keeping began in 1789. The increase gave Australia an annual growth rate of 1.5% (the highest rate since 1990), and brings the population to an estimated 20.9 million. Net overseas migration contributed 54% (162,600 people) to this growth, which was more than the natural increase of 46% (138,100 people or 273,500 births minus 135,400 deaths).

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/3101.0Media%20Release1Mar%202007?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=3101.0&issue=Mar%202007&num=&view=>

Why Conservation Efforts Will Not Survive Mass Immigration

Tim Murray, Quadra Island, British Columbia Canada

The venerable Canadian environmental author Farley Mowat made a boldly generous but stunningly futile gesture. He donated 200 acres of his Cape Breton land to “Nova Scotia Nature Trust”.

But while Mowat’s motives are beyond dispute and his affinity for wildlife unquestioned, he continues to evidence no understanding of the root causes of biodiversity loss.

In North America it is runaway population growth, fuelled largely by mass immigration and coupled with excessive consumption that is crowding out wildlife habitat, wetlands and farmland.

The question to be put to the environmental movement is, can nature preserves, greenbelts and national parks permanently shield wildlife habitats from the developmental pressures issuing from this growth?

Ontario commentator Brishen Hoff answers with a categorical “no”. “History has proven that no lands are protected when the population surrounding them is growing. This applies to countries, national parks, islands or whatever. Once growing populations that surround pristine areas

reach a tipping point, the demand for the resources of the protected area will become so great that all safeguards, laws, or barricades will be obliterated and the resources will be exploited.”

That is why Albert Bartlett of the University of Colorado established as his Fundamental Law of Planning that a workable, durable local plan cannot be effected in a community until the regional population is stabilized.

Curiously, advocates of secure borders and more restrictive immigration have been reproached and ridiculed by soft greens and mainstream environmental NGOs for proposing the equivalent of an international “gated community” that couldn’t hope, they allege, to fend off the heavy global traffic of people in the real world.

Yet none of these critics will acknowledge that their little fortresses---their nature preserves,

their greenbelts, their parks, their strict land-use zonings--have little hope of standing up to the pressure of the growing populations we have recently seen. Growth spilled out of the urban boundaries of Portland, Oregon-



Red Kangaroo

<http://www.australianfauna.com/redkangaroo.php>

--poster child of "smart growth"---into surrounding farmland. And with no let-up from immigration, houses are being built on formerly sacrosanct British greenbelts, the "lungs" of Britain.

And, as long as economic growth is God, conservation lands are not secure either. They can and have been withdrawn by legislation and executive order. At one time, an Act of Congress removed 1400 square kilometres of the original Yosemite National Park for timber and mineral production. "Wildlife habitat will continue to be lost as natural capital is relocated from the economy of nature to the human economy", until the economy shifts to a kind of steady-state model, writes Professor Brian Czech of Virginia Polytechnic Institute

Oddly, there is virtually no environmental organization in Canada that makes a connection between immigration and environmental degradation of any kind. Not the Sierra Club, the David Suzuki Foundation, Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund, Canadian Parks and Wilderness, Ontario Nature---the list goes on. None of them speak of a connection. Quite the contrary. The problem is not whether we grow, so their mantra goes, but how we grow. If we grow "smart", we can welcome the whole world here.

And the biggest Welcome Wagon in Canada is the leader of its Green Party, Elizabeth May, who argues for an immigration level even higher than that supported by her rivals. She calls this "Canada's Great Multicultural Project". May parrots those two sweet-sounding buzzwords that many environmental organizations use so frequently---"cultural diversity". But cultural diversity in Canada and the United States cannot be sustained without massive and fresh injections of newcomers to bolster existing immigrants who otherwise would assimilate.

Viable multiculturalism requires unrelenting mass immigration. And mass immigration marginalizes wildlife habitat. Cultural diversity therefore comes at the cost of biological diversity. So let's dispense with the cant. The correlation is clear. Growing cities, vanishing wildlife.

Ed: It is not just the message that reserves do not protect wildlife if surrounding human population is growing that is of interest here. Most SPA members will be familiar with Albert Bartlett's work. However, "Smart Growth", as the solution to urban sprawl was widely promoted across Australia and is still quoted as a solution to our destruction of urban bushland in this country. The situation in Portland, in the US State of Oregon,, is now generally acknowledged. See <http://www.sprawlcity.com/portland.html> for a considered review.

("In its first decade of vigorously applied Smart Growth techniques, Portland could not stop the urbanization of rural land. The reason? The population grew by 146,000 during the decade" and "The lesson is not that the Smart Growth efforts of Portland are wrong-headed but that the best-thought plans cannot create a protective wall for nature that will withstand the continuous onslaught of population growth.")

Biodiversity Losses in W.A.

Immediate effects of population growth are not the only threats to biodiversity. In the last week, the WA Newspapers have carried the following stories of the losses emerging in WA alone. Thirty percent of the trees, shrubs and flowers in W.A.'s 250,000 ha Kalbarri National Park are already dead or dying, a result of climate change according to the Senior Park Ranger Mike Paxman. Impacts on the animals may be even higher as the twice yearly trapping to monitor wild life had no catch this year. The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) has failed to recapture any of the 100 Woylies and 60 Chuditch (native cat) released in the park in recent years.

Some of the 10 species of rare orchids in the park, appeared to be withering or dead according to Catherine Page, flora expert for DEC. Gum trees on the banks of the Murchison River in the park are green since the river swelled 26 metres in depth following rain in the headwater Murchison area. Rainfall in the park itself was less than half the average in 2006 (147mm cf 360mm) and has been even lower this year.

A third of W.A.'s plant species face extinction and the magnificent South West forests could be reduced to small pockets even if International Greenhouse targets were met. The IPCC recommendations of a 60% reduction in greenhouse emissions would limit global warming to 2°C. But many south west eucalypts and two thirds of the southwest W.A. vegetation lives in a close to 2°C temperature band. Dr Ray Wills, geographer and earth scientist said "the majority of species on the planet live in less than a three degree temperature band, so if we increase the temperature by 3°C we put all those species at risk. National Climate Centre figures show the annual mean temperature for W.A. has increased by a little over 0.8°C since 1910.

Species of Banksia which Dr. Wills called the "canary in the coalmine" have already begun dying in the Midwest. He predicted there probably won't be any banksias left in the wild if temperatures rise by 2°C.

Dr Wills said that Karri forests in the southwest would decline to remnant stands if the climate change predictions were correct. Karri requires annual rainfall of 1000mm or more.

Climatologist, Tom Lyons of Murdoch University said that all the climate models predict that average rainfall in the Southwest would decline markedly – up to 60% over the next 40-60 years. Already it has fallen 10% since 1970, which coincided with global changes in atmospheric circulation. These climatic changes would challenge the survival of the biggest and most robust plant species.

Professor Lyons work has also confirmed that widespread clearing has affected rainfall because rain-bearing clouds are more likely to form over native vegetation than over cleared paddocks.

One is left to ask if the effect of reducing native vegetation will accelerate the climate change process.#

Greenhouse Myths

A brief summary of **Research Paper No. 49**

August 2007, George Wilkenfeld, Clive Hamilton and Hugh Saddler, The Australia Institute.

There is now no doubt that something is happening to the climate as the reports come in from around the globe about ice 'melts', droughts and changing weather patterns. The sceptics are also shifting from denying any change to arguing whether the observed changes brought about by human activity are due to some natural phenomenon, such as the sun's activity. The public too, are starting to ask the hard questions about how bad the situation is, what options do we have and where can we find solutions.

But it's easier to ask the questions than provide solutions. Clive Hamilton and a team from the Australia Institute have produced research suggesting attempts to properly identify the problems and develop solutions are being clouded by greenhouse myth, folklore and lies, leading to much confusion in the public mind. In an extremely useful effort to 'clear the air', they have taken 16 of the most 'common myths' and examined them in some detail. They summarise them here:

1. Coal can be part of the solution. In reality, coal is the main problem, and curtailing its use is essential. There is no such thing as 'clean coal' at present, and there is a chance there will never be.

2. Carbon sequestration can be the centrepiece of policy. This technology is unproven and expensive.

3. Nuclear power can be the centrepiece of policy. This technology is expensive and risky and, if pursued, is unlikely to have any significant impact for 15-20 years.

4. Renewable energy is always benign. All forms of energy have advantages and disadvantages, and not all renewables are completely 'clean'.

5. Renewable energy can support our current level of energy use. In reality, we cannot make the transition to a

renewable energy system without first relying on natural gas and greatly increasing the efficiency of energy use.

6. Renewable energy cannot provide baseload power. An electricity system that uses a mix of geographically dispersed renewable technologies, with some gasfired power and energy storage, will have just as much ability

to supply reliable baseload power as the current coal-based generation system.

7. Voluntary 'greenpower' schemes can make a difference. Experience shows that they have had little effect.

8. Buying carbon offsets is the same as actually reducing emissions. In fact, buying offsets is too often just a smokescreen for large emitters who intend to operate on a 'business as usual' basis. A reduction in emissions requires a reduction in emissions, plain and simple.

9. We can plant enough trees to get us out of trouble. We can't.

10. We need to wait for new technology. In reality, if the technology is not already available, it will come too late.

11. The hydrogen economy will save the day. Energy is required to produce hydrogen, so the hydrogen economy would be only as greenhouse friendly as the energy system, which supports it.

12. Expanding public transport is the answer. Cars are here to stay and reducing emissions from them must be the primary focus of policy.

13. It won't cost anything. Tackling climate change will mean the end of the era of cheap energy.

14. Higher energy prices mean lower living standards. In fact, with good policies energy bills could come down while energy prices go up.

will meet its Kyoto target. We

15. Australia won't.

16. There is no point ratifying the Kyoto Protocol. Australia's interests would be best served by having a seat at the table. The G8 summit endorsed the Kyoto process under the UNFCCC.

For the full text (19 pp) and a discussion of each of the myths, download the paper at The Australia Institute [#](http://www.tai.org.au/documents/downloads/WP108.pdf)

The Joy of Very Large Numbers (Brian Spittle)

A sardine said to another sardine
As they rested in oil in a tin
'It's not quite as bad as the critics claim
If you're really prepared to fit in
If you don't need to eat
This is rather a treat'.....

But the second sardine cut in
'Just listen to me sonny Jim
It's all right for you
From your point of view
But I dream of the life we once knew
With you and your friends
And my dad and his friends
We swam in the vast ocean blue
We swam fast and free
In the endless deep sea
And we thrilled to the touch of the new.

But Jim was content
He said 'You know what I meant
We're safe here together
Through foul and fine weather
And we're growing in numbers each day
And everyone knows
It's as plain as your nose
That numbers, sheer numbers, do pay
It's what all economists say
If you add up the tins on the shelves of the shops
Multiplied by the numbers of stores
You'll arrive at a figure so pleasing to God
That you'll be deafened by His loud applause

The Sardine God who made us
Has made it very plain
That with a planet full of sardines
We won't have lived in vain
So I'll take you back to my statement
As we lie here in oil in our tin
It's not quite as bad as the critics claim
If you're really prepared to fit in
We don't need to eat
So it's rather a treat
And too much pleasure is sin.#

2008 SPA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

TO COMMEMORATE THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF AESP/SPA

*“Population, Peak Oil, Climate Change:
their impact on the Millennium Development Goals”*

14, 15 March 2008

Shine Dome, ANU Campus, Canberra

Keynote speaker: Em Prof John Guillebaud

Professor Guillebaud (pronounced gil-boe) is Emeritus Professor of Family Planning and Reproductive Health at University College London. He has authored or co-authored seven books and more than 300 other publications, is Co-Chair of the Optimum Population Trust, acts as a consultant for WHO and is a member of other international and national expert committees. He was a leading contributor to the recent Inquiry by the UK Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health into “Population Growth: its impact on the Millennium Development Goals”.

Other speakers include Professor Tony McMichael, Director of the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, and Dr Colin Butler who also contributed to the UK report.

Further information in the December issue of this Newsletter. Meanwhile, keep the dates free! Further information: Jenny Goldie jgoldie@snowy.net.au

Housing Affordability – an excuse to destroy the environment of SEQ

by Sheila Davis, SPA-SEQ Branch

The Queensland Government’s so-called “affordable housing strategy,” signed in July with no community consultation, establishes an Urban Land Development Authority with sweeping powers, including the power to amalgamate land, to acquire land in its own right, and to on-sell their land with development rights to particular private developers.

The justification given for such sweeping powers being given to the new authority is to speed up approvals. It has long been a complaint of industry that the approval process for development is slow and therefore costly resulting in higher prices to home buyers. The enabling legislation pushed through Parliament, again without any consultation and with unseemly haste, of course strips away some current protections.

Under the new legislation, the Minister can declare areas of land for urban development or as major development areas. In these areas, the Act removes the community’s right to appeal approvals, overrides provisions in local government planning schemes that protect steep slopes, floodplains and waterways and removes restrictions in state legislation designed to protect endangered vegetation and waterways from destruction. It also removes the requirements for assessment with regard to contaminated land, heritage places and many other values.

With these policies, “ecological sustainability” has been abandoned in favour of “growth at any cost” development. Premier Beattie, once seen as a bit of a champion of environmental protection and community participation in the planning process, has, after removing the hard won environmental gains of his nine years as Premier with this legislation, now handed over the reins to an eager new Premier Anna Bligh.

In response to SPA-SEQ’s media release earlier this year calling for a population cap, Ms Bligh said that we need more growth “in order to create demand to maintain the jobs of people currently employed in construction.” At the same time, the state government also claims that we need more skilled migrants to build the infrastructure needed to cope with the demands caused by Queensland’s population growth (also, no doubt, more taxpayers to pay for these major infrastructure projects). In other words, we have no choice but to grow our population in order to deal with problems caused by past population growth!

Housing affordability is an issue for all of the community and there are many ways to make housing more affordable, not the least of which is to lower the demand. The declaration of land as urban without any regard for the views of existing residents, the costs of infrastructure, the provision of open space or the local constraints to development is a betrayal of everything the Beattie government said that it represented. Now it seems they believe they have no choice but to continue to grow the population. It appears the Queensland government has fallen for the growth lobby’s arguments hook, line and sinker.#

Labour drives population growth

by Paddy Weaver

Skills and labour shortages, are used to justify Australia's high immigration rate and contentious 457 (Business long stay) visas. Predicted future shortages are Costello's justification for reproductive incentives such as the 'baby bonus'. Labour shortage is an important issue driving population growth in this country. It deserves close scrutiny.

Three recent reports, two from the Reserve Bank and one from the Australian Bureau of Statistics deal with recent aspects of Australian employment. With wide publicity given to Australia's lowest unemployment rates for a generation, the report from ABS that more than 1.5 million Australians looked for work during the year ending February 2007 is rather surprising. The notion that around one in eight workers were unemployed and seeking a job in a year when much publicity has been given to unemployment at record low levels of 3 to 4% seems strange. What exactly is Australia's employment situation?

Growth in employment: Economic growth in Australia over the past 15 years has been linked to annual growth in employment of around 2% resulting in an employment increase around 2½ million. Almost half the new jobs have been part-time work, ie. 1 to 34 hours per week, which now constitutes 30% of all employment. Two thirds of these part time jobs are held by females and most are in the service industries. There is now no difference in the proportions of married and single women working and almost 30% of children under 12 years are enrolled in formal daycare.

With the resources boom acknowledged as the driver of Australia's economic growth, mining still constitutes only a small portion of total employment – 1.25%. Work in the construction sector for new resource projects and associated community infrastructure has shown highest growth, a cause for concern when the resources boom declines since this employment may decline markedly. Employment in the construction phase of resource projects is usually many times the employment in their operating phase. The other sectors providing recent employment growth are the service industries, Finance, property and business services, Education and health, Retail and wholesale trade and Public administration.

The Labour Force: With 16.3 million Australians of working age, only 4.7 million did not work or look for work during the year to February, 2007. This group includes retirees, those caring for homes and children, students and the disabled. The remaining 11.6 million individuals, around 65% of those of working age, constitute Australia's labour force.

The size of the labour force has increased in the last two years due to the increasing proportion of women in the workforce, the levelling off of the slow decline in male participation and increased participation by those aged over 55 years.

Employment: According to the ABS figures, 11.1 million Australian residents worked at some time during the year, around 7.4 million working for the whole year. Almost two thirds of those working during the year worked full time only, a quarter worked part-time only with the remaining 10% working a combination of full and part-time work.

Unemployment: That one hour's work per week constitutes employment is not, as many might believe, Government fiddling the figures. It is an internationally accepted standard used for many years. Employment for between 1 to 34 hours per week is classified as part-time employment.

However this does appear to seriously mislead the public about the availability of work and the time and difficulty in finding a job. ABS now reports on Unemployment and Underemployment which better represents true unemployment by including those who desire more work than do the official unemployment figures.

More than 9% (1.5 million) of the labour force was unemployed and looking for work at some time during the year to February 2007.

On average those seeking employment spent 16 weeks finding a job. More than 60% found work in less than 13 weeks and 7% spent more than a year searching for a job. People over 55 years spent longest, an average of 20 weeks, and 15 to 19 year olds the shortest time, 13 weeks, finding a job.

Unemployment is highest in the 15-24 year old group, who made up 40% of the total unemployed and constituted only 19% of the workforce. One quarter of the young unemployed had been out of work for over 12 months and are thus classed as long term unemployed. Young unemployed include students wanting part-time jobs to support their studies, those school leavers seeking a full time first job and those between jobs.

Unemployment has declined from 17% of the labour force in 1992, the high level following the 1990 recession, to around 4% in 2006/07. The largest decline was for males seeking full time work with rates for those seeking part time employment lower and relatively constant. Since the 1990's more than half the decline in unemployment has been for the long term unemployed.

Potential in the older worker group: According to the reserve Bank report, a quarter of the employment growth in recent years has come from greater participation by older workers. The participation rate for the 55 to 64 year age group in Australia has been and still is lower (57½%) than for many O.E.C.D. nations eg. Canada, UK, USA and Sweden with 58½%, 59%, 63½% and 75% respectively. The Bank suggests there is potential for further employment growth from this group.

Many will remember the post 1990s recession restructuring of many businesses and departments with a strong emphasis on youth. Many senior workers at this time had little option but to take early retirement. Greater

financial security may now be an attractive incentive to return to the work force. Many would have skills and experience attractive to employers. However the longer time to find employment for unemployed in this age group mentioned earlier, does suggest age discrimination may still exist.

Immigration and employment: The current migration program is now directed to enlarging Australia's workforce with current levels of migration at close to the highest ever and growth in skills category immigrants to twice the number of family category immigrants. In 2005/06 a total of 180,861 permanent settlers arrived through the migration program, the humanitarian program and settlement of New Zealanders.

The unemployment of new arrivals is high initially, falling rapidly in the first two years and approaching national levels by the fourth year. Participation in the workforce by immigrants now exceeds national levels as selection into the Skills program is largely based on employability and allows some employers to seek overseas workers specifically. Problems that have occurred from this approach have not been touched on in these reviews. Immigration is viewed as an important source of labour supply. It is noted that currently the program has made its

Visas Granted 2005/06

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Permanent | 180 861 | Temporary | 3 978 420 |
| Migration Programme | | Non-business visitors (Tourists) | 3 195 039 |
| - Skill Stream | 97 340 | Business visitors | 368 333 |
| -Family Stream | 45 290 | Student | 190 674 |
| -Special Eligibility Stream | 310 | Working Holiday Makers | 111 973 |
| Others | | Business (Log Stay) | 71 150 |
| -NZ Settlers | 23 781 | Others | 41 251 |

Source: Dept. of Immigration and Citizenship reproduced in Immigration and Labour Supply RBA.

largest contribution to population growth since 1980.

Two groups of temporary entrants also contribute to Australia's labour force. In 2005/06 almost 112,000 working holiday makers on 417 visas (up to 12 months stay) and 71,150 Long stay Business visa entrants (457 visas for 3 months to 4 years stay) arrived in Australia. Both are permitted to work under specific conditions and often do not complete the full allowed period. In June 2006 a total of 143,000 from both categories were residing in Australia.

It is obvious from the three papers considered here that pressure for increasing population in Australia will continue so long as the resources boom persists. It is also certain that the boom will not last forever and unemployment levels are likely to rise when the slump occurs. Avoiding population growth driven by the resources boom would be most readily achieved by governments adopting a more

rational strategy towards development. The pressures on OPEC countries trying to restrict the rate of depletion of their oil suggests that this approach is unlikely to succeed in Australia, particularly with our high level of foreign ownership of resource companies. The much needed controls on greenhouse gas production could help if ever international pressure for these is achieved. In the meantime it would appear the best possibility is to encourage workforce participation of our seniors and women. *Sorry folks. It's Hi Ho, off to work we go.*#



Homo sapiens: overabundant and the ultimate pest?

By A.R. Jones Vice President SPA

Australian Museum, PO Box 2010 Sydney, Australia

An abstract of a manuscript recently published by the Australian Zoological Society as part of a seminar on pests. At the end of the seminar, I suggested that humans are *the great pests* and received a lot of support. The editor invited me to write this paper for the symposium proceedings.

"Pests are species that, when they become overabundant, have unacceptable effects on humans. Ironically, humans themselves have greatly increased their abundance in the last century. Although this increase, together with concomitant scientific and economic growth, has brought many benefits, it also imposes great costs on ecosystems. Lands, waterways, the atmosphere and biodiversity are all greatly affected at both local and global scales. In fact, current human demands exceed Earth's renewable productive capacity, an inherently unsustainable situation. Consequently, achieving humanity's overarching goals of universal human wellbeing and ecological sustainability is not occurring. Indeed, it is becoming increasingly improbable since much more population and economic growth is certain. Since, humans depend totally on healthy, functioning ecosystems, this situation is unacceptable; humans have become a pest species. Moreover, because of their pervasive negative effects on other species and ecosystems, humans can be considered the ultimate pest." *The full text is a little long for the Newsletter but has been placed on SPA's website at; <http://www.population.org.au/misc/furtherreading.htm#articles>. For those without web access please contact Ron D'Souza in SPA's office in Canberra for a copy of the text. See the 'Back Page' for Ron's details.*#

Notable Quotes!

Information is no longer the power – getting the attention of someone to listen to your information is.

Richard Watson in 'Future files – a history of the next 50 years', Scribe publishing September 2007.#

Bureau points to numbers

The population message is getting through to the community even if our politicians don't recognize it. In the Bureau of Meteorology national post-winter update, Dr Mike Coughlan pointed out that our nation was facing a "new reality" of harsh water restrictions and commented: "Population growth in all capital cities exacerbates the problem, and we will grow by another 65 per cent by 2050." <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,22373487-5010020,00.html> #

No overseas aid for family planning from USA

The Bush Administration has, for the 6th consecutive year, blocked the USA's contribution to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Congress voted \$34 million for the program; the Senate voted to lift restrictions on family planning aid to overseas health organizations that 'promote or use' abortion as a method of family planning. UNFPA promotes the right of every individual to a life of health and opportunity. The Bush decision was justified on the grounds that the agency contributes to China's "coercive abortion" program. China has denied emphatically using coercive measures, since the one child policy was relaxed for rural villages where children provide labour on the farms.

Senators and Congress members pointed out that family planning could prevent abortions in China and that once again the Bush Administration was punishing "the poorest women and children" in all 140 countries that the UNFPA serves. <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/09/07/america/NA-GEN-US-UN-Population-Fund.php> #

Land-Use Allocation Protects the Peruvian Amazon

Department of Global Ecology, Stanford University
Researchers hold out hope for the future survival of the Peruvian Amazon.

"Disturbance and deforestation have profound ecological and socio-economic effects on tropical forests, but their diffuse patterns are difficult to detect and quantify at regional scales. We expanded the Carnegie forest damage detection system to show that, between 1999 and 2005, disturbance and deforestation rates throughout the Peruvian Amazon averaged 632 km² and 645 km², respectively. However, only 1-2% occurred within natural protected areas, indigenous territories contained only 11% of the forest disturbances and 9% of the deforestation, and recent forest concessions effectively protected against clear-cutting. Although the region shows recent increases in disturbance and deforestation levels, and leakage into forests surrounding concession areas, land-use policy and remoteness are serving to protect the Peruvian Amazon." www.sciencemag.org SCIENCE VOL 317 31 AUGUST 2007#

Printed on 100% recycled paper.

U.S. Life Expectancy Hits New High of Nearly 78 Years

A child born in the United States in 2005 can expect to live nearly 78 years (77.9). That's a new high for the U.S. according to a report released this month by the (U.S) Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Deaths: Preliminary Data for 2005", available from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/>.

Life expectancy has continued to increase over the last 40 years from 69.6 years in 1955, 75.8 years in 1995 to the 2005 high of 77.9 years.

The difference in life expectancy at birth between males and females has decreased on average one-tenth of a year every year since 1980. Female life expectancy in 2005 remained 5.2 years greater than for males, the smallest difference since 1946.

The converging trend in mortality figures across the major race groups in the U.S. continued in 2005. The rate has decreased by an average of 2 months annually since 1993 with white life expectancy in 2005, 5.1 years higher than black life expectancy. #

Overpopulation drives desert growth

Overpopulation together with excessive cultivation and grazing, (often the result of poverty), and climate change have been identified as major causes of desertification



(expansion of deserts). The statement came from the 8th UNO Conference on desertification held in Madrid (04-09-2007).

About 200 million people live in desert areas while more than 2 billion – or one third of the world's population – live on arid land that make up 41% of the Earth's surface according to the UN University. Unless the spread of deserts is curbed, 50 million people could be displaced within the next decade. A study prepared by 200 experts from 50 countries was presented to the conference attended by representatives from 191 countries that had signed the UN Convention to combat desertification (UNCCD) and representatives of over 800 non-government organizations.

A desert is a region receiving less than 10 inches (254mm) precipitation annually according to the Bureau of Meteorology.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20070903/wl_afp/spainunenvironment_070903183231 #

BOOK REVIEWS

“Six Degrees - Our Future on a Hotter Planet”

by Mark Lynas.

Published by Fourth Estate, London. \$28 rrp. 358pp.

Reviewed by Jenny Goldie

If you watched Tim Flannery on the National Press Club recently, you are forgiven if you were lulled into a sense of complacency about climate change. Tim certainly stressed that we only had ten years to turn the situation around, a point with which author Mark Lynas would concur. But his book *Six Degrees* leaves no room at all for complacency. He spells out the implications for the world of one degree warming, two degrees, three degrees etc. Even a one-degree rise leaves you depressed. By the time you get to six degrees - a mass extinction scenario - you're feeling desperate as well as depressed.

Lynas is a science journalist who has done his homework. He spent eight years researching the topic and travelling to many of the places he cites where conditions will change dramatically with even a small rise in temperature. He thus writes with immediacy as well as authority.

What may happen with one degree warming? Desertification of the high western plains in the US; the melting of the Alps permafrost, releasing deadly giant landslides; and amplified global temperatures in the Arctic leading to rapid decline in sea ice.

Two degrees? Loss of most coral reefs including the Great Barrier Reef; acidification of the oceans wiping out plankton which is the base of the marine food chain; every European summer as hot as that of 2003; the eventual melting of the Greenland ice sheet that will raise sea-levels by seven metres.

Three degrees? Drying, burning and ultimate desertification of the Amazon releasing ever more carbon; desertification of southern Africa and many parts of Australia making agriculture untenable; a collapse of Pakistani food supplies as the waters of the Indus almost dry up because of the melting of the glaciers that form the river's source.

You've got the message. You don't want to know about four, five and six degrees.

The critical message in this book is that once we go beyond two degrees, we set off a range of positive feedbacks that no human effort will contain.

I think I'll send Tim my copy.

Highly recommended. #

Immigrants: your country needs them

by Philippe Legrain

(Little Brown Book Group, UK, 2006) A\$35.00

reviewed by Mark O'Connor.

Some angst was caused in February 2007 when Philippe Legrain (with this book in tow) was featured at Perth Writers Week. The problem was not that a debate on migration was irrelevant to a literary festival but that there was no debate—and that the supposed expert (Legrain) seemed ignorant of Australian conditions.

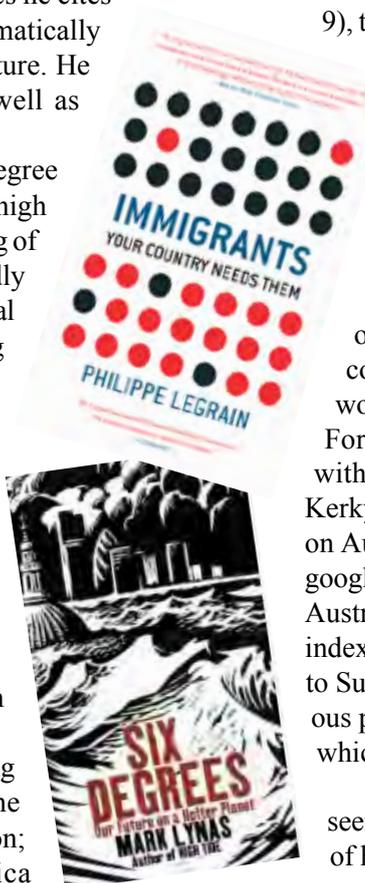
I am struck by how little and how selectively Philippe Legrain has read in the area on which he claims to be an expert. Despite his Australian publicists' claim that he offers a lucid and enlightened account of “Australian policies, facts and statistics” the facts he states are frequently incorrect or slanted. His index is barren of references to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), which perhaps explains his bizarre claims that Australia's population is 19 million, that its net migration is some 90,000 a year (see p. 9), that births are not keeping pace with deaths (p. 108, in

fact they are twice deaths), that immigration was slashed in 1996 by the Howard government (see p. 53) and so on. In fact we have never had such a high-immigration government as Howard's. Only in the immediate post WWII period, when most of our migrants were war refugees, has immigration been so high.

Australia, along with Canada and the USA is one of Philippe Legrain's three best examples of countries which have sought and accepted what is by world standards a bizarrely high level of immigration. For Australia, he seems to have relied on interviews with a couple of high immigration advocates (Stepan Kerkyasharian and Abdul Rizvi). The rest of his figures on Australia could have been gained from half-an-hour's googling---some time ago. Of critics of high immigration in Australia he seems ignorant. There are no references in his index to CSIRO's *Ecumene* project, to *People and Place*, to Sustainable Population Australia or even to the numerous publications of the Bureau of Immigration Research, which at least attempted a certain objectivity.

On the UK and the USA (his main market target) he seems only a little less ill-read. When referring to critics of high immigration he concentrates on Peter Brimelow and Samuel Huntington, but seems unaware of such important players as Britain's Migration Watch Committee or America's Federation for American Immigration Reform and the Centre for Immigration Studies. All of these have websites that could have provided him with an encyclopedia's worth of articles and information on relevant issues of which he seems ignorant. But I get the impression that Philippe Legrain is a gentleman who likes to make up his mind and then not disturb it by looking at inconvenient facts or contrary opinions.

A crucial document is the 1994 plenary resolution of the



Immigrants: Cont.

Australian Academy of Science on Australia's population options. This specified that our population should probably have been capped at 19 million, but must in any case be capped at no more than 23 million, and that net migration must therefore be kept below 50,000 a year.

1994 was also the year of the Cairo Conference on Population, in which the nations of the world pledged (with only a few selfish exceptions) to hold their populations in check, and not to use emigration as a way of unloading their population problems upon others. Needless to say, Cairo also is missing from Legrain's index. Nor does he mention the way in which the USA's immigration-fed increase has prevented its population stabilizing and made it dependent for its life-style upon a risky pursuit of foreign oil.

Nor does he mention the issue of the vast increases in greenhouse effect caused by migration from the low GHG to the high GHG producing countries. Most telling of all, against Legrain's irresponsible vision of open borders, is the fact that the two large-population countries that have had spectacular success in reducing their population growth (Iran and China) did so precisely because they had quarreled with the West and could **not** lean on it to take their emigrants. By contrast, those countries like Mexico and the Philippines, where families could hope that an extra child might be the lucky or talented one that would get to the US and bring in the rest of the family, have neither solved their own problems nor ceased to drive up population in the wealthier countries. Legrain complacently notes that the Philippines relies on remittances from its emigrants for something like 40% of its economy. (And still the babies keep coming.) By contrast, Legrain asserts (p. 20) that "freer migration is one of the best ways to help poor countries." For a capitalist economist Legrain is oddly naïve about the problems of population socialism. A visit to www.garretthardinsociety.org might trouble—yet expand—his mind considerably.

Legrain seems to share the common economist's delusion that growth can go on for ever, that there are no other species or environments to be considered, and that almost the only thing we lack (to fuel an eternal bonfire of growth) is more people.

Overall, this book, despite its parade of academic references, is not a serious attempt to examine the issues. It should be read as a piece of rhetoric: a first speech for the government in a student debate 'That this house believes the world should have open borders'. Legrain's "lucidity", which some foolish reviewers have praised, is largely a reluctance to explain his economic modeling. He simply asserts. He claims at one point (p. 64, cf. p 19) that studies show freer immigration could "*potentially*" make us all far richer—which is code for saying he won't explain the assumptions behind the calculation. He offers no refutation—only an ad hominem put-down—of the detailed calculations of the Harvard economics professor George Borjas, a much more eminent economist, who draws the opposite conclusion. Perhaps he knows he is writing for people who want a feel-good sense of moral superiority,

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and don't want to be bothered with details.

Yet if Legrain can get us used to using cheap immigrant servants and cooks and nurses, he will then try to make us feel guilty about "the anonymous people whose existence you barely acknowledge . . . We just never bother to ask" (pp. 26-27). It doesn't make much sense. But as I say, Legrain is a rhetorician, not a thinker.

Perhaps most irritating is Legrain's glib sense of moral superiority—backed by his publisher's predictable assertion that he is offering an original "challenging and powerful" version of the open borders case. Not so. If the facts were as Legrain claims, and if the only issues to be considered were the ones he propounds, then everyone would come to his conclusions. Intelligence and moral superiority don't enter into it. Naivety and ignorance do.#

Return of the Population Growth Factor:

*Its impact upon the Millennium Development Goals
Report of Hearings by the (British) All Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health January 2007*

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were an outcome of the 1994 'Cairo' International Conference on Population and Development. Six years later the United Nations through the adoption in September 2000 of Resolution 55/2 by the General Assembly, set 8 goals for global development called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals were to be achieved by the 'due date' of 2015.

Unfortunately, the MDGs now made no reference to population growth or its impact on development. Instead the eight MDGs focused on halving extreme poverty, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS, providing universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality, ensuring environmental sustainability and seeking partnerships for global development.

While highly commendable goals for a body such as the UN it was felt that they missed the point in that to ignore the 'population growth factor' and to turn away from family planning, reproductive education and the widescale use of contraception would mean that the MDGs would always be unachievable. The UNFPA has now included a new target on Family Planning and reproductive education under the 5th Goal.

As a result, in early 2007 after a series of public hearings and expert testimony the British All Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health published this report on the Millennium Development Goals with an assessment of the impact of Population growth across the world but with a special emphasis on Africa.

As it turns out, on the 14th and 15th March 2008 Sustainable Population Australia will hold the 2008 SPA National Conference in Canberra to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of AESP/SPA. The topic chosen will be "Population, Peak Oil, Climate Change: their impact on the Millennium Development Goals" and this report provides a good overview of the impact of population growth on the MDGs. <http://www.appg-popdevrh.org.uk/#>

SPA Newsletter No 76, October, 2007 – 9

President's Report

John Coulter

We face an election in which it seems very likely Labor will win by a considerable margin resulting in a number of completely new MPs. This provides SPA with an opportunity to influence the incoming government.

Most candidates enter politics with some measure of reforming intention but many with a somewhat naïve understanding of the conservatism of parliamentary process and the erosive and coercive nature of internal party workings. An MP is likely to be more outspoken in the early months of his/her term. Our members should try to see every Labor candidate, especially new ones, between now and the election and talk with them broadly about the incompatibility between continuing population and economic growth and transition to an environmentally sustainable Australia.

I suggest sending each candidate a copy of the Al Bartlett DVD seeking a meeting with them to discuss the importance of its message in the context of the next term of government. I can supply any member with copies of this DVD. I will also put on the SPA website a two page document that members may use, plagiarise or précis as a covering letter to political candidate(s).

A full list of candidates will not be available until the election is called but many can already be found on the ALP website. Now is the best time to talk to pollies and candidates; they are looking to have their bum on a seat in parliament after the election. Speak to them as an SPA member; remind them you are from an organisation with over a thousand members and a wider support base. It's just possible that with enough new members who have recently been exposed of a more radical view of reality, a new Labor Government, fresh from an overwhelming victory may feel confident enough to make some of the urgently needed changes.

If you can speak with candidates from other parties as well so much the better.#

State Branch Reports



South East Queensland Branch Report

SPA-SEQ Branch has published over 20 media releases since the SPA National Conference held in the Redlands in April of this year. Our members, also active in environment groups throughout the area, are extremely busy trying to protect the amazing biodiversity and fragile landscape of South East Queensland in the face of an additional 1.4 million residents projected over the next 20 years.

We have been particularly busy trying to stop the overturning of environmental protection provisions with the recent announcement of local government amalgamations and Queensland's Housing Affordability Strategy. As then Premier Beattie said, the amalgamations, and this

State Branch Reports cont.

legislation, are needed to enable / fast track development, to cater for rapid population growth in Queensland. (See the separate article on Queensland's housing affordability legislation in this issue.)

Beattie's parting remarks at a business lunch two days before his retirement, that he supports 50 million people in Australia, shows that he has no idea of the carrying capacity of this land, despite the SPA-SEQ Branch entreaties over the years. The upcoming Federal election is an opportunity to turn the ship around and it is good to see that SPA National is planning to put forward strong arguments. SPA-SEQ is working together with other groups in our region to lobby our candidates and provide them with information; however, the leaders of the parties must be convinced.

The belief that we need more people to provide for the needs of an ageing population is continuously provided as justification for baby bonuses, brain drain from other countries and continued population growth. Despite studies that show that ageing is a temporary and necessary response to high population growth in the past, and that having more babies actually results in a much greater dependent to worker ratio for at least the next 20 years, we seem unable to get these messages across.

Until the Federal Government gets the message and stabilises Australia's population in line with its carrying capacity, there is little hope of regional conservation groups, or even state governments, being able to save their environment, no matter how special it is. Until our elected representatives are relieved of the need for massive campaign funding, they will never be free to actually represent the people who elected them; but rather will continue to be influenced by the propaganda of their contributors, in this case the housing development industry.#



North Queensland Branch Report

The year has so far has again been a quiet one for our branch. Our widely scattered members tend to promote SPA ideas as individuals rather than through branch activities. However, we are grateful to our secretary Laurie Hall (laurence24@optusnet.com.au) for keeping us in contact through occasional email alerts. There have been a couple of highlights in recent months. A statement that we made that Townsville and Cairns (300km apart) would merge into a giant conurbation within 170 years at current growth rates caught the attention of the local Townsville newspaper - who gave it almost a half page spread. Another highlight for our branch arose when the science faculty at our local university organised a debate about nuclear power. We had SPA members on each side of the argument and three of the four speakers in the debate emphasised the untenable nature of continual population growth. We have tentatively planned our AGM for 7PM Sunday 14 October at 18 Stagpole St.

Contact David Kault 47210487 or 0400714480 for confirmation.

State Branch Reports (Continued)



New South Wales Branch Report

Dr Garry Egger was guest speaker for the NSW Branch August Forum. In his talk, 'Population growth, climate change and health', Garry noted that 15 per cent of the world's population are overweight or obese and that the obesity epidemic and Global Warming are linked through energy use. A personal carbon trading scheme aimed at reducing fossil fuel usage could reduce obesity by rewarding increased personal energy use.

Dr Egger's paper 'Personal carbon trading: a potential "stealth intervention" for obesity reduction?' was published in the 6 August 2007 issue of the Medical Journal of Australia (Vol 187, Number 3).

Annual General Meeting:

The SPA NSW Branch AGM will be held at 2.00 pm on Saturday 27 October 2007 at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street Sydney, Level 3 meeting room (NOTE, level 3, not the usual venue).

The meeting will receive the financial report and elect the 2007/2008 Branch Committee:

President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer and up to 5 committee members.

Following the formal AGM, a number of short SPA video-clips will be screened. These video-clips comprise a series suitable for YouTube exposure, which have been prepared by David Williams, with music composed by Kris Spike, and draw on interviews with SPA President Dr John Coulter supported by archive DVD and video resource material.

Light refreshments will be provided after the meeting.#

ACT Branch Report



Jeremy Leggett, author of Half Gone, visited Canberra for the Australian Science Festival in August where he argued for population stabilisation - saying population growth was indeed a driver of climate change and any extra population would make life more difficult in a post-peak oil world. He spoke at two meetings including one for Radio National's The Science Show which was broadcast on September 15.

On Saturday September 8, 2007, the ACT Branch organised a forum for candidates in the upcoming Federal Election that included speakers from both major parties, the Greens and Democrats. While all candidates addressed population issues, none would really discuss numbers although all said it was necessary to develop some sort of population policy. It did provide a good overview of where politicians are coming from and gave some insight into their fears of appearing to be too radical if

they attacked the problem head on.

Prior to this forum, branch members discussed the national SPA conference that will be held in Canberra in March in the Shine Dome. A number of good suggestions were made for speakers and sponsors. Patron Frank Fenner was there and he has subsequently agreed to open the conference.

SPA ACT organised with ACT Peak Oil the premiere screening of "A Crude Awakening" 1 August, 2007 which was a successful venture thanks to three politicians (one actual, two candidates) speaking afterwards to the audience over wine and orange juice in the foyer of the theatre.

Our President, Jenny Goldie, was in a debate on August 21 with Barney Foran arguing for population stabilisation as soon as possible in Australia against Professors Peter McDonald and Stephen Bartos. About 100 people, including many SPA members, were in the audience at the Shine Dome. Jenny was on local ABC radio and Triple J that morning saying why we needed to stabilise and then reduce population. From our point of view, this was a good forum to raise these issues.#

Victorian Branch Report



August 12th - The first meeting of the 2007-08 Committee and we were pleased to welcome two people taking part for the first time.

August 16th A coordinated group of community representatives presented their cases regarding Melbourne 2030 to the Minister for Planning, Justin Madden. Jill Quirk delivered a verbal submission from SPA Victoria on population as the driving factor in Melbourne 2030.

29th August. Sheila Newman successfully played the role of UN Secretary General to secondary school children for one day at the invitation of UN Assoc. The subject was nuclear energy - with population being a major consideration. Her participation in this activity was an enjoyable experience.

30th August Ilan Goldman attended a large meeting on transport in Melbourne. Ilan reported that population was mentioned at length by one member of the audience.

September Jill Quirk and Sheila Newman were interviewed for a significant article published in September 3rd edition of the Wynham Leader - a Melbourne local newspaper. The article quotes Sheila Newman as SPA Victoria Vice President and land use planning sociologist on the effect of population growth on housing affordability.

17th September Jill Quirk has been invited to speak on population at the next meeting of the Victorian branch of the Australian Skeptics at La Notte in Carlton

4th October Sheila Newman has been invited to speak on Population in the context of oil depletion at the next meeting of the Woodend Sustainability Centre, Woodend.#

The Back Page

ABOUT SPA

The SPA Newsletter is mailed bi-monthly to members of Sustainable Population Australia Inc. Membership is open to all who agree with SPA's aims and objectives. For further information, please contact the SPA National Office or your nearest SPA Branch.

All membership applications, renewals and Newsletter contributions should be sent to the National Office.

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Editor's Note

This issue has been particularly difficult to put together as there is so much good material available (population is increasingly being talked up in the community) and members are sending in a range of excellent contributions. I must apologise for not being able to print all contributions but there is limited space available!

Is there a member with some time and access to a computer who could assist with the construction of an Index for the Newsletters? This is a job badly in need of doing. If you're interested and able please contact the editor (see details at left).

It appears that some members have limited download facilities with their ISP service so as from Issue #75 the Newsletter will be available as html (a webpage) and as PDF. Those members requesting an e-newsletters will be advised each issue, by email when the newsletter is available and the address where it can be viewed or obtained. JW#

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

The National Executive invites members to register if they wish to receive campaign material from candidates in future SPA elections. If members are not on this list, they will receive the statements as they appear in the newsletter prior to the AGM, but not other material.

Please notify our Administration Officer, Ron D'Souza, if you do wish to receive campaign material, that is, to be on the Campaign Register.

Email: info@population.org.au

Phone: 02 6288 6810

Address: PO Box 3851,
WESTON ACT 2611#

ABS Population Clock

World Population estimated on 24th September,
2007 by the US Bureau of Census:

6,620,239,150

Australia's resident population on the 23 July 2007 is projected to be:

21,096,061

This projection is based on the estimated resident population at 24 September 2007 and assumes growth since then of:

- 1 birth every 1 mins 56 secs
- 1 death every 3 min 58 secs
- 1 net international migrant every 3 min 10s
- Australia's overall population increase is one additional person every 1 mins 43 secs.

These assumptions are consistent with those used for Series A in Population Projections, Australia 2004 to 2101 (cat. no. 3222.0)#