



NEWSLETTER

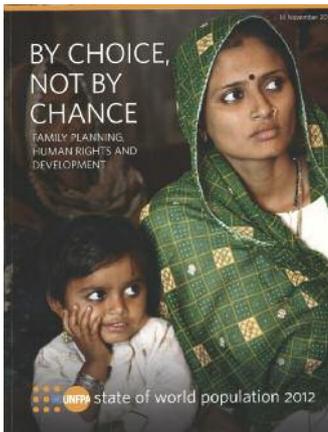
Sustainable Population Australia Inc

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Patrons
Professor Ian Lowe
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Senator the Hon Bob Carr
Professor Tim Flannery
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Family planning empowers women: report



UNFPA's annual report *State of the World Population 2012* was launched in Australia on 26 November in Parliament House, Canberra, by no less than its Executive Director, Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin. He was in Australia for talks with Australia's Foreign Minister, Senator the Hon Bob Carr, who introduced

him at the launch. The report's main message was that making voluntary family planning available to everyone in developing countries would reduce costs for maternal and newborn health care by \$11.3 billion annually. Currently 222 million women do not have access to modern forms of contraception.

One recent study predicts that if the fertility rate fell by just one child per woman in Nigeria in the next 20 years, the country's economy would grow by at least \$30 billion.

According to UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), the benefits are not just economic. It argues that family planning delivers immeasurable rewards to women, families, and communities around the world. By enabling individuals to choose the number and spacing of their children, family planning has allowed women, and their children, to live healthier, longer lives. Looking ahead, if an additional 120 million obtained access to family planning, the report estimates three million fewer babies would die in their first year of life.

"Family planning has a positive multiplier effect on development," said Dr. Osotimehin in the report. "Not only does the ability for a couple to choose when and how many children to have help lift nations out of poverty, but it is also one of the most effective means of empowering women. Women who use contraception are generally healthier, better educated, more empowered in

their households and communities and more economically productive. Women's increased labour-force participation boosts nations' economies.

"Family planning is not a privilege, but a right. Yet, too many women—and men—are denied this human right," said Dr. Osotimehin. "The pledge we made in July in London to increase access to family planning will improve the lives of millions and will each year help avert 200,000 maternal deaths."

In his speech at the Canberra launch, Minister Carr noted that population growth is highest in the poorest countries where it's difficult to access family planning services.

"The report reinforced the importance of putting women and children at the centre of our aid efforts – and we do. Australia does this because women and children are the most affected by poverty. And we also do this because investing in women and their children can bring the most long-lasting results," he said.

"A woman with equal rights and education, with access to health care, a job, ownership of a small business, will invest in her family and her community. This investment has a ripple effect across the whole country – creating stability, a better economy and a better life for her children and all members of the community. Family planning is good, smart investment. It saves lives." JG



Pictured at the Canberra launch (left to right): Senator Claire Moore, Chair of the Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (PGPD); Foreign Minister Bob Carr; Dr Babatunde Osotimehin; Kelvin Thomson MP; and Senator Mal Washer, previous Chair of the PGPD.
photo Jenny Goldie

Population clock is ticking for O'Farrell

by Paul Sheehan

This article appeared on August 23, 2012 in the Sydney Morning Herald. Reprinted with permission.

If you feel that everyday life in Sydney is increasingly more dense, with more of almost everything, you might consider the population clock kept by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

As I wrote this, the clock said Australia's population was 22,707,125. Today, it will be 22,708,000. With each passing day, almost 1000 more people reside in Australia.

By my estimate, at almost 1000 net persons a day Australia's population clock will strike 23 million by the end of next June. Not far away. We're in the middle of a historic surge, driven by the federal Labor government. It's a big subject that remains largely ignored.

When the Rudd government came into office in 2007, Australia's population was 21 million. By the time Labor's second three-year term is scheduled to end next year, the population will be more than 23 million. It will have grown by 2 million people in just six years. That's never happened before, not even close.

It's almost a 40 per cent ramp-up on what, for the previous 60 years, had been a remarkably consistent and gradual increase in population of 1 million people every four or five years. According to the ABS, net migration is adding one person to the population every two minutes and 42 seconds, or 533 people a day, which more than doubles the natural population increase.

Why the hurry? The implications for Sydney are significant. If the majority of the population growth is coming from migration, and Sydney is the biggest single magnet for new immigrants, it is not surprising that Sydney's population is increasing by 60,000 a year. That's one large new regional city accommodated within greater Sydney every year.

We've become used to talking about Sydney and Melbourne as 4-million-people cities but it will not be long before Sydney is a 5-million city. According to the ABS, in the year to June 2011, Sydney's population was 4.63 million, having increased by 59,800 people in 12 months. At an increase of 60,000 a year, a rate that has been accelerating, the 5 million threshold will be reached by 2016. Consider that it took Sydney 27 years to go from 3 million people, in 1972, to 4 million, in 1999, and it will have taken just 17 years to go from 4 to 5 million. Feel the weight. Sydney is already much

bigger, by almost a million people, than Australia was when it became a nation in 1901.

Which brings us to the person who must bear more of this weight than any other individual, Gladys Berejiklian. Berejiklian is under the pump. She is the Minister for Transport and her top bureaucrat, Les Wielinga, the director-general of Transport for NSW, has abruptly resigned from the board of Infrastructure NSW, the body created to deal with our infrastructure backlog.

Worse, she's also discovered that the defining, reputation-making, iconic development of this still relatively new NSW government, the north-west heavy rail-link, is not going even remotely to plan. At this point, there is not going to be a heavy rail link. There's going to be a metro, and it is going to fit poorly with the city's heavy rail system. Unless Berejiklian can fix the problem.

By all accounts from my sources inside the NSW ministry, Berejiklian is doing a good job, perhaps the best of the ministers. But that job is getting harder as time passes and needs grow more urgent. Sydney is approaching a dangerous point where it is a city dominated by the car, with all the inefficiencies and pollution this entails. This is not how very large, advanced cities function. How could Tokyo, population 9 million, or London, 8 million, plus their big commuter populations, survive without their dense networks of subways and railways? They would fuse.

The Premier, Barry O'Farrell, acutely aware of maintaining a reputation for competent leadership, will reap the downside of caution if he cannot get his Transport Minister a big win on rail, with the funding she needs. The Premier will not be defined or remembered for prudence, and a plethora of studies and balanced budgets. He and his government will be defined by big projects they can deliver that prevent the city from slowing into a crawl of congestion under a brown haze.

The drug of capitalism, endless material growth, has an



NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell

unshakeable hold on our culture, so the city will thicken along the rail lines and major arteries as they sprout with more high-rise development. The urban edges will continue their spread. And the weight of the compression caused by this historic and unneeded population surge will be felt, and felt.

Speech

Transforming human society from Anthropocentrism to Ecocentrism

by Bob Douglas

This is an edited speech delivered at a conference in Canberra on 1 November 2012 to honour the work of Professor Tony McMichael, international authority on climate change and health. Bob Douglas preceded Tony McMichael as Director of the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health (NCEPH) at the Australian National University.

In 1968, the ecologist Paul Ehrlich published *The Population Bomb* in which he expressed grave doubts about the world's ability to feed itself in view of the massive growth in the human population that was underway.

Then in 1972 the Club of Rome published *The Limits to Growth* which suggested that continued human population growth and resource use would lead to collapse of human civilisation during the 21st century. Like Tony McMichael, I was appalled at the conclusions of both Paul Ehrlich and the Club of Rome when I read them in the early seventies. It was concerns raised by Ehrlich which led me to embark on formal training in demography. But, unlike Tony, I failed at the time to understand the environmental nature of the evolving crisis.

By the time I knew Tony well he was working in the CSIRO Division of Human Nutrition and his interests were becoming increasingly environmental. I was successful in recruiting him to the Foundation Chair of Occupational and Environmental Health at the University of Adelaide and it was from there that he published his seminal work *Planetary Overload*. Let me remind you of a few sentences from the book:

“Our burgeoning numbers, technology and consumption are overloading Earth's capacity to absorb, replenish and repair. These global environmental problems pose health risks not just from localised pollution but from damaged life support systems.... We cannot live apart from nature, remote from a great web of life.... The risk arises from the disruption of natural systems because we are exceeding the biosphere's carrying capacity – that is, we are overloading the planet's metabolic capacity.”

I read *Planetary Overload* shortly after its publication. It was highly influential in my own intellectual journey and led me to modify our research programs at NCEPH. We began a major commitment to the issue of water quality and treatment and I began thinking and writing

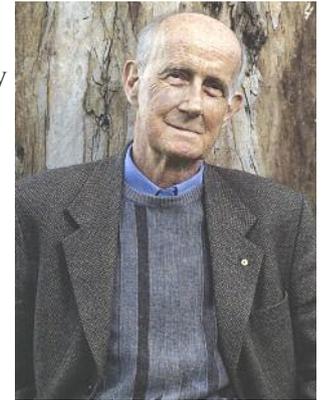
more about health and the environment. Nineteen years after its publication: *Planetary Overload* remains a classic and prophetic of what has happened since.

Planetary Overload makes it clear that humans cannot live apart from an intact natural web of life. Since its publication, he has driven home the point and mobilised the evidence that climate change is a huge threat to human health and well-being. This is a message cleverly crafted for the ears of his anthropocentric hearers. For we live in an age of blatant anthropocentrism. Humans generally believe that we are at the apex of the evolutionary pyramid and that the Earth has been created for us to exploit. But as Tony points out in the introduction to *Planetary Overload*: "Humans are newcomers to our planet with no special immunity against the usual fate of biological species on earth, namely extinctions."

The anthropocentric mindset is the central problem, which we must now address and urgently. That is going to require a revolution in global thinking. We need somehow to re-educate our species to an understanding of the verities which I believe are best summarised by the term 'ecocentrism'.

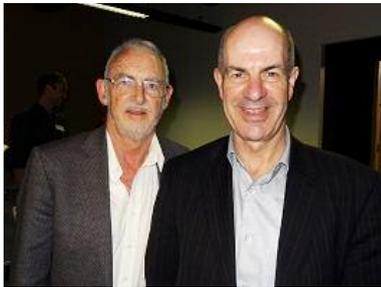
Humanity is hurtling down anthropocentric highway towards a brick wall of total impossibility. Already, the signs that we have moved beyond the limits of physics, chemistry and biology are screaming at us on the billboards on the sides of the highway but we ignore them. We are approaching a fork in the road with a little sign that points down a bumpy track labelled 'ecocentric survival'. Much of the traffic is travelling too fast to even notice the sign or the fork in the road.

We need to engineer a radical transition from the prevailing paradigm of anthropocentrism, which sees humans as the superior species in total control of our planet, to a new ecocentric paradigm. We must now recognise our utter dependence on healthy ecosystems and make their nurture central to our culture. Ecocentrism places their welfare at the heart of the human social, psychological and economic enterprise. It understands the world as a collaborating system of networks, ecologies and relationships. It recognises that human systems are a subset of nature's systems and will survive only if they survive. A communal mindset shift of this kind will have profound consequences and will lead to radical change in the way we live, govern ourselves and structure the human economy.



Tony McMichael

Boom mentality led to 'Immigration Overshoot'



Bob Birrell and Kelvin Thomson MP at a population conference on 17 November in Sydney organised by the Nature Conservation Council, where they each spoke to the paper.
photo Lorraine Cairnes

In a groundbreaking paper called 'Immigration Overshoot', Professor Bob Birrell and Ernest Healy of the Centre for Population and Urban Research (CPUR) at Monash University have found that Australia's immigration program is set on full throttle,

whereas net growth of the employed workforce in Australia has slowed to a crawl.

The paper argues that the immigration intake is too high and that major visa subclasses need to be culled.

The paper notes that Australia has been in the grip of a boom mentality over the last decade and has lost its capacity to reality-test claims, such as those from the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency, that Australia faces enormous growth in the demand for workers.

According to the paper, immigration policy settings have been adjusted to accommodate this boom ethos. "The permanent migration program for 2012-13 has been set at the record high figure of 210,000. The Government's 457 temporary-entry visa program is also running at record high levels. Opportunities for other temporaries, including visitors, students and Working Holiday Makers (WHMs) most of whom have work rights in Australia, have also been opened up," it says.

Between the 2011 and 2012 August Quarters, net growth in the employed workforce in Australia was just 58,000. Yet, in the past year, at least 100,000 new migrants found employment.

The paper notes that the Government has put an increasing emphasis on outsourcing the selection of migrants to employers who it claims are the best judges of Australia's skill needs. Yet most of the migrants sponsored by employers for permanent and temporary entry have nothing to do with the resources industries.

The paper noted that the Enterprise Migration Agreement (EMA) issue has brought the 457 visa program to public attention. In May this year, the Government announced that the Roy Hill venture would be allowed to sponsor some 1,715 workers under the 457 visa subclass. Two key concessions were granted. Most were to be semi-skilled and all of those

sponsored, whether semi-skilled or skilled, could possess only rudimentary English. Like other 457 visas, Roy Hill did not have to give Australian workers an opportunity to apply for the jobs. The EMA arrangements have been based on claims that domestic workers are unwilling to work in remote settings. Yet, by October 2012, some 27,500 job seekers had registered an interest for such work on the Government's Resources Sector Jobs Board.

The most serious implication of migration for domestic workers is the huge presence of migrants on temporary visas in metropolitan lower-skilled labour markets. Though allegedly here for various educational, holiday and cultural exchange purposes, large numbers are primarily in Australia to work. The surge of Working Holiday Makers (WHM) is a prime example. For example, the number of Irish citizens who obtained a visa under the WHM program increased from 14,790 in 2009-10 to 25,827 in 2011-12.

The paper concludes with recommendations for policy change. Employers should only be permitted to grant visas under the 457 visa subclass in certain circumstances, such as where the Australian Government has determined that there are actual skilled shortages in that occupation and in that region. In addition, projects seeking an EMA should only be allowed to sponsor semi-skilled migrant workers after domestic workers have first been offered the opportunity to take on the work and provided with the necessary training. Also, the WHM program should be capped according to the state of the domestic labour market.

JG

<http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/cpur/immigration-overshoot/>

Lord Carey on immigration

by Lord Carey (Ex-Archbishop of Canterbury)
Mail Online (UK), 6 October 2012

We are two-thirds of the way through party conference season. Labour and the Liberal Democrats have been keen to attack the Government on the economy and claim they are the parties to unite a country splitting into haves and have-nots.

But there has been a resounding silence on the most divisive issue in our national political debate. The scale of mass immigration in recent years is a subject virtually ignored despite having contributed, according to the most recent census, to the population growing by 3.7 million in ten years...

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2213866/Lord-Carey-When-politicians-realise-racist-actually-DO-immigration.html>

Speech

A world of one billion?

What does a 4°C warmer world mean? It means a world of one billion people, not seven billion. Or put it another way: What is the difference between 2°C and 4°C warmer world? Human civilisation.

The first question was put and answered by oil analyst **Ian Dunlop** at the Earth Systems Conference held in Canberra in late November. The second came from Joachim Schellnhuber, Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and cited by Dunlop.

In a speech characterised by a profound sense of urgency, Dunlop said the world was experiencing collisions between major forces: peak oil and declining EROI (net energy); climate change; water scarcity; food insecurity; and financial and social instability. It is climate change, however, that is the most urgent issue confronting the world. Emissions are at worst-case levels, nothing has been done in 20 years, and the 2°C guardrail is too high yet even that may be unattainable. We are probably heading for 4°C warming.

What is the evidence? The Arctic has lost 80 per cent of its sea ice since 1979 and may be ice-free in summer as early as September 2015. It could even be ice-free all year round by the 2030s. Greenland has just experienced the most rapid ice melt seen so far.

Dunlop said we had probably passed climatic tipping points that will lead to runaway warming, rapid sea-level rise and to permafrost melt. He noted that Fatih Birol, head of the International Energy Agency (IEA), says, without mitigation, we could even be on a trajectory heading for 6°C warming. The energy sector is largely responsible for emissions and Australia is one of the worst offenders.

Dunlop says we are heading for an energy cliff. Conventional oil peaked in 2005 but, if production is to keep pace with demand, the world will need four new Saudi Arabias by 2035. Oil, of course is critical to transportation, and underpins civilisation as we know it. It is becoming increasingly expensive to extract/produce, however, so society now has to put a lot more energy into maintaining civilisation. Growth is simply unsustainable and we have to rethink the way we live. As the IEA said in its recent World Energy Outlook Report 2012, we can only afford to burn 30 per cent of know fossil fuel reserves. Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is not yet working; turning from coal to gas to produce electricity may even worsen warming; and the high carbon infrastructure we are now building locks in carbon emissions for the next 50 years.

What must we do? Emissions need to peak within the next five years. Yet recent Australian reports such as the

Energy White Paper and that on Australia in the Asian Century ignore the recent warnings from, not only the IEA, but also the World Bank, UN Environment Program, International Monetary Fund, PricewaterhouseCoopers, KPMG and the World Economic Forum.

We must also remove fossil fuel subsidies and give major support to bio-sequestration. Peak oil is real and Australia has a problem. We are less than 50 per cent self-sufficient and, as an importer, we are at the end of the world's supply chain. We could well be left with stranded assets by the end of the decade.

In an accompanying extended abstract to his speech, Dunlop wrote that, if we accept that only a small fraction of existing proven fossil-fuel reserves can be consumed if dangerous climate change is to be avoided, it would negate the need for further exploration and trigger a devaluation of fossil fuel companies.

The rapid transformation to a low carbon economy will be essential. This will fundamentally alter national energy policy and national security agendas. Research on new energy options will need to be increased and contingency planning required for potential oil shortages.

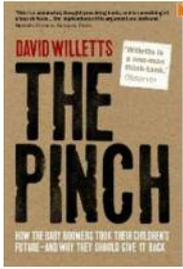
To support this transition to a low-carbon economy, revenue from current high carbon activity must be conserved, tax structures refocused, and policy inconsistencies and inappropriate subsidies eliminated. To provide a level playing field for low-carbon alternatives, meaningful carbon prices should be introduced rapidly and other environmental and health externalities internalised.

Dunlop added that transformative change of this nature has rarely been attempted globally. It requires leadership prepared to abandon 'political realism' in favour of genuine cooperation in support of the common good. Restructuring energy systems will require leadership and cooperation of the highest order. It demands a positive attitude, focused on the enormous benefits and opportunities the change presents, rather than on the problems and costs of departing the status quo. A prerequisite for building the consensus for change is sound community awareness of the energy and climate challenge, and of the rationale behind the solutions.



JG Ian Dunlop photo Jenny Goldie

Book Reviews



The Pinch: How the baby boomers took their children's future — and why they should give it back

by *David Willetts*

Atlantic Books, London, 2010

Reviewed by *Katharine Betts*

Don't be put off by Willetts' title. He is no journalistic mercenary filling yet another column by sneering at baby boomers. He is an intelligent British Tory MP describing the basis of a decent society and how to preserve it — the social contract, not only between people alive today but between the generations.

Baby boomers do not threaten this because they are ageing. Demographic ageing is a good thing, not a challenge. Older people help their children and grandchildren, pass on traditions, provide role models and enhance social stability. Very youthful societies have fewer of these benefits and face desperate problems. But the baby boomers have disrupted aspects of the social contract. They are no more selfish than others but they are a large cohort and grew up in a time of unusual affluence enjoying unprecedented freedom. For a while they created an ethos of individualism and social fragmentation. But this impression is superficial. They are good parents and most help care for their own parents. Where they fall down is in their weak commitment to other people's children.

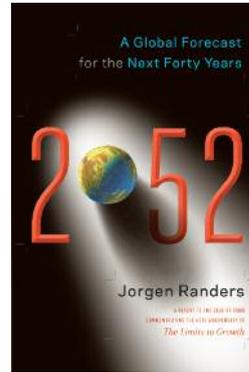
The baby boomers' numbers and relative wealth gives them disproportionate power. For example they can protect their pensions and property values at the expense of young people's needs for education and housing. In 2010 they were aged 49 to 65 and thus included most of the political elite. Their privileged position enabled them to tolerate, and often profit from, high levels of immigration. This was at the expense of the young and has made intergenerational inequality worse.

Thus they have 'eroded the contract between the generations which is at the heart of a healthy society'. But the environmental problems our children will inherit make this contract more necessary than ever. Here Willetts points to population growth, depletion of resources, and global warming, coupled with the boomers' failure to invest in infrastructure.

He uses evolutionary biology and game theory to show how intergenerational cooperation is the default setting for human beings. After all 'valuing the future is fundamental to us as humans and how our society works'. We will be better able to protect the future if we understand how this default setting arose and what is

now going wrong with it.

Boomers must look beyond the interests of their immediate families and extend their protective care to the offspring of all their fellow citizens. If they do not they will be eroding the basis of their future support; it is this that is 'the pinch'.



2052 - A Global Forecast for the Next Forty Years

by *Jorgen Randers*

Chelsea Green, USA, 2012.

392pp.

Reviewed by *Jenny Goldie*

Forty years ago, Norwegian Jorgen Randers co-authored the best-selling *Limits to Growth*, which set out different scenarios

including ones of overshoot and collapse. In this book he gives his views on what he thinks the world will be like over the next 40 years. Before reading the book, I heard him speak in Canberra. I was expecting him to say the world would go out with a bang but no, there was more of 'going along with a whimper' story, not even going out. There was overshoot certainly, but not exactly collapse except in a few localised places. Rather weirdly, I thought, he declared that human population numbers would peak at 8.1 billion because urbanised people would choose to have only one child. If only...

But to the book itself - it was certainly an interesting way to write one. He got several friends and colleagues to write how they thought things were going to go, and then he commented on these 'glimpses'. For instance, Reinvag and Brunstad write that China would be the new hegemon by mid-century. Spot on, responds Randers. Jonathan Porritt writes on the death of nuclear. No death imminent, responds Randers, just a decline in numbers. Herman Daly writes about the end of economic growth. Randers agrees with the central message, but takes a different slant. He sees humanity devoting a much larger share of GDP to solving problems of pollution, depletion, congestion, climate change and biodiversity loss with a parallel reduction in consumption.

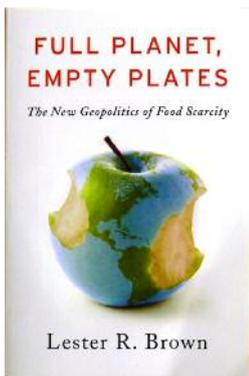
This reduction in consumption and much slower GDP, Randers argues, will give us time to shift to a more rational economy 'which does not systematically destroy future or non-priced values'. This is the optimistic side of him. He believes that we will see advances in resource efficiency and an increasing focus on human well-being. This is in contrast to his pessimistic side that sees productivity decline as a result of social unrest, and global poverty continuing except in

Book Reviews

a few places like China.

Surprisingly, he thinks we could be better off in 40 years but there are some 'wild cards' that throw all projections out of kilter. There could total collapse in trust in the financial sector where the banks stop lending, leading to economic depression. Disease could wipe out a couple of billion people – tragic of course, but it would lessen the human footprint on the Earth. There could be a collapse in ecological services, counterrevolution in China or revolution in the United States.

Randers sums it up this way. "The sustainability crowd will win in the end, but not fast enough to avoid damage to the planet. They will win only after the destruction caused by climate change, resource depletion, biodiversity loss and growing inequity can be easily seen and felt." I hope he's right. I hope the sustainability crowd *does* win in the end, but I tend to think the ride will be rougher than he makes out.



Full Planet, Empty Plates: The New Geopolitics of Food Security

by **Lester R. Brown**

W.W. Norton, New York, London 2012, pp 136

Reviewed by *John Coulter*

I read this small but excellent book by Lester Brown, Earth Policy Institute, a few weeks

before the Federal Government's White Paper, *Australia in the Asian Century* appeared on my computer screen.

While the former deals comprehensively and simply with just one of the most pressing issues humanity faces, there is no hint in the latter of any knowledge about or concern for the issue of food security. It is based exclusively on a 'business as usual' view of the future. Lester Brown defines the purpose of this book as '.....to help people everywhere recognise that time is running out. The world may be much closer to an unmanageable food shortage—replete with soaring food prices, spreading food unrest, and ultimately political instability—than most people realize.' Every one of our politicians should be tied to a chair and not released until they had read and fully understood this book.

After an opening chapter in which Brown identifies food as 'the weak link' in every claim that humanity can continue the BAU path he lays out his reasons chapter by chapter: continuing population growth, more humans feeding higher up the food chain, the conversion of

food into transport fuel, soil loss, peak water, declining returns from improved food production technology, climate change, politics of rising food prices, international land grabs. Each subject is covered in enough detail and with enough supporting evidence to be clear, concise and convincing. It is this clarity of argument and brevity that makes this such a valuable book.

The Government White Paper conceives India as an important element in a prosperous Australian future. Brown says that 48 per cent of all children in India are stunted physically and mentally and likely to have IQs that are on average 10-15 points lower than well-nourished children. Food prices are rising faster than poor incomes. This situation leaves a legacy lasting many decades. Meanwhile, the population of the Indian subcontinent (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) is projected to rise from 1.6 billion to 2.2 billion in 2050 with sub-Saharan Africa also rising from 899 million today to 2.2 billion. 'Millions of women in the world want to plan their families but lack access to reproductive health and family planning services', says Brown.

Indian farmers have drilled 21 million irrigation wells, dropping water tables by up to six metres per year. In some states up to half of all electricity is used to pump water. In Tamil Nadu, a state of 72 million, 95 per cent of wells owned by small farmers have dried up.

Rising population numbers together with increasing incomes for many is also leading to a move from a predominantly carbohydrate diet to one richer in protein which in turn has led to greatly increased numbers of food animals.

Although aware, through Chinese purchase and investment in land in Australia, that international land purchases were occurring, *Full Planet* provides evidence of the scale on which this is occurring and its potential for international conflict. Saudi Arabia has used fossil water under its dry deserts to grow wheat by irrigation for several decades. The water has now gone and by 2015 the Saudis will grow no more wheat on their own soil. The Saudis have now bought or leased large areas of well-watered land in Ethiopia to grow rice, most of which will be exported to Saudi Arabia rather than supplying food to the local increasing population. This has already led to violence against the workers with five deaths and nine wounded this year.

The drought throughout the US corn belt this last year has brought home the impact of climate change on food production. Corn pollination is particularly susceptible to drying caused by high temperatures.

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The international Rice Research Institute in the Philippines has shown that rice production falls 10 per cent for each 1°C rise in temperature. As well as these direct effects warming is leading to reductions in glacial melt water. Two thirds of China's glaciers could be gone by 2060. Glacial melt leads to large reductions in dry season flow seriously impacting rice production. In the past when grain production fell in the US, exports have been curtailed. Now, with China holding \$1 trillion of US debt, it is unlikely the US could stop grain exports to China; another indication of how glacial melt on the Tibetan plateau could drive up food prices in US supermarkets.

Is Brown hopeful? He begins his last chapter pointing out that in rich countries about 9 percent of income goes on food while among the poorest, already 50-70 percent is spent on food. Global food prices have roughly doubled in the last decade leading many families to have a food free day each week or having only one meal per day. 'Spreading food unrest will likely lead to political instability.....We cannot claim to be unaware of the trends that are undermining our food supply and thus our civilisation.

'On the demand side of the food equation there are four pressing needs—to stabilise world population, eradicate poverty, reduce excessive meat consumption and reverse biofuels policies that encourage the use of food, land or water that could otherwise be used to feed people.' On the supply side, Brown sees the most urgent needs are to cut carbon emissions by 80 percent within a decade and to do this with a massive shift in the tax structure toward a tax on carbon, to improve water use efficiency and to stop soil degradation. He argues for establishing a minimum 70 days carry-over of food reserves. He stresses the scale and urgency of the problems and says we all have a role in working on all aspects of the food equation. 'Saving civilisation is not a spectator sport.'

Obama win a mixed result for population

Barack Obama's re-election as US President was greeted with jubilation in some quarters and despair in others, and that's just within the population movement.

A *New York Times* editorial warned that in the US, Mitt Romney and his running mate Paul Ryan "would support the recriminalization of abortion with the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, and they would limit access to contraception and other services. But they have also promised to promote policies abroad that would affect millions of women in the world's poorest countries, where lack of access to contraception,

prenatal care and competent help at childbirth often results in serious illness and thousands of deaths yearly." Romney would have reintroduced the Global Gag Rule which forbids funding of any organisation that even advises on abortion, let alone carries them out. It would have removed funding of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the main body for funding family planning services around the world. Organisations such as Population Action International thus treated Romney's defeat with relief.

On the other hand, President Obama had supported the "DREAM Act" (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) a legislative proposal first introduced in the US Senate in 2001. This bill would have provided conditional permanent residency to illegal immigrants who had arrived in the United States as minors. Opponents of the Dream Act were justifiably concerned about the 11-12 million illegal immigrants currently residing in the US and how this had contributed to a population blow-out.

Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS) said Obama and the new Congress must deal with a host of issues, including gaining control of immigration.

"Unfortunately, neither the candidates nor the media drew attention to the deleterious impact that high immigration levels have on American workers," said Marilyn DeYoung, Chairman of the Board of CAPS. "There is no difference between outsourcing, sending American jobs overseas, and 'insourcing,' bringing in foreign workers to take American jobs."

"True immigration reform means securing our borders and reducing immigration to reasonable levels that protect American workers. In 1996, Barbara Jordan and the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform called for lower levels of legal immigration and tough measures against illegal immigration. It made sense then; it makes sense now," stated DeYoung.



Marilyn DeYoung

Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS) is a non-profit California organisation founded in 1986 which works to "preserve California's future through the stabilisation of our state's human population." CAPS was the former branch of the Zero Population Growth (ZPG) organisation. It supports "replacement-level" immigration, and does so "without regard to race, ethnicity, or national origin."

News & Views

India's Plague, Trash, Drowns Its Garden City During Strike

New York Times, 26 October 2012

MANDUR, India. Trash is India's plague. It chokes rivers, scars meadows, contaminates streets and feeds a vast and dangerous ecosystem of rats, mosquitoes, stray dogs, monkeys and pigs. Perhaps even more than the fitful electricity and insane traffic, the ubiquitous garbage shows the incompetence of Indian governing and the dark side of the country's rapid economic growth. Greater wealth has spawned more garbage, and the managers of the country's pell-mell development have been unable to handle the load.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/27/world/asia/indias-plague-trash-drowns-bangalore-its-garden-city.html>

Agriculture needs another revolution, scientist says

Online Athens, November 11, 2012

Global warming isn't such a problem as the sheer number of people now on Earth and how those people waste energy, one of the world's most respected environmental scientists told a University of Georgia audience last week.

About 7 billion inhabit the earth, compared to fewer than 1 billion in about 1800. And even though the rate of population growth is slowing, total world population is still going up and is likely to reach 9 billion or more by the 2030s, when it may finally level off, said Daniel Hillel, the winner of the 2012 World Food Prize...

Study: Shortage of Skilled Workers Vastly Overstated

Washington Post, 23 October 2012

Calls for targeted immigration reform are growing louder from economists who say the United States' supply of highly skilled workers cannot keep pace with increasing demand from its young businesses. Especially in technology and manufacturing fields, many believe foreign-born talent is needed to help firms reach their potential.

But a new report suggests their concerns may be overstated.

Conducted by the Boston Consulting Group, the study indicates that a "skills gap" indeed exists but that it's not nearly large enough to spur panic or broad policy changes.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/on-small-business/post/study-shortage-of-skilled-workers-vastly-overstated/2012/10/23/8670526c-1d3a-11e2-b647-bb1668e64058_blog.html

Why over-population is bigger threat than global warming

Mirror(UK), 31 October 2012

TV wildlife presenter Chris Packham is convinced that when it comes to destroying the planet we are our own worst enemy. He has just got back from filming the threatened polar bears and melting ice of the Arctic.

But TV wildlife presenter Chris Packham says over-population is a bigger threat to the human race than global warming...

He is convinced that when it comes to destroying the planet we are our own worst enemy.



"The single most important thing is not climate change but human population," he insists. "We haven't got unlimited space because we've only one planet."

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/technology-science/science/autumnwatch-chris-packham-on-why-over-population-is-biggest-1408733>

Population growth and the road to total societal meltdown

by Michael C. Osborne

grist.org 12 November 2012

Imagine for a moment that planet Earth isn't running out of anything. We have plenty of food, plenty of oil, plenty of rare minerals, and plenty of air. In this little utopia, the only constraint is space. We can breed like bunnies, and everything is fine — until we hit what I call Peak Elbowroom.

This is more or less the idea behind a series of experiments conducted by John B. Calhoun in the 1960s. Calhoun offered a group of rats a limitless supply of food, water, bedding, and everything else healthy, happy rats could want — except space.

So what was the rat response? Turns out they all died. Well, they went big, then died. The population spiked and plummeted in a blaze of rodent self-extermination...

<http://grist.org/cities/population-growth-and-the-road-to-total-societal-meltdown/>

Branch reports

Vic/Tas: The culture of growth permeates our lives as strongly as ever in Victoria. The Metropolitan Planning strategy was launched on 26 October with its discussion paper “Melbourne, let’s talk about the future.” In a nutshell it is about accommodating population growth over the next 40 years to the tune of over two million! At a meeting of community groups on 20 November about the strategy with about 200 community representatives, the question was asked of the Minister for Planning: “Is the issue of population growth up for discussion?” To this the Minister replied that he would “not stifle” discussion on anything. The fact that the room was full of community representatives to me indicates a very high level of concern about where our state is heading.

The push for more and more growth is relentless and this culture is reflected clearly in “Melbourne, let’s talk about the future.” it is not only about Melbourne but plans huge growth in regional centres such as Ballarat and Geelong. If you wish to comment, this is possible until 1 March next year. Go to www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au for this discussion paper.

I am very familiar with the Victorian scene where in terms of absolute numbers our state has the largest population increases. Tasmania’s growth rate is less than one fifth that of Victoria and in view of the Victorian State government having its foot flat to the floor heading to a population of seven to eight million by mid-century, the biggest concern for Tasmanians would have to be that Victorians will seek refuge on their beautiful island.

At present the branch is preparing for a three day stall at the annual Sustainable Living Festival, Federation Square, Melbourne 15-17 February. Please come and say hello to our volunteers if you are at the festival.

Jill Quirk

ACT: The ACT branch Christmas party is being held on 14 December under the Rotunda in Glebe Park, Civic, from 5pm. All welcome – bring a folding chair if you think you might need one. (President Christopher Dorman is convalescing after a stint in hospital, hence this limited report. Get well Christopher. Ed.)

NSW: The branch has held its 2012 AGM with the result that the existing committee and office bearers were re-elected. The meeting was followed by a screening of the hour long version of *Hooked on Growth* after which there was a Q&A with Donnie McLurcan who was the Australian co-producer of the film. Donnie challenged us to find more positive messages about the benefits of slowing population

growth as a way to engage more young people with our cause. On November 17 the Nature Conservation Council of NSW held a day-long population seminar with several key speakers from around the country. The branch was one of the main sponsors of the event and it proved to be a worthwhile exercise in getting our fellow environmentalists to consider more closely the link between continual population growth and environmental decline. Many thanks to Nola Stewart for her tireless efforts and quiet determination to bring this event together.

Kris Spike

QLD: The Queensland Branch held its inaugural AGM (since the amalgamation of the NQ and SEQ branches) on Sunday 28 October. We welcome Jan McNicol as branch Secretary, and thank Ken Sketcher and Ted Newton who retired from the committee. A special thanks to Ken, who acted as branch Treasurer for many years. Other positions were unchanged: Jane O’Sullivan (President), Tony Matta (Treasurer), Jim Courtney and David Robertson (committee members). Twelve members attended the meeting, and the numbers swelled to twenty for the talk given by Professor William Grey, which stimulated some good discussion.

SPA held another stall at the Mary River Festival, on 10 November, thanks to David Robertson and Tony Matta. Unfortunately, after almost four months without rain, the day was rather wet. Nevertheless, the hardier souls turned out for the festival and the stall received a good flow of interested visitors.

Jane O’Sullivan presented a paper at the conference of the Australia New Zealand Society for Ecological Economics, which was very well received. Jane and Tony will talk to the Rotary Club of Stafford on 28 November.

Arrangements for the 2013 national AGM are progressing. The Abel Smith Lecture Theatre at the University of Queensland has been confirmed as the venue. David Robertson has been appointed as Returning Officer.

Jane O’Sullivan

WA: The “no rain State” managed a downpour for SPA’s team at the Zig Zag walk making life difficult for Otto and Claudia Mueller although they reported significant public interest. A submission made three years ago by former Committee member Astrid Herlihy on the Wungong water initiative was recently acknowledged by the Water Commission. This was only one of two submissions that mentioned population growth contributing to Perth’s serious water supply problems.

Our Secretary, Claudia, has been working on banners for the branch in consultation with Jackie Ellis. A number of members, including the very prolific Brad

SPA News

Capes, Ranjan Ray and Harry Cohen had letters published in the *West Australian*.

We are still having problems with membership records and reports of members not getting the newsletter. Please let the branch know if you are having any such problems.

The WA Branch Committee has agreed to defer its monthly meetings over December / January.

WA has a state election on 9th March 2013.

In response to a talk on the psychological impact of environmental change, a speaker has been given \$2000 to fight population growth in WA.

Paddy Weaver

SA: The SA branch has not met since hosting the successful visit of Richard Heinberg. A DVD has been produced of his talk in Adelaide. It is available for \$5 to cover disc and postage. Contact sa@population.org.au

Letter from a grumpy member

Hope you don't mind me having a grump.

Here goes: Grovely TAFE and Ithaca TAFE will be closing down next year so the land can be sold (more people make land a very valuable commodity). Of course, the suburb with more people will have considerably less social/educational resources.

Then there are parks. A decade ago we could drive into central Brisbane and walk by the river or spend time in parks such as Southbank. Now we can't. The cost of parking is exorbitant if there is parking available.

Southbank is a teeming morass of bodies. We can't go in by train because we can't get to the station - all the parking at the station is jam packed full by 7am each morning. Everything costs heaps (you guessed it, we are pensioners) and there is a clear loss of amenity.

Why? My guess is that QLD has had a steady policy of attracting hoards of people to live here hour after hour, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, decade after decade, century after...

It is now getting very hard to afford to stay in your own home because of all the rules and government imposed costs that are simply huge.

Yes, I do wake up and have midnight horrors about it. Yes, I do accept that I am completely powerless to stop this tidal wave of destruction that will end our world (all our world). I'm very glad I'm old, but I'm definitely very, very pissed off about overpopulation, government abysmal stupidity and climate change.

Anne Tennock, Ferny Grove, QLD

Call for Nominations for SPA National Executive Committee

The SPA Annual General Meeting will be held on **Saturday 13 April 2013** at the

Abel Smith Lecture Theatre, University of Queensland.

St Lucia Campus, Brisbane

At the meeting, elections for all SPA Committee positions will be held. Nominations for these positions, the tenure for which is 12 months, are now called.

Financial members can nominate for more than one position e.g. Secretary and Committee member. The positions are National President; Vice President; Meeting's Secretary; Correspondence Secretary; Treasurer and three to five committee members. These are crucial positions providing leadership for the organisation into the future. Members are urged to consider standing.

A nomination form is included with this Newsletter. Additional copies are available from the website at www.population.org.au, the State Branch offices or from the SPA National Office in Canberra (email info@population.org.au or phone (02) 6288 6810) and must be completed and returned to the **Returning Officer SPA, PO Box 1291, BUDERIM QLD 4556** to arrive no later than **Friday 25 January 2013**.

Proxy voting forms will be distributed with the February 2013 Newsletter which will also include a list of candidates for positions and candidate statements.

Sandra Kanck, National President

PETITION TO STABILISE POPULATION

You may already have been enthusiastic enough to sign SPA's petition to the Federal Government to stabilise the population at or near present levels.

It would considerably strengthen our case if we could collect many more signatures.

You may wish to approach your networks, friends and colleagues with a message such as the following:

"I have signed the petition asking the Federal Government to stabilise population at or near present levels. Please go to www.population.org.au/petition and read the petition and, if you support it, please sign and forward to others."

Marie Stopes International

NSW member David Griffiths recommends this worthwhile charity as one that helps to cut the world's population growth as well as improving the lives of women in developing countries.

<http://www.mariestopes.org.au/>

SPA's involvement in climate change talks

SPA applied for, and was allocated, an exhibit booth at the UNFCCC 'COP18' in Doha, which runs from 26 November to 7 December. We had also applied for a side event, but were not successful on that count. Our Ugandan colleague Isaac Kabongo was intending to attend the meeting, but not for the full duration. Our colleagues in the Population Health and Environment (PHE) Consortium, Ethiopia, were keen to attend and help with the stall but needed financial support to do so.

SPA Executive supported the funding of travel for Mesfin Kassa Admassie, the environmental projects officer from PHE Ethiopia, and for printing of materials for the stall. Jane O'Sullivan prepared all the materials for the stall, including three A0 posters, a title banner for the booth, a handout requesting a SBSTA Work Programme on Population (see page 4 of this newsletter), a general handout on "Why we can't afford to ignore population growth any longer", the Joint Position Statement from African Civil Society Organisations (the output from the Kampala meeting in 2010) and several charts to provide a wall display. All materials were printed in Addis Ababa and carried to Doha by Mesfin. In addition, Jane found a colleague who was travelling to the meeting, who agreed to carry some postcards (PopOffsets and "We don't talk about that!") to add to the stall. Mesfin has reported that he has set up the stall, and that it is receiving a good number of visitors, some of whom are leaving cards for follow-up.



DISCLAIMER

While every effort has been taken to ensure the reliability of the information contained in this newsletter, the opinions expressed are those of the various authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of either SPA or the editor.

ABOUT SPA

Formerly Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population.

The SPA Newsletter is mailed bi-monthly to members of Sustainable Population Australia Inc. For further information, please contact the SPA Office or your nearest branch. All membership applications and renewals should be sent to the National Office. Newsletter contributions should be sent there or directly to the editor.

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