



NEWSLETTER

Sustainable Population Australia Inc

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Patrons
Professor Ian Lowe
Dr Mary White

Senator the Hon Bob Carr
Professor Tim Flannery
Dr Paul Collins

SPA welcomes end to baby bonus

Sustainable Population Australia wholeheartedly welcomed the Budget decision by the Federal Government to abolish the baby bonus from March 2014. The move will save the Government \$1.1 billion over five years. The baby bonus will be replaced by a lower \$2000 supplement for the first child and \$1000 for subsequent children, payable only to recipients of family tax benefit (A). To be eligible for family tax benefit (A), incomes must not be above \$110,000 to \$112,000 a year, whereas the baby bonus benefited those earning up to \$150,000 a year.

These lower payments to recipients of Family Tax Benefit (A) are less likely to be an incentive to have children than was the baby bonus which was originally \$3000 per birth but later increased to \$5000.

Two weeks after the Budget, on May 28, Opposition Leader Tony Abbott confirmed that the Coalition will support the abolition of the baby bonus, albeit "reluctantly".

After the introduction of the baby bonus in 2004, Australia's fertility rate went from 1.7 in 2004 to 2.0 in 2008 – the highest in 31 years - before dropping back to 1.9, but still leaving us with one of the highest fertility rates amongst OECD countries.

The Howard Government claimed the baby bonus was to help families with the costs of having a baby. It became associated, however, with the then-Treasurer Peter Costello's call to increase the birth rate ("One for Mum, one for Dad and one for the country"). Costello was quite explicit about it being a measure to improve the nation's fertility rate.

Influential economists, however, such as Professor Bob Gregory from the Australian National University's Research School of Social Sciences criticised the scheme as an "unbelievably expensive" means of increasing fertility and that it amounted to "middle class welfare". By 2008, they were already calling for its complete overhaul.

With an annual growth rate of 1.7 per cent, Australia hardly needs any incentive to increase natural increase

which, in the year ending September 2012, was 154,500 people, 6000 more than the previous year. With a fertility rate under replacement level of 2.1, even with the baby bonus boost, natural increase (births minus deaths) might be expected to start falling. Increased life expectancy, however, combined with a bigger base to the population, means natural increase is still going up, not down.

The general reaction to the axing of the baby bonus was positive, especially in social media. ABC Radio National's PM program mentioned some of the comments on ABC's Facebook page, including: "Totally into scrapping the baby bonus. Not that families shouldn't get some help, but people should not start a family with a baby bonus as an incentive." And one from Twitter: "... glad middle welfare class is cut..."

In November 2009, Fairfax columnist and economics editor Ross Gittins contemplated the effect of the baby bonus on the birth rate. He felt there were other contributing factors such as 30 per cent rebate for childcare. Although an opponent of population growth, he wrote: "No, it's not natural increase that will do us in, it's high levels of immigration...The policy lesson for governments from the new baby boom is that a sustained rise in the fertility rate is a much more effective way to alleviate the problem of an ageing population than is ramping up immigration."

Ageing, however, is not the central issue; it is overall numbers. Sustainable Population Australia's policy is to advocate for not only stabilisation but also reduction in population numbers, thus removal of any incentive to increase numbers is very welcome indeed. JG



Jenny Macklin, Minister for Families (FaCHSIA), who administered the baby bonus

Malignant Growth

by *Clive Huxtable, member SPA WA branch*



Clive Huxtable

As a retired veterinary pathologist it seems to me that the exploding human population is analogous to malignant cancer and the body it is subverting is the biosphere.

No-one living in a lucky country like ours could reasonably deny the material benefits brought by the growth-driven market economy.

No-one, however, should ignore the risks posed by ongoing un-restrained growth, both of population and per capita consumption. Many of those driving the growth agenda would consider themselves skilled managers of risk in the world of business, yet the risks of messing with the capacity of the planet to support life seem to be ignored. One must ask why. It seems to me that the endless growth message is delivered with a startling lack of cosmic perspective. There is a careless inability or wilful refusal to appreciate our true situation in the universe. Our singularly remarkable little planet, Carl Sagan's pale blue dot in the void, is the only one available to us in practical terms. Like the "boy in the bubble" we have nowhere else to go should we let the system fail. Our situation is rather precarious and depends entirely on the capacity of the planet to support a rich diversity of life forms, of which we are but one. Just how many are enough is completely unknown but each year brings more understanding of the importance of the "web of life" and data on how rapidly it is being degraded – by us. By ignoring the risk, it may be too late by the time we are looking down the barrel.

What are the difficulties in making a case for a stable sustainable Australian population? There is a vigorous and vociferous opposition to the idea, able to play on the notion that "catastrophist" theories are woolly nonsense based at best on pessimistic speculations and at worst on politically subversive ideology. Some have faith that a supernatural overseer will look after us. Attempts to halt growth would drag us back into poverty and the dark ages so it is said.

What then to do? First and foremost is the need to provide reliable evidence for the reality of the risks. The voices of credible, calm and objective people need to be made audible and kept in the headlines, but with a caveat. The question must always be played cool. Too often the voices of emotion and zealotry are picked up by the media and then used by opponents to pour general scorn and derision on all arguments by

association

Second is recognition and acknowledgement of the huge dependency of the livelihoods of many citizens on continual growth and the almost universal adherence of economists to this model. There is no doubt that a shift to a non-growth model would be extremely difficult intellectually, politically, socially and psychologically. The problems cannot be shrugged off and the economists who are engaging with these questions should be encouraged and publically supported.

Third is the need to counter the poll and lobbyist-driven reality of our political system. Our local politicians should be challenged with some explicit questions. What do they know in detail about the current status of land and water degradation in Australia? If they believe in continual population growth, what is their vision of what that means for life in Australia in 100 or 200 years? If on the other hand they do acknowledge that a day will come when population growth will be detrimental or impossible, are they not acknowledging the need for a non-growth economic system? If so, they should be pressed on how they see it working.

At the age of 72, my observations of human behaviour often make me doubt that humanity en masse can voluntarily make the necessary changes, and that the train wreck is inevitable. By the reckoning of the actuaries I can expect a dozen or so years more life on the planet, and should get off the train in time. But I then think of my little grandchildren and feel I must try and do something or have some influence, however small.

In my home town of Perth, the Water Corporation is running urgent TV commercials begging people to save water to help stop "Perth drying out". We have also been reminded of the inexorable and predicted-to-continue decline in rainfall over the last quarter century. At the same time the government is proudly projecting robust population growth with an extra half-million people in another decade with more to come. Makes you wonder what we are saving the water for. Makes you wonder who is setting the agenda and what is the vision.



**Population, Resources
& Climate Change**
implications for Australia's near future.

You can now register online at:

<https://www.amlink.com.au/secure/html/fenner2013.html>. For those without internet connections, a hard copy brochure and registration form accompanies this newsletter.

The dirty little secret to tackling climate change

by *Cathy Alexander*

This (shortened) article first appeared in Crikey on April 18, 2013. Reprinted with permission.

Recent data shows that without Australia's population boom, we'd probably have greenhouse gas emissions under control. So why is no one talking about whether an Australia of 62 million is environmentally sustainable?

Forget the carbon price, forget the Opposition's Direct Action climate plan. Australia could probably meet its targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions without either, provided we did one thing. But you won't hear the politicians talk about it.

A statistical analysis by Crikey, based on data released this week, indicates that if Australia's high population growth rate were reined in, the country would already be meeting its targets to cut pollution. In fact, we'd probably be under those targets.

The Federal Government's data on greenhouse gas emissions for the December quarter points to the major impact the population boom has had on Australia's emissions. Here's the Crikey number-crunching that shows why it might be time to talk about the environmental impact of Australia's growing population.

Australia's per capita emissions actually dropped between 1989 and 2012. But the population increased by 35 per cent during that period, and overall national emissions soared by 32 per cent. That took national greenhouse gas emissions from 418 megatonnes a year in 1990 to 552 megatonnes in 2012.

Australia has a high rate of population growth, caused in part by a relatively high rate of immigration. What would the country's emissions be if that was not the case?

The ABS calculates that in the decade to 2007, the population grew by 1.3 per cent pa on average with "just under half from net overseas migration". By 2009, migration provided 65 per cent of population growth. Based on those numbers, if Australia had net zero migration from 1989 to 2012, we can estimate the population would have increased from 16.9 million to roughly 20.4 million.

And based on the Government's calculation of current per capita emissions, that would give us total national emissions in 2012 of 495 megatonnes. So our actual total emissions are 11.5 per cent — or 57 megatonnes — higher than if we had had net zero migration.

So what? Well, the body politic is consumed with how

to meet the bipartisan target to reduce national emissions to 537 megatonnes of emissions per year in 2020. It's an issue that has toppled prime ministers, helped decide elections and keeps politicians awake at night.

The short answer is that we might well be meeting that target already if we did not have the population boom. With the swelling population, it's a different story. The ABS predicts there will be between 31 million and 43 million of us in 2056. By 2101, it could be as high as 62 million.

This above analysis is rough and is no substitute for rigorous modelling by teams of economists and demographers. However, the numbers crunched here do point to an aspect to the climate debate that is seldom discussed at the political level: more people means higher emissions.

Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd famously declared he believed in a "big Australia"; in the ensuing criticism both major parties toned down the rhetoric, but neither major party has moved away from significant population growth fuelled by skilled migration.

Tony Mohr, the Australian Conservation Foundation's manager of climate change campaign, calls for a stabilisation of Australia's population. "More people in Australia means more roads, more energy use and more greenhouse gas emissions," Mohr told Crikey. "Population is one driver of emissions growth in Australia."

He says Australia should address the problem. "We've already got a really big emissions footprint ... certainly taking another look at our skilled migration would help reduce the growth in our greenhouse gas emissions," he said.

Mohr calls on politicians to debate the impacts of population growth on the environment and cities. He adds the ACF did not support reducing Australia's humanitarian intake, which is a fraction of the overall migration intake. In the 2010 election campaign, Prime Minister Julia Gillard said:

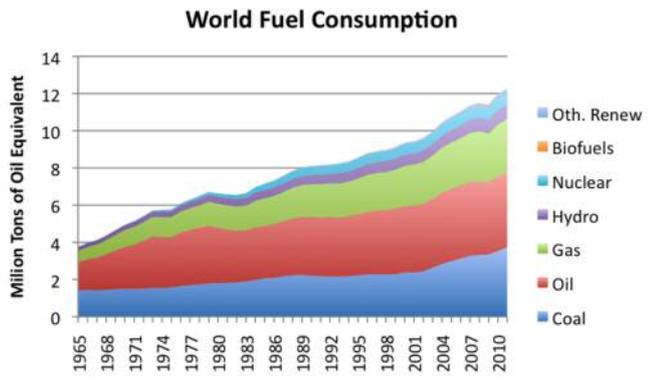
"I do not believe in the idea of a big Australia; an Australia where we push all the policy leavers into top gear to drive population growth as high as we can. Australia cannot and should not hurtle down the track towards a big population." However, Labor has done little to seriously challenge projections of significant population growth.



Cathy Alexander

Re-examining Limits to Growth

by Peter Strachan, former member of the SPA national executive and now a Senate candidate for the Stable Population Party. This paper is from his 9 April investment newsletter.



Let's look at where energy comes from today. Globally the vast majority of all energy comes from fossil fuels. Coal makes up about a third and together, coal, oil and natural gas account for about 87 per cent of all energy sources. Despite China's massive strides to introduce non-carbon based and renewable energy sources, its proportion of energy from fossil fuels is even larger at over 90 per cent, with massive hydro-power projects dwarfing renewables. The graph above adds some perspective and show the enormous, and I would say impossible, task that nuclear and renewable energy sources face to replace the carbon based energy status quo if business as usual is a base line.

Human population has already past the limit of how many people the world will support without unduly affecting other species. The current rate of species extinction is running at a high level globally. Even Prince Charles has commented *'that the world is already in the "sixth extinction event", with species dying out at a much faster rate than at any time since the death of most of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago.'*

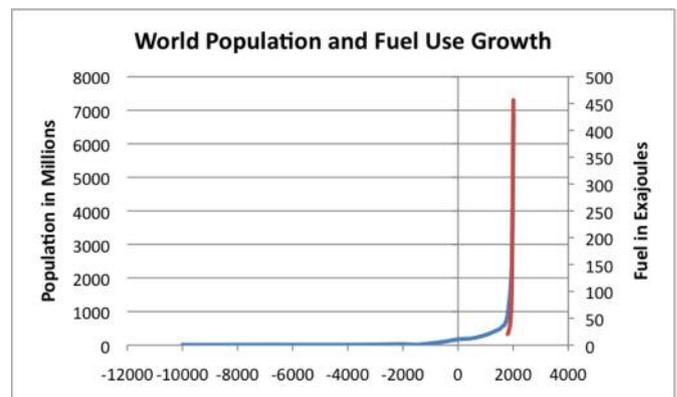
There are now over 7.1 billion humans on earth, compared to fewer than 200,000 gorillas and chimpanzees, which are also primates. The daily increase of human population is more than the total global population of all large primates on the planet. Humans rely on a web of life on this planet for their existence. Without the companion species that colonise our bodies and that provide clean air, water and food, humans would not survive. While destroying forests, farming land and relying on fossil fuels to produce clean water may provide short term profits, it is not going to be a long term survival strategy. With the aid of a big brain and use of energy sources, humans have

adapted to every environment on the planet in a way that leaves even the brown rat in the shade!

Up until the 17th Century, humans mostly used renewable energy. Water, wind mills, the power of domestic animals, cow dung and wood were the energy staples while fossil fuels were limited to the occasional lump of dried peat or coal that stuck out of the ground. Up until the arrival of modern medicine in the 18th Century and the harnessing of fossil fuels in the 19th Century, human population was limited by disease and by the seasons as it affected the availability of food.

Richard Heinberg also highlights that another limit to economic expansion is pollution of many types. What we observe in the Western World is that GDP per capita and the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) rise in tandem until GDP reaches about \$20,000 per head. After that level, GDP per head can rise as commerce expands, but the negative externalities of growth, such as water and air pollution, traffic congestion, rising costs and degradation of farming land, leave the GPI per head flat-lining as the negatives match any positives from economic growth.

There are negative externalities everywhere even renewable energy poses pollution challenges. Hydro-dams change local climate and can lead to loss of biodiversity and battery recycling and disposal poses pollution challenges. Also, mining of rare earth minerals used in electric cars, wind turbines and many high tech energy efficient devices is often cited as being very polluting in China, where most of these minerals are currently extracted.



World population from US Census Bureau, overlaid with fossil fuel use (red) by Vaclav Smil from *Energy Transitions: History, Requirements, Prospects*

Another limit is declining soil quality. Modern farming relies on supplements such as phosphorous and potassium to retain soil fertility but current practise is gradually leading to erosion of top-soil, while the amount of organic matter in soil is reduced, making crops less drought-resistant. Soils often suffer from salinity related to irrigation while nitrogen levels also become depleted and ultimately, food production has

Opinion

become more reliant on scarce fossil fuels to add fertilisers and pesticides as well as for harvesting, processing, packaging, storage and transport.

Another limit is imposed by the Second Law of Thermodynamics. This law prohibits the sort of perpetual motion machines so often touted by ‘Greens’ and other cornucopians as technological fixes for overpopulation or any other environmental issue. Things made by modern economies fall apart. All of the roads, bridges, pipelines, electricity transmission equipment, cars and computers that humans have produced will degrade and eventually need to be replaced. If we intend to continue to have roads, we need to keep repairing them and building new ones. This requires an increasing amount of fossil fuel energy, using current technology. It is folly to believe that renewable energy sources such as wind and solar technologies will provide abundant, free energy forever. First, renewable plant needs energy to manufacture operating systems and then these systems need to be maintained and replaced. There is no such thing as something for nothing in the world of energy. Even fossil fuels are just stored solar energy or fossilised sunshine.

Rising resource scarcity and a new commodity price paradigm so well explained by Jeremy Grantham, places further limits on economic growth. This arises not only because of an exponential increase in demand for finite, non-renewable resources but also because the cheapest, easiest to extract resources are processed first. Moving to lower quality, deeper, lower grade and more distant mineral deposits results in higher production cost because cheap resources have already been depleted. Some observers focus on discovered mineral Resources and don’t necessarily notice a difference as their quality drops over time.

Even fresh water, which is a key input to human activity, is coming under pressure. Initially water is taken from a local stream or from a shallow well where little energy is required to obtain it. As this resource depletes or is overwhelmed by demand, we seek new water sources. Deeper wells, water piped from afar or desalination. All of these approaches use much more energy. If the world’s total energy supply is not growing rapidly, using more energy for water supply is likely to mean less energy is available for other uses.

Richard Heinberg and Nicole Foss have mapped out financial limits to increased wealth. They point out that after a certain point, debt fuelled expansion is illusory. Growing wealth disparity, debt default and an inability to collect enough taxes have all become too evident since 2007. Political instability follows on from the effects of over-leveraging and the use of leverage on

leverage in the form of derivative financial products. Eventually not enough tax revenue is generated to deliver services, leading to civil unrest by the numerous and poor lower class and often government collapse. The impact of financial limits is not only seen in Libya and Egypt, but also in Greece and Cyprus. In Egypt for instance, widespread shortages of fuel in the run-up to the spring crop planting period, threaten massive food shortages in that nation. So far inadequate food, medicine and sanitation due to inadequate wages and government cutbacks have seen limited disease susceptibility, but this impact cannot be far behind.

Restrictions surrounding exploitation of fossil fuels have been recognised for over 50 years. The US navy saw this back in 1957 in a paper entitled “Energy resources and our future” – by Admiral Hyman Rickover, 1957:

“In the face of the basic fact that fossil fuel reserves are finite, the exact length of time these reserves will last is important in only one respect: the longer they last, the more time do we have, to invent ways of living off renewable or substitute energy sources and to adjust our economy to the vast changes which we can expect from such a shift.”

“Fossil fuels resemble capital in the bank. A prudent and responsible parent will use his capital sparingly in order to pass on to his children as much as possible of his inheritance. A selfish and irresponsible parent will squander it in riotous living and care not one whit how his offspring will fare.”

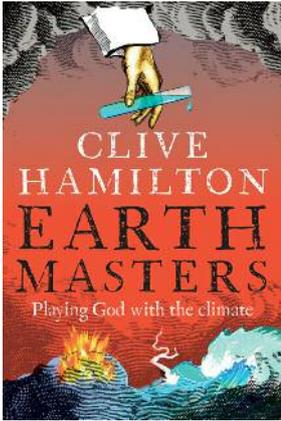
Even if by some minor miracle, cheap, scalable and safe Thorium/MSR reactors can be produced there are still all the other problems and negative consequences of endless growth. Problems associated with soil erosion due to factory farming, desertification, habitat destruction, mass extinctions, oceanic dead zones, air, water and ground pollution, growing scarcity and expense of mining raw materials and dropping water tables will not be solved by an improbable, 20 years turnaround in energy supply. Humans are fouling their own nest at an alarming rate and most people just don’t appear to connect the dots.

There is no aspect of the issues faced today that can be improved by further expansion of human population. On the contrary, stabilising and then moving to a more sustainable population is critical to addressing the issues we face.



Peter Strachan

Book Review



Earth Masters – Playing God with the Climate

by Clive Hamilton

Allen and Unwin, 2013

Reviewed by Bob Wolcott,
NSW SPA member

'Earth Masters' is, for us, an absolute 'must read'.

Although most won't make the connection, the subject matter – geoengineering – is

critically related to our core concern, population.

Clive Hamilton's second book on the broad topic of climate change is as thorough and informative as his first, 'Requiem for a Species'. His up-date on the science of global warming is, however, even more terrifying.

'Thanks' to a complex interaction between ignorance, indifference, denial, self-deception and greed, there has been no stopping the build-up of greenhouse gas emissions. As they increase in the atmosphere, so does the forecast global temperature. Not so long ago the 'target' was to keep the increase to 2° C or less. Now seen as a 'pipe-dream', a new range of 3.5° C to 6° C has taken its place.

It's here the horror story begins. The words used to describe a planet that much hotter include 'unthinkable', 'irreversible and potentially catastrophic climate change', 'a world hotter than it's been for 15 million years' and 'not the kind of world on which modern life forms evolved'.

Unfortunately, it gets worse. Having wallowed in denial for decades, a growing contingent of 'leaders' has shifted to a position of alarmed acceptance of climate change. The only 'solution', according to them, is to 'geoengineer' the climate. The methods include manipulating the earth's cloud cover, changing the ocean's chemical composition, blanketing the planet with a layer of sunlight-reflecting particles or some other mega-manipulation.

Enlightening in itself, the science goes by a variety of names, each intended for its own propaganda purpose. 'Geoengineering', OK for those on side, won't do for those wary of the idea. For them 'Sunlight Reflection Methods' was concocted. Intentionally 'boring and bureaucratic sounding', it's to 'let our workshop fly under the radar'.

To get some idea how influential and powerful these 'big thinkers' are we need to see who they are. Very prominent (mostly) North American scientists,

including some deeply involved in nuclear weapons development. Senior politicians, including Newt Gingrich as an unabashed advocate of geoengineering and George W. Bush and every Republican presidential candidate last year. Investors hoping to profit from the adoption of a techno fix: Bill Gates, Richard Branson and David Keith, a physicist and entrepreneur, who says, if they construct *his* machines, 'we're printing money'. Top corporate executives, mostly from the fossil fuel industry. Their lobbyists. The military (because there are 'national security' implications, including 'weaponizing the weather') and the think tanks (like the Rand Corporation) that advise them. The economists, for whom it comes down to a cost-analysis exercise. The media, by their association with all of the above. And all those in thrall to the ideology that 'planetary management' is a logical next step in man's continuing 'triumph over nature'.

Outside this determined group are the other 7 billion citizens of the planet who remain generally uninformed about climate change and blissfully ignorant of geoengineering. In other words, there is no effective opposition to these dangerous men. [Women's names hardly appear in the account.]

Much of the book is about how compelling the idea of geoengineering is *and* how crazy it is. Compelling because it can be spun as a solution to an otherwise unsolvable problem and crazy because it's so fraught with unquantifiable risks and because, once begun, it must be continued *forever*.

As I read through the book, I became convinced the author would, in the end, dump a bucket on geoengineering. But, he doesn't. Briefly acknowledging there's a choice – undertake it or don't – he skips past it to focus on the question of *why* we would undertake it. Do it with the intent to continue endless growth or do it to buy time to get our values right while we wean ourselves from this impossible idea?

It's at this point I fear most readers will be drawn into the 'intent' debate rather than the more fundamental one about 'choice'. To focus on the latter, it's essential to understand, that climate change, regardless of the fact that it's a full-blown existential threat, is but a symptom of an even larger problem: population growth.

Seen in this light geoengineering becomes a cure that's worse than the disease. The only real hope lies in addressing the increase in human numbers that's pushing the entire human enterprise beyond the capacity of the planet to provide for it. There can be no higher calling than helping others to see this fundamental fact.

Report

Dialogue on a Crowded Planet: Population Policy and Dwindling Resources

Symposium organised by Sustainable Population Australia, University of Queensland, 13 April 2013.

The forum discussed the consequences of population growth for energy security, food security and future wellbeing of Australians.

QUT's Dr **Murray Lane** presented his research modelling the determinants of human carrying capacity at local, regional and national levels. "Determining the limits to human population should not be left to chance - it must be planned," he said.

Adelaide-based peak oil analyst Dr **Michael Lardelli** said "Australia's fuel security situation is precarious and seriously threatens our food security and economy.

"The oil industry in Australia is giving government a 'don't worry, be happy' message to avoid making expensive behavioural changes and investments. But the longer we delay, the more severe will be the consequences of the inevitable fuel supply disruptions that are coming."

Keynote speaker and SPA Patron, Professor **Ian Lowe**, who last year published a book entitled *Bigger or Better? Australia's population debate*, warned: "The future consequences of current short-sighted and uninformed policies will be enormous.

"Australia's population policy has for decades been based on the myth that population growth is good for the economy," he said. "The social and environmental costs are ignored, even though they are also substantial."

It was, however, mining engineer Dr **Simon Michaux** who really shook up the audience. While population has grown 5.3 times since 1850, he said, per capita consumption has expanded 8.6 times meaning total consumption has grown 45 times. Of this, non-renewables make up 89 per cent.

Humans understandably use the highest quality, richest and easiest to obtain resources first.

Mining, Dr Michaux's industry, consumes 10 per cent of world energy, spews out nearly ten per cent of toxic pollutants, threatens 40 per cent of the world's undisturbed forests, but generates a only small share of the jobs. It does, however, empower everything else by supplying raw materials for manufacturers and energy. The ratio of discarded rock and waste can be high, for instance, with gold, there are three tons of waste for every gold wedding ring.

Unfortunately, since 2000, the efficiency with which capital, labour, materials, services and energy are utilised to generate a unit of product is declining. Now

40 per cent more inputs are needed to generate a single unit of mineral product. In the case of copper, once large nuggets were found on dry stream beds, smaller nuggets in streams but even when they were gone and they started digging it out of the ground in the 1850s, the grade was high – around 15-20 per cent. Now at the big mines like Bingham Kennecott, the grade is down to 0.2 to 0.5 per cent.

The trends in all ore grades is declining, however, not just copper. Gold, lead, zinc, nickel, diamonds, uranium and silver ore grades are also. Nevertheless, production has increased, driven by increasing demand. It has only been economies of scale that have kept things going and carried the industry. Ore has been getting progressively harder so more power is required to break the rock; ore grain size has become more disseminated with again, an increase in power draw. Now all that's left is low grade, difficult to extract deposits, located in increasingly remote and 'challenging' postcodes (think Congo). Eventually, the costs of dealing with the wastes will exceed the value of the metal.

The energy consumed in mining has increased 450 per cent in the past 40 years. Ore is shifted in diesel trucks that can carry 255 tonnes at a time. Meanwhile, conventional oil peaked in 2006 and coal will peak around 2025. The cost of mining basically correlates with the price of oil. We have, basically, a petroleum-based economy. Power and water shortages loom, yet not only is energy required to extract metal, potable water is needed. To remain economically viable and to meet demand, the operational scale has to double or triple in size. But the party's over when demand for something vital outstrips supply. Some vital services cease to function reliably, or at all. People come to realise that the world they live in is no longer possible.

Peak mining will affect every aspect of economic development. Peak mining combined with peak finance will lead to peak manufacturing and, in turn, peak industrialisation. This will be the end of the industrial revolution; the end of materialism.

Out of the ashes, a new system will be developed through necessity. The transition, however, may not be easy and it may take some time. JG



Left to right: Simon Michaux, Michael Lardelli, Ian Lowe and Murray Lane. Photo: Brian Rickards

STOP POPULATION GROWTH NOW

Stop Population Growth Now Party registered in South Australia

Michael Lardelli wrote in April: I would like to congratulate Bob (Couch) on his success in registering this party. I know it has been an immense amount of work for him to come this far. Heaven knows how many km he has walked in his letterboxing efforts as well as the endless hours of unpaid administrative work in replying to applications and then repeating the whole membership declaration exercise in order to satisfy the new SA state rules that were put in place to hinder new party registrations ... Those outside of SA do not know what a hot-button issue population has become in this state. We now have 11 months to prepare for a state election that will be very hard fought by all sides and that will permit a large amount of relatively cheap advertising (e.g. via corflutes etc.) Bring it on!

The Pro-Growthers



Michael Easson

Following a suggestion by SPA member Ken Golding, we are starting a regular feature on people who are opposed to the objectives of SPA, namely, those that promote population growth. First off the blocks is **Michael Easson** AM, former Vice President of the ACTU, former Senior Vice President of the ALP (NSW Branch) and inaugural Chairman of the NSW Urban Taskforce. He was editor of a generally pro-growth book published in 1990: M. Easson (Ed), *Australian and Immigration: Able to Grow?* He is currently Executive Chairman of EG Property Group that advises large property owners about land use change. In 2012 he was appointed by Immigration Minister Chris Bowen as Chair of the Ministerial Council on Business Skills Migration. He recently rejected claims by the new Minister for Immigration, Brendan O'Connor, that the 457 temporary visa scheme was being rorted.

Sexual and reproductive health education key to tackle child marriage in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world. It also has one of the lowest rates of birth registration in the world which constrains legal protection against child marriages. Two in three women marry before the legal age of marriage, which is 18 for girls, and one in three women start childbearing before the age of 20. Many parents actively push their

daughters into early marriage to avoid stains on the family honour by pre-marital sexual activity. Marrying at a young age and early sexual contact put girls at higher risk of sexual health problems, including HIV.

(Editor's note: SPA recently signed a petition calling for an end to child marriage.)

www.girlsnotbrides.org



Save the Children's position on family planning

Save the Children supports the view that reproductive health, including the freedom to determine the number, timing and spacing of one's children, is a fundamental human right to which everyone is entitled. All persons have the right to access family planning services and to choose freely from a wide range of family planning methods in order to achieve their desired number of children.

Save the Children is committed to the ICPD's goal and the Millennium Development Goal Five target of "achieving universal access to family planning by 2015." To this end, *Save the Children* advocates for and supports the provision of family services in countries around the world.

Save the Children believes that women, men and young people should be able to freely determine the number, spacing and timing of their children and have access to the means to exercise their choice. Family planning services should be of high quality, comprehensive, voluntary, affordable, culturally-appropriate, non-discriminatory and accessible to all women, men and young people.



15,000 Endangered Species Condoms for Earth Day

News from the Center for Biological Diversity www.endangeredspeciescondoms.com/

April 22 was the 43rd Earth Day. To celebrate, our intrepid population activists gave away more than 15,000 free endangered species condoms at events around the country. All told, our population prophylactics were part of 20 Earth Day events in 13 states -- from New York and Florida to Alaska and Hawaii. The condoms were featured at music festivals, ecology fairs, zoos, restoration projects and film screenings.

Each colorful condom package, featuring species

News & Views

threatened by human population growth, is a surefire way to get a conversation started about how our burgeoning numbers are putting wildlife, pristine places and our own quality of life at risk across the globe and right here at home.



Water shortage hits Pacific women

Interpress Service, 8 April 2013

HONIARA, Solomon Islands. The Solomon Islands, a developing island nation in the south-west Pacific Islands, has one of the highest urbanisation rates in the region, and the basic service infrastructure is struggling to cater for the influx of people from the provinces to the capital, Honiara....

A spokesperson for the Solomon Islands Water Authority (SIWA), which is responsible for the urban water supply, explained to IPS that the “current (water supply) network is not able to supply the water demand due to pipe restrictions and the limited and aged pipe network *cannot meet the demand of the rapidly expanding population in Honiara.*”

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/04/water-shortage-hits-pacific-women/>

Parliamentarians demand a Decade of Family Planning

May 9, 2013. European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development

On 9 and 10 May 2013, 57 parliamentarians from 34 countries from around the world (including 14 G20 countries) met in the Houses of Parliament in London, where they were joined by over 100 other participants from across the fields of international development.

They discussed the importance of family planning and reproductive health in development, and how they are key to issues such as sustainable development, women’s empowerment and maternal and newborn health. At the end of the event they agreed upon a powerful message to the policymakers who are planning the future framework for International Development. It said: “[We] demand that G8/G20 leaders place family planning in the context of sexual and reproductive health and rights at the core of the post-2015



development agenda.”

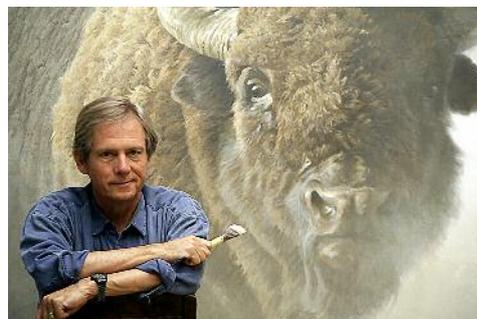
<http://www.iefpd.org/conferences/64/3716/g8/g20-london-uk-2013-parliamentarians-demand-a-decade-of-family-planning/>

Population Institute Canada appoints first Patron

Clifford Garrard writes: “Robert Bateman, one of Canada’s best known and most respected naturalists and wildlife artists, has become a PIC patron, our first.

“In accepting the invitation, Bateman said the world’s population had increased from 2 to 7 billion in his lifetime, adding that virtually ‘all the world’s problems’, not least climate change, are directly related to the relentless growth in human numbers. Bateman has been described by the Audubon Society of Canada as one of the top 100 environmental proponents of the 20th

century. His deep concern for the health of the planet and for a sustainable future for mankind parallels our own.”



Letter to editor

Rising costs and increasing woes

Yesterday’s West Australian (28 May) carried a report of children with cancer waiting up to 500 days just to get a doctor’s appointment at WA’s only children’s hospital. Children! Cancer! 500 days wait!!!

The same issue carries a story of the Prime Minister giving a generous donation to Bill Gates for the global immunisation program. We should help global programs but we also need to care for our own.

Perhaps this is just another case of the “invisible third” of this nation, good for providing funds to the Federal coffers, suffering from decade-long, fastest population growth with its devastating need and costs for additional services and infrastructure.

It is about time the Australian government recognised that the costs of population growth are ultimately borne by the Australian residents in rising costs and diminishing services.

Population growth must be issue number one at the coming election. It is the driver of all our woes.

*Paddy (Patricia) Weaver
Nedlands, WA*

BRANCH NEWS

QLD: The Queensland Branch hosted a successful Annual General Meeting and public symposium at the University of Queensland on 13 April. Around 60 people

attended the forum, and all were impressed and motivated by the four excellent speakers. Unfortunately, a last-minute change of venue meant that we were not able to record the speakers, as this had been booked for the original theatre. Thanks to donations on the day, the branch covered the event costs with a profit of \$6.93.

We have continued with monthly film and discussion evenings at Toowong Library, on the third Monday each month. April featured Albert Bartlett's "Arithmetic, Population and Energy" and in May we screened "Mother: Caring for 7 Billion". On 17 June we plan to show "An Introduction to Demography and Populations" by Joel Cohen, the author of "How many people can the Earth support?"

The branch will run stalls at two events in June: the Logan Enviro Action Festival (LEAF) on 2 June and the Sunshine Coast World Environment Day Festival on 9 June. Thanks to David Robertson for coordinating the stalls. We'd love to hear from any members willing to help out at either event.

Jane O'Sullivan

NSW: The Branch recently hosted the Sydney leg of Nicole Foss's Automatic Earth Tour. The event was fairly well attended and attracted many new faces to the Mitchell Theatre. MC and Vice President, Graham Wood did an excellent job of running the proceedings and made a strong case for joining SPA and signing our petition. Nicole Foss's presentation focused mainly on the likelihood of imminent financial collapse and argued that our most urgent task was to find ways to rebuild our economy along more sustainable lines. She was followed by Mark Diesendorf from UNSW who discussed the Steady State economic theory and the need to move to such a system in conjunction with population stabilisation. Scientist and author, Dr Haydn Washington then gave a passionate presentation hammering home the rather obvious (to some) notion that humans are dependent on the natural world and we destroy it at our own peril.

Kris Spike

WA: Thanks to our WA members letters keep flowing to The West and Sunday Times. Just as important are the contributions to local newspapers and electronic media. Our WA President Harry Cohen AM and Treasurer John Weaver have given talks recently to a number of community groups, including church groups and Labor women.

Preparations are in planning for a number of community events including the David Attenborough

visit. A more formidable event is the conference on biodiversity in September for the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives hosted by the WA Local Government Association. Joondalup will be the site for this meeting and the list of 200 international invited speakers is still being compiled. We are proposing that this list should include Bindi Irwin and Kelvin Thompson. We would appreciate support from SPA members for our suggestions to the organisers.

The most important action that we can all take is in the lead up to the coming Federal election. We seek assistance from every member in getting the views on Australia's population growth from all candidates. WA has had, with Queensland, the fastest growth of any state. We see the impact every day in the rising costs of living, unaffordable housing, water shortages, gridlock on our roads and public transport and the growing numbers of homeless people and beggars. Please express these concerns to all candidates and political parties and direct your vote accordingly. *Paddy Weaver*

SA: Peter Martin, Sandra Kanck, John Coulter and David Paton met with South Australia's Sustainability Minister Ian Hunter on 22 May. The Minister said several times that he is on side already. While that did not really reflect our impression last time, nevertheless, it could still be that he is more or less in agreement with our reservations on growth and how it undermines attempts to achieve a sustainable economy. Mr Hunter suggested we should be talking to the Chief Executives of various departments, as well as other Ministers and the Premier but also said he would be happy to keep meeting with us occasionally. He said several times that there was no money for new initiatives, and that he was about to make large cuts in his own areas of operation. He also talked of plans to use "citizen science" and "apps" to get young people involved in marine parks, and from this would come the wider use of shared and publicly available data.

David Paton presented a succinct argument on aspects of biodiversity in SA, and the Minister seemed to follow the thread and agree. David will follow up by sending details of the funding mechanism he has devised for developing biodiversity reserves. (see <http://www.bior.org.au/>).

Sandra will contact the Premier's office and seek a meeting, following the Minister's observation that, in terms of portfolio allocation, population is the Premier's responsibility.

After the meeting John, Sandra and Peter agreed that the sort of quiet lobbying exemplified by the meeting with Ian Hunter could be kept separate from the more public role of a Wakefield Group, and thus both could

SPA News

proceed.

John Coulter will invite the mining speaker, Simon Michaux, from the recent SPA AGM to present a public talk at the next SA-SPA AGM. *Peter Martin*

VIC/TAS: On March 23 the branch proudly held a well-attended general meeting to launch population sociologist, Sheila Newman's "Demography, territory and law: rules of animal and human populations" Sheila gave an introduction to her theory of population and answered questions from the audience.

Population growth, its effects and its presence in the media have been relentless, with an announcement by the Victorian state government that faster population growth will be encouraged in the regions specifically mentioning Geelong and surrounds which stand to inflate by 210,000 in population by 2050. The Melbourne media is filled with discussion around traffic, transport, planning and congestion issues and "solutions" resulting from ever rising population. The branch continues to plug away with a deal of success in having our say in letters to the editors on the main newspapers.

The Victorian premier, Denis Naphine on April 24 was quoted as saying at a chamber of commerce luncheon. "We believe that population growth is good for our economy, good for diversity, good for our quality of life." This is an avowed faith in the face all evidence to the contrary.

On May 21 Jill Quirk was an invited guest on the ABC RN hour long "Big Ideas" program on population. Another notable guest that evening was Bernard Salt.

Jill Quirk

ACT: The U3A course on population which the Branch organised is currently running at the Hughes community centre every Monday.

The committee has put a number of proposals to the national executive about the need to increase membership; about how to support specific like-minded political parties in the coming election; about having a

separate supporters' list; and that the NumbersUSA model of outreach be considered. *Christopher Dorman*

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Jenny Goldie

It was good to take over the reins of SPA again at the AGM in Brisbane in April. Our sincere thanks go to Sandra Kanck for her four years of leadership. It was an excellent AGM and symposium (see report page 9) thanks to the organisation of the Queensland branch. All four speakers were extremely good even though the subject matter was disturbing. The new executive had a much needed face-to-face meeting the next day which makes our bimonthly phone hook-ups much easier when we know who we are.

After a bit of a dip, our membership is picking up again though not our donations which are critical for our work. **Please consider making a donation before the end of the financial year, remembering they are tax deductible.** Donations can now be made on-line or cheques can be sent to the SPA office (made out to SPA) at PO Box 3851, Weston Creek, ACT 2611. And please consider making a donation to the scholarship fund for the Fenner Conference so 10 graduate students can attend for free. Please make out cheques to 'Australian Academy of Science' rather than to 'SPA'. Thank you!

Our indomitable member of the national executive and president of the Queensland branch, **Dr Jane O'Sullivan**, leaves early June for a meeting of the UNFCCC (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) in Bonn, Germany. SPA has been allocated both an exhibit space and a side event. A submission was made to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA) in March and copies will be distributed at Bonn. Jane then travels to England and will speak to the Population Matters Oxford Group. She has been working on an analysis of the costs of population growth in the UK in collaboration with Roger Martin, Chair of Population Matters.



The incoming national executive meets in Brisbane 14 April. Back row l. to r.: Nick Car, Peter Schlesinger, Nola Stewart, John Coulter, Kris Spike, Michael Lardelli. Front row l. to r.: Jane O'Sullivan, Jenny Goldie, Jan McNicol, Sandra Kanck, Christopher Dorman. *Photo: Ross Kingsland.*

David Attenborough's Australian tour

The world's best-known natural history film-maker is revisiting Australia to appear live on stage in *Sir David Attenborough - A Life on Earth*. On this tour he will talk about his life over six decades as a traveller and broadcaster.

On arrival in Australia, Attenborough, now 87, cautioned Australia against pursuing further population growth, and questioned why the country still debated whether it needed to grow its population.

"Why would you want to do that? I don't understand that," he said. "The notion that you could continue to expand and increase and grow in an infinite way on a planet which is finite, is a kind of lunacy. You can see how mad that is by the expression that you can't believe that you can grow infinitely in a finite place - unless of course you're an economist."

Nevertheless, Attenborough insisted he was not on a proselytising tour.

"On occasions I speak on these issues where it's appropriate and where the subject has come up," he said.

Attenborough said while he did not believe bureaucrats and governments should meddle in a family's right to have children, had China not introduced its one-child policy in 1979 the consequences for the planet would have been catastrophic.

"One thing you can say is that in places where women are in charge of their bodies, where they have the vote, where they are allowed to dictate what they do and what they want, whether it's proper medical facilities for birth control, the birth rate falls," he said.



David Attenborough
Photo: brisbanetimes.com.au

BRISBANE 8pm Tuesday 11 June 2013
CANBERRA 8pm Thursday 13 June 2013
PERTH 8pm Saturday 15 June 2013
ADELAIDE 8pm Tuesday 18 June 2013
SYDNEY 8pm Wednesday 19 20 June 2013
MELBOURNE 8pm Saturday 22 June 2013

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.

Newsletter editor: Jenny Goldie
editor@population.org.au 256 Barooka Road,
Michelago NSW 2620

Webmaster: Nicholas Car 0438 227 737
webmaster@population.org.au

Website: www.population.org.au

SPA NATIONAL OFFICE BEARERS

President: Jenny Goldie Phone 0401 921 453
president@population.org.au

Vice-president: Hon. Sandra Kanck 08 8336 4114
vp@population.org.au

Minutes Secretary: Nola Stewart 02 9686 3542
meetingsecretary@population.org.au

Correspondence secretary: Jan McNicol
secretary@population.org.au

Treasurer: treasurer@population.org.au

TRUSTEES OF THE POPULATION FUND

Mr Gordon Hocking

Mr Ross Kingsland

Dr Bill Sorby

SPA NATIONAL OFFICE

Administrative Office: Successful Alliances
Office: 2C, 18 Napier Close, Deakin ACT 2600
Address: PO Box 3851, WESTON CREEK ACT 2611

Phone: 02 6288 6810 Fax: 02 6288 7195

Email: info@population.org.au

REGIONAL BRANCHES

NSW: President: Mr Kris Spike. Ph:02 96803245
nsw@population.org.au

WA: President: Dr Harry Cohen AM Ph: 08 9386 1890
wa@population.org.au

VIC: President: Jill Quirk Ph: 03 9509 7429
vic@population.org.au

ACT: President: Dr Christopher Dorman
Ph: 02 6251 1945 act@population.org.au

SEQ: President: Dr Jane O'Sullivan
Ph: 07 3379 8090 seqld@population.org.au

SA: President: Peter Martin Ph: 0417 776 494
sa@population.org.au