



NEWSLETTER

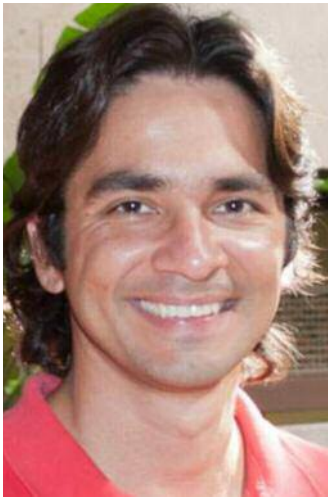
Sustainable Population Australia Inc

No. 115
April, 2014

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Population growth trivialised or ignored



Camilo Mora

A ground-breaking study published in *Ecology and Society*^j has found that the issue of population growth has been downplayed and trivialised in scientific, public and political circles. This despite population growth's fundamental and negative role in human welfare and biodiversity loss.

Author of the study, Assistant Professor of Geography at the University of Hawaii, Camilo Mora, reviewed 200 scientific papers, 70 per cent from the last decade including ones from Dr Jane O'Sullivan of the University of Queensland and Prof Bob Birrell of Monash, to highlight the key role of overpopulation in several pressing social and environmental issues. He found 'the issue of overpopulation is being critically underplayed and fails to influence decisions in which millions of people and species could be negatively affected...'

Most worrying perhaps is that overpopulation, despite being clearly linked directly or indirectly to the deterioration of ecological systems, has been rarely considered by much of the conservation biology community. As for climate change, projections of human population numbers suggest that greenhouse gas production could be equivalent between the developed and developing world because of high consumption by the former and large population growth of the latter. Yet the 2007 report of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) makes little to no reference to the issue of population growth or family planning.

Alarming, in the US, public opinion on population growth as a pressing problem declined from 68 per cent in 1992 to a mere 8 per cent in 2000. This is of particular concern because 'interest in the topic among

developed countries greatly determines the success of education and family planning programs in developing nations'.

Mora makes the point that overpopulation is not confined to developing nations. He cites the case of former Presidential candidate Mitt Romney who recently released a photo of himself with 20 or his 22 grandchildren. Several other candidates in the last US election had 5 to 7 children.

Why the declining interest in population issues? Mora suggests a key factor is scientific illiteracy of the public in general. For western countries it is below 17 per cent and probably even less in developing countries. Yet scientific literacy is at the core of real comprehension of what overpopulation numbers mean and for standing up to conflicting religious and political beliefs.

A top pressing concern for governments, Mora notes, is the need to supply jobs since high levels of unemployment can cause economic and social turmoil. Yet because of population growth, in the next decade there will be a shortfall of 640 million jobs worldwide. Absorbing the new labour supply is made more difficult for a number of reasons: advanced technology reduces the need for labour; declining land for agriculture which is a main sector for employment; and in developed countries, job outsourcing through globalisation.

To achieve stabilisation of numbers, Mora argues that simply achieving 2.1 replacement fertility is not enough because of increased longevity and the overlap of generations. In fact, 'population stabilisation is achieved when the natality rate is equal to the mortality rate, which by today's demographics would be equivalent to one child per women'. Intrusive and coercive government policies are not the answer, he argues, rather increased public awareness of the issue and for that 'we need greater courage from scientists to take a public stand on the issue of population growth and on the family, state, and natural costs of childbearing'.

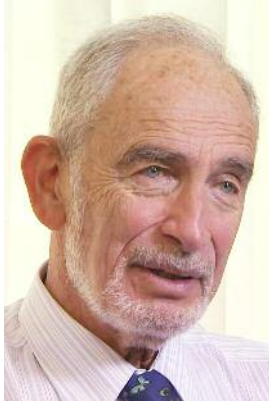
Jenny Goldie

^j<http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol19/iss1/art38/>

Humanity's gamble

Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich

Speech delivered by Paul Ehrlich to the AAAS meeting in Chicago on 16 February 2014.



Paul R. Ehrlich
photo: United Natures Media

Humanity is taking a gigantic gamble in assuming it can feed and support as many as 9.7 billion people in 2050, a third more than exist today, without revolutionary changes in behaviour. The world community is betting that climate disruption will not prevent continuing increases in yields of grains and soybeans and, combined with ocean acidification, not reduce fisheries productivity. It is

betting that, in the face of climate disruption, changes in infrastructure and other measures will prevent further deterioration of water security, especially in critical access to water for irrigation. It is betting that the food system, heavily dependent on oil and itself producer of roughly a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions, can make a substantial start on kicking both habits. It is betting that the need for more food will not prevent society from undertaking a serious commitment towards global atmospheric decarbonisation. It is betting that the energy-intensive and highly polluting Haber-Bosch process can continue to keep nitrogen levels in agricultural systems adequate and to a large degree replace sound soil husbandry, even while reducing the deleterious effects of overfertilisation runoff on ocean and freshwater productivity. It is betting that the geopolitical problems surrounding the world's available supplies of phosphorous for fertiliser will be solved. It is betting that integrated pest management can safely and effectively replace both the pest-control service of winter in mid-latitudes as the global annual temperature rises, and the pest-control services of birds, bats, and predacious insects as their populations decline in the great sixth extinction episode now well under way.

That's far from the last of the bets. Humanity is also betting that, especially for the variety and nutritional quality of food, pollination services will be maintained despite the biodiversity crisis. It is betting that the 'genetic insurance' provided by the wild relatives and indigenous cultivars of food crops will not be eroded or eliminated from the countryside and remaining wildlands by the drivers of global environmental change operating in synergy. It is betting that the growing demand for meat and bio-fuels will not greatly

reduce the access of the poor to grains. And perhaps most important, it is betting that people will find the jobs that will provide the income to purchase what food is available.

At the moment this looks like a very bad series of bets, especially since close to a billion people are already hungry and more than that are malnourished. Losing several of the bets could easily result in many deaths and great hardship, or even in some combination of mass starvation, epidemics, and warfare, leading to a general breakdown.

The odds of avoiding a collapse could be improved if society launched a coordinated effort to stop expanding land under agriculture; increase yields where possible; revise the industrial agriculture system to make it more ecologically sound, place much more emphasis on soil conservation and increase the efficiency of fertiliser, water and energy use; become more vegetarian; reduce food wastage; stop overfishing and changing the chemistry of the oceans; greatly enlarge investment in, and dramatically change the direction of, agricultural research and development; educate all about how the human food system works, and move proper nutrition for all to the top of the global policy agenda. It is a large order.

Scientists, in analysing the prospects for supplying an exploding human population with adequate diets, must point out that the citizens of developed nations should stop at an absolute maximum of two children per couple and work to curb their consumption. They must abandon the impossible goal of perpetual economic growth through increasing consumption. For any scientist not to emphasise these points wherever possible borders on the unethical.

The situation in developing nations, especially in sub-Saharan Africa where population is still growing at 2.7 percent annually, is more complex. It certainly includes a great need for dramatically restraining reproduction in most circumstances, a major exception being in rural areas where infant mortality remains high and where having more than two children is often an economic necessity.

In summary, the human predicament is unlikely to be solved unless the scale of the human enterprise can be reduced as rapidly as humanely possible.

All is not hopeless. Demographic shrinkage is approaching in many over-consuming rich nations, where it is most important. There is substantial room for improvement in crop yields in Africa, for building rural health clinics there, and for making modern contraception and backup abortion universally available.

New Population Organisation

Why I have set up Population Growth Slow Down (PGSD)

by Martin Tye



Martin Tye

There are many bodies, political and non-political, attempting to cut through the veil of secrecy and supply of misleading information surrounding the massive surge in population growth which is taking place in this country at the moment. PGSD's understanding of the issues is much the same as SPA's.

The idea of forming a new organisation was

born out of my frustration with the slow take-up of what appears to me to be the bleeding obvious! 'Population Growth Slow Down' is essentially my attempt to re-brand and re-present the issue in such a way that it has broader appeal to the general public. I have attempted to re-present the information in a more accessible format. I hope this comes across in the website www.populationgrowthslowdown.com.au. I am from a business background and know that branding and presentation are everything.

As I see it, the main reason why SPA is not gaining the public support it deserves is that its concepts are too far ahead of what the general public is capable of digesting. SPA is only tapping into that very small percentage of the general public willing to take the time to research and think about the issue and as such, are mainly 'preaching to the converted'. The work of SPA, Sustainable Population Party (SPP) and others is absolutely essential to the cause. I would not want to see them re-brand in this way as it would trivialise their work.

So I saw a gap in the market for an organisation to attempt to build a bridge between the average person and organisations such as SPA: to lead people into the issue via their emotions, a touch of drama and easily digestible bits of information (mostly drawn from the work of SPA, SPP and the like). The best analogy I can think of is that SPA is the engine room while we are the window dressing.

So why use 'slow down', rather than 'stop population growth' or 'stabilise' etc? The answer is simple. If you

look at the 'immigration' section of our website you will see that our policy is the same as SPP. This will lead to a stabilisation of our population. But to put this front and centre is too much for the average person to comprehend; it scares them and they switch off immediately. Even if we were to implement zero net migration tomorrow, our population would continue to grow but much more slowly as births currently exceed deaths. It would still take years to stabilise.

I have seen firsthand that to jump straight into the stable population concept is an extremely difficult 'sell' (too much for the public to swallow). Better to highlight the short term in which we will slow down. Any population policy aimed at stability (or reduction) will first need to slow down. Let's get them thinking 'slow down' first. This is in accordance with my aim to bridge the gap, not to push the public too far, too fast. A population 'slow down' is easier to contemplate.

Our aim is to get the general public interested, to take the bait. To continue the fishing analogy, we hope to throw a net around a whole bunch of people who would never have considered the population issue. It will then be up to organisations such as SPA to take them to the next level (a deeper understanding).

Our game plan is very simple. Phase one is to gather as many members as possible. All we are asking people to do is join. This is free and all they are really doing is signing a petition saying they support what we stand for. Once we have gathered sufficient support we can then begin to throw our weight around. It is my hope that this will serve to boost support for organisations such as SPA. In no way is PGSD intended to be a rival.

Martin Tye is 56 years old and lives on the south coast of NSW. He has been a small business owner since 1987. Prior to this he obtained a BSc in Applied Geography at the University of Canberra. He ran as a candidate for the Sustainable Population Party (formerly Stable Population Party), for the seat of Eden-Monaro in the 2013 Federal election. He has now resigned and moved outside of politics where he feels more can be achieved by involving people of all political persuasions. He is now a full-time 'sustainability campaigner' with a major focus on the population issue. His goals are a strong and sustainable economy; a better 'quality of life' for current and future generations; and preservation of our natural environment.

FENNER CONFERENCE BOOK

To all those who have inquired about the book written by the speakers at the Fenner Conference last year (organised by SPA), it is in the hands of CSIRO Publishing and will be out in a few months.

Baby credits

By Keith Lethbridge

Keith is a member of the WA branch of SPA



Humans do what humans do. Elephants are far more destructive, but fortunately they aren't so successful at increasing their population. If they bred as rapidly as humans, they would soon destroy their habitat and suffer accordingly. This would be known as a plague of elephants. Nobody would be surprised at their suffering. It would be easily

predicted, measured and, if necessary, rectified. Other species breed more rapidly. We're all familiar with plagues of mice, rabbits and lemmings. They soon destroy their natural habitat, threaten the survival of other species, attract predators, starve and eventually are reduced back to sustainable numbers.

Humans are no different. As our numbers rise, our habitat is diminished. However, we do have the intellect to mitigate the destruction. Hence Carbon Credits. Of course Carbon Credits, even if successful, only address one of the symptoms of population pressure. Carbon Credits do nothing to reverse the underlying problem or the whole range of associated difficulties.

Population growth in Australia is the end product of deliberate and manipulative government policies. Nobody believes that we need more rabbits, lemmings, mice or elephants, but many people believe that without perpetual growth of human population, our economy, our standard of living and even our survival would be at risk. As a result of these beliefs, governments are persuaded to encourage immigration and even to pay people to have more babies.

When humans were few, we were encouraged to go forth and multiply. This was sound advice at the time. An economic system developed, based on growth and supported by debt. This worked very well. Most of the planet now teems with humans. Only about 14 per cent of these humans struggle in abject poverty, so the growth/debt system is considered to be a success. Despite destruction of habitat, of the environment and of other species, we are thought to need more growth, supported by more debt. Governments work hard to achieve this goal.

Paying people to have children creates a double jeopardy. Not only does it increase the environmental burden (the human plague) but it encourages those who are least capable of caring for children, to breed more.

A common argument for population growth is that we need young workers to support the needs of old folk. Japan is currently working its way through this alleged dilemma. Despite some difficulties, Japan remains as having one of the highest standards of living on the planet. In 20 or 30 years the Japanese age balance will have returned. This natural balance, along with a resulting lower population, is very likely to see Japan return to the golden age of self-sufficiency they enjoyed for centuries, before extreme growth set in.

Iran recently enjoyed a period of population stability without economic or social stress, thanks to government policy. Unfortunately, this policy has now been reversed, so Iran is likely to join other Middle-East countries in their rush towards hunger, thirst, poverty and social disruption.

If Carbon Credits can be used to place a monetary value on carbon emissions, why not create tradable Baby Credits? This would be a fertility incentive, either positive or negative as required at any given time. How would it work? Governments would consider factors of immigration, emigration, refugee obligations and the optimum population level for our natural resources. They would also consider the environment, the habitat needs of other species and the cultural, social preferences of our people. The first three factors (immigration, emigration and refugees) could be balanced to zero, or to a higher or lower level if required or desired.

Baby Credits would be available for couples, on application, with each couple being allowed a maximum number of Baby Credits to match the population needs of the country (whether this be stability, increase or decrease). They would need to register and be assessed as being capable of raising children in a reasonable and stable manner. Allocated Baby Credits would then be a tradable commodity. At times, in a seller's market, they may become very valuable. Each Baby Credit would include a government guarantee of free education, free health care and a job when the child reached adulthood.

Baby Credits would not be compulsory. Repeat: Not compulsory! People would be free to have as many children as they saw fit. However, this would be totally at the parents' own expense.

Yes, the age of entitlement is indeed over and the age of responsibility has arrived. This includes responsibility for the proper care of our children, for our communities, our country, the planet, the environment and the habitats of other species.

Perpetual growth is not sustainable. Go forth and stabilise!

Population Growth: A Multiplier of All Problems

Recent research authorised by UK's Population Matters



for a
sustainable
future

1. More Costly UK Infrastructure for No Gain

Each additional person requires £165k to be spent on

housing, infrastructure, equipment and training, to extend to them the services and living standard of current UK residents. This cost is borne by existing residents, through a higher cost of living. The cumulative cost of UK population growth to 2050, assuming constant per capita GDP, adds up to: low population growth £1.1tn; medium £2.7tn; high £4.2tn; simply to maintain, current standards. [O'Sullivan, Jane](#), University of Queensland, 2013

www.populationmatters.org/documents/cost_population_growth.pdf

2. More Aid plus More People does not equal Less Poverty

In the 20 highest fertility countries with the fastest growing populations, the number of people in absolute poverty has increased during the past three decades, despite a sharp increase in the amount of aid given. High fertility rates and consequent rapid population growth is the main cause. Three sectors of aid contributed to fertility reduction: family planning, education and economic infrastructure. But these received only 16.38% of total aid, and the key sector, family planning, received only 0.31%. [Wu, You](#) LSE 2013

www.populationmatters.org/documents/aid_people.pdf

3. More Europeans, Harder Carbon Targets

The EU population (500m) range projected for 2050 is 47m fewer to 75m more. The top end would at current rates per head emit 15.11bn more carbon tonnes than now by 2050, requiring 362K more 2MW wind turbine equivalents to hold emissions constant. To attain the 80% reduction target, the higher population would require proportionately more, with greater substitution and storage problems. [Gao, Mengran](#) Lancaster U 2013

www.populationmatters.org/documents/more_europeans.pdf

4. More People, More Power Stations, Higher Cost

The energy supply and cost implications of reaching the top of the projected 2050 UK population range (87.7m) rather than the bottom (68.7m), while cutting carbon emissions by 80% below 1990 levels:

- The additional cost of new power stations alone

would be between £380bn and £1.02tn;

- This zero carbon capacity equates to 260k more wind turbines, or 20 more turbines per day;
- Holding emissions constant requires additional renewables for 450k people pa (a new Liverpool)

[Chan, Steven](#) LSE 2012

www.populationmatters.org/documents/population_infrastructure_summary.pdf

5. More People, Fewer Jobs; Lower Population, Higher Prosperity

How many new jobs would the UK have to create to keep unemployment at mid-2000 rates under different population projections to 2050? The high projection (88m) requires an annual job creation rate of 0.60%; the mid projection (79m) of 0.45%; and the low projection (68m) of 0.25%. [Xiao, Eric](#) LSE 2012

www.populationmatters.org/documents/population_prosperity.pdf

6. More People, Less Water

The implications for UK water supplies at the limits of the projected 2050 population range, 64-82 million, are: the higher end would require 1.5 - 4.9m more tonnes of water per day than the lower end; the additional reservoirs would cost £5.9 - £22.6bn more; all merely to maintain supply standards.

[Shukla, Rusha](#) LSE 2011

www.populationmatters.org/documents/water_report_summary.pdf

7. Running Up a Down Escalator: Carbon and Cost Implications of 10 Million More UK Residents by 2033

The medium ONS projection of 10m more people in the UK by 2033 would add:

- 1 bn of CO₂t; or renewables equivalent to 27k wind turbines, just to hold total emissions constant;
- £1tn extra expenditure on public infrastructure, just to maintain current standards. [Anastasaki, Erasmia](#) LSE 2010

www.populationmatters.org/documents/escalator_summary.pdf

8. UK Food Supply Vulnerability

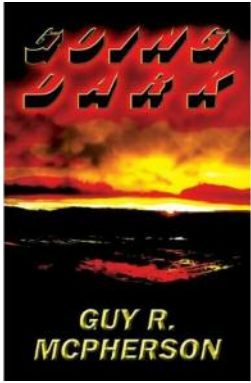
How many people could the UK feed in 2050?

At current consumption levels, the maximum sustainable UK population would be 15m.

The projected 75 million could be sustained only at 20% of current consumption per head. [Rousseau, Popi](#) LSE 2010

www.populationmatters.org/documents/food_supply_summary.pdf (cont. back page)

Book Review



Going Dark

by Guy McPherson

PublishAmerica 2013

Reviewed by Nick Goldie

“Following contemporary culture leads directly to the Sixth Great Extinction. Following contemporary culture tips us further into human population overshoot on an overcrowded

planet.”

Guy McPherson was an academic conservation biologist. In the Introduction to his tenth book, *Going Dark*, he explains that a decade ago, as he was editing a book about climate change, he concluded that the human race was facing a very uncertain future, in fact no future at all.

“In June 2012 the ocean of evidence on climate change overwhelmed me, and I no longer subscribe to the notion that habitat for humans will exist on Earth beyond the 2030s.”

These are fighting words, and I looked for good scientific evidence to back them up. However, McPherson is a discursive writer, and *Going Dark* is in three loosely divided sections.

For the first part of this quite slim book, which is really a collection of independent essays, McPherson seems to be more interested in his own history, and the trajectory which took him from successful teacher to what he rather mysteriously calls “the mud hut”. Later in the book he explains, allusively, that he now lives in an adobe dwelling in the desert.

He spends some pages looking at the notion of hope, and what he calls the “hopium” that keeps us going, when rationally we should simply give it all away. This theme becomes rather overwhelming: at one point I simply put the book down and said: *I wish he would stop whingeing!*

Of course, near-term extinction is a good enough reason to shed a tear or two, and in the third section of the book McPherson proposes a sort of existential acceptance, much like the “nobility” of Sisyphus in Camus’ fable. He knows it will end in tears, but he keeps stoically on with his appointed task, heaving the rock to the top of the hill only to watch as it rolls back down again.

The central section of the book contains the scientific rationale for McPherson’s certainty that the end is nigh. It also has some stinging criticisms of the capitalist enterprise, and in particular of Barack Obama.

“I cannot imagine a worse president than Obama, although that’s what I thought about his predecessor too. I’m hardly the only person to refer to Obama as the worst president ever.”

McPherson’s view is that the US Democrats, whom he once supported, have moved so far to the right that they have simply co-opted the Republicans, and are able to get away with massive abuses “simply by using the Republicans as cover.”

What he cannot forgive in Obama is that the President is fully aware of the lies and duplicity which keep him in office, and that he has willingly embraced the system which imprisons, tortures and kills its own citizens. The requirements for maintaining an empire, especially a failing empire, are obedience at home, oppression abroad, and wholesale destruction of the living planet. As early as 2009 Obama was even fully aware of the probability of near-term extinction, but he did what he was told to do: “he lied about collapse, and he lied about climate change. And he still does.”

The central essay is called *Climate Chaos is Poised to Kill us All*, and opens with a brisk attack on the media, “fully captured by corporations and the corporate states.” McPherson despairs of his fellow scientists, because of their inherent conservatism, which leads them to down-play threats even when the threats are glaringly obvious.

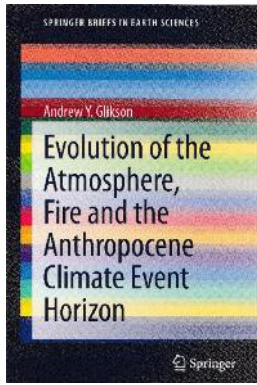
He lists the different ways in which the human race is about to wipe itself out: climate change as number one, but the consequences of non-lethal threats such as over-population rapidly become lethal as they are compounded by economic collapse, rampant disease, loss of soil and water resources, sea level rise, extreme weather and nuclear contamination.

Carbon dioxide and methane, though, are the chief culprits. McPherson reports that scientist Malcolm Light wrote in 2012 that Arctic methane, released by warming caused mainly by carbon dioxide, will lead to the extinction of *all* life on earth before 2045.

Meanwhile, McPherson gets on with his own life, however much of it still remains. He long ago gave up his post as a professor, and moved with his partner to “the mud hut” on a small block of land, shared with another couple. They grow vegetables, milk goats, maintain an orchard, and socialize with their neighbours. McPherson described himself as “an academic who could barely distinguish between a screwdriver and a zucchini ...” but he learns practical skills.

And at the end, he writes: “I no longer think that we’ll save the remaining shards of the living planet beyond another human generation.”

Book Review



Evolution of the Atmosphere, Fire and the Anthropocene Climate Event Horizon

By Andrew Y Glikson

Published by Springer.
Dordrecht, Heidelberg, New York, London 2014. \$106.95

Reviewed by Jenny Goldie

Why review two books on climate change in a newsletter focussed on population? Because the fortunes of humans have risen and fallen as climate has changed over the whole period of human evolution. Civilisations have even collapsed following prolonged dry periods, such as the great Khmer civilisation after the Angkor droughts in the 14th and 15th centuries.

Andrew Glikson is a well-known Canberra-based geologist who has been warning of climate change for some years now. His lectures and writing can be a bit dense at times – witness the title of the book – but the quality of his research is unquestioned. If you need a book to answer that glib rejoinder to climate science, namely, ‘but the climate’s always changed’, then this is the one for you, if you can afford the eye-watering price. Of course, the climate’s changed but for other reasons than why it is changing now. Glikson goes back to the beginning of the Earth to describe these atmospheric changes. He is a geologist, after all, and knows the geological history, and from the reading of isotopes, foraminifera, stomata and a host of other indicators, he can extrapolate what ancient climates were like.

In its own way, this book is as bleak as Guy McPherson’s book *Going Dark* (see page 6), but provides more scientific underpinnings for the assertion that we face a possible apocalypse. Every chapter has a wealth of references, sometimes four pages of them. Glikson is an expert on the Five Mass Extinctions including the second worst, K-T that knocked out the dinosaurs 65 million years ago (mya) and caused 45 per cent of global genera to go extinct, and the worst, the Permian extinction of 251 mya when 78 per cent of genera were extinguished.

There were other extinction events as well, if not ‘mass’ ones, such as that during the Paleo-Eocene Thermal Maximum (PETM) 55.9 mya when temperatures rose about 5°C largely due to significant release of methane. This was an ice-free period for the world and consequently sea-levels were significantly higher.

Glikson argues that we are already well into the Sixth

Mass Extinction aided by anthropogenic climate change. While some argue that the on-set of the human-dominated Anthropocene era began 6000 years ago (CO₂ from land-clearing and fires) or 4000 years ago (methane from rice cultivation), and others from the Industrial Revolution 250 years ago, Glikson claims the Anthropocene began with the first kindling of fire by humans in the mid-Pleistocene (2.0 – 1.0 mya) when fire was used to modify extensive land surfaces.

Now, however, we are in the ‘Great Carbon Oxidation Event’ that began in the 18th Century. The combustion of coal, oil and gas has released around 360 GtC (billion tons of carbon) and, in addition, land-clearing and fires have added another 150 GtC to the atmosphere. The atmospheric rise in CO₂ from 280ppm in pre-Industrial times to 397-400ppm exceeds any in the geological record including the PETM and the K-T asteroid impact. Measured temperature rise rates of ~0.003°C/year (or without aerosol masking ~0.008°C/year) exceed all previous rise rates with one exception.

As we are already seeing, the increase in sea water temperatures enhances the hydrological cycle, with consequent floods and cyclones. Current trends are shifting the atmosphere towards a state analogous to the end-Pliocene, before 2.8mya, a period when the Greenland and west Antarctic ice-sheets melted. Yet it is the polar ice caps, sources of cold air vortices and ocean currents such as the Humboldt and California that keep the Earth’s overall temperature in balance. Melting of these ice-caps is already doubling every 5-10 years, exceeding the contribution to sea-level rise from thermal expansion and mountain glaciers.

Towards the end of the book, Glikson finally dispenses with the heavily referenced text and gives free rein to his anger and despair at humanity’s failure to act in the face of this ‘Planeticide’. Instead of any meaningful attempt to slow-down, arrest or reverse global warming,

‘the bulk of extra resources continue to be poured into the military, entertainment, sports, gambling, electronic gaming, and drugs poisoning the young’s mind. With a majority oblivious to the fast changing climate, misinformed by vested interest and their media outlets, betrayed by cowardly leaders and discouraged by the sheer magnitude of the event, beyond human power, only a few scientists and nature lovers remain, becoming the subject of witch hunts, while humanity is drifting into unparalleled catastrophes.’

Andrew Glikson, like James Hansen and David Attenborough to whom he dedicates this book, may be a Jeremiah, but is also a hero of our time.

Guidance on the provision of contraception information and services

UNAA, 19 March 2014

The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched new guidance that aims to help countries ensure human rights are respected by providing couples, women and girls with the information and services required to avoid unwanted pregnancies. The guidance complements existing WHO recommendations for sexual and reproductive health programmes such as the guidance on maternal and newborn health, sexuality education, and prevention of unsafe abortion and core competencies for primary health care.

<http://www.unaa.org.au/guidance-on-the-provision-of-contraception-information-and-services.html>

Small is good for SA economy, says report

InDaily, 20 March 2014

South Australia's economy is in better shape than most analysts suggest, a new report says.

'Growth without Growth' by local urban research consultancy ipData, claims South Australia and Adelaide may be outperforming other states on a per capita basis when long-term indicators are considered on a per capita basis.

"Indeed, the state and city 'punch well above their weight' compared to their population size," ipData's Executive Director George Giannakodakis said today.

"The research indicates that over the past 10 years SA has been growing its Gross State Product (GSP) at a much faster rate than comparatively larger states; that its debt per capita is actually the lowest of any mainland state; that it invests a proportionally higher level of good debt into infrastructure than other states, which underpins productivity improvements, and that Adelaide has the most affordable inner and middle ring housing in the nation."



State net debt per capita

<http://indaily.com.au/business/2014/03/20/small-good-sa-economy-says-report/>

World heading for 'collapse in decades': Nasa-funded study

My Daily News, 17 March 2014

Modern civilisation is heading for collapse within a matter of decades because of growing economic instability and pressure on the planet's resources, according to a scientific study funded by Nasa...

In the report based on his "Human and Nature Dynamical" (Handy) model, the applied mathematician Safa Motesharri wrote: "the process of rise-and-collapse is actually a recurrent cycle found throughout history"...

"Collapse [however] can be avoided and population can reach equilibrium if the per capita rate of depletion of nature is reduced to a sustainable level, and if resources are distributed in a reasonably equitable fashion," the scientists said.

<http://www.mydailynews.com.au/news/world-heading-collapse-decades-nasa-funded-study/2200497/>

Rort fears as 457 visa loophole reopened

Sydney Morning Herald, 12 March 2014

The Abbott government has quietly reopened a visa loophole that will allow employers to hire an unlimited number of foreign workers under a temporary working visa, in a move that unions say will bring back widespread rorting of the system.

In the Coalition's bid to remove all "red tape" from the 457 skilled migrant visa, employers will not be penalised or scrutinised if they hire more foreign staff than they applied for.

Before the loophole was closed in 2013 by the Labor government, companies in the mining, construction and IT industries were knowingly hiring hundreds more foreign workers than they had applied for.

In one example, an employer was granted approval for 100 visas over three years, but in 18 months he had brought in 800 workers under the 457 visa.

Climate change's effect on crop yields worse than thought: study

ABC News, 17 Mar 2014

A new study on the impacts of climate change shows warming will lead to heavier losses in global crop yields than previously believed.

Co-author Mark Howden from the CSIRO says it shows wheat, maize and rice crop yields decline by around 5 per cent for every degree of warming.

"Reductions in yields tended to increase as the temperature went up and up," he said.

Yields also go down more rapidly in tropical environments than they do in temperate environments, the study says.

Dr Howden says the result is worse than previous forecasts.

"Looking back a few years we thought maybe we could get away with a bit more warming before we went negative, but this is actually showing the spike will happen sooner than later," he said.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-03-17/climate-change-effect-on-crops-worse-than-thought-study/5325130>

Mumbai: Bright lights, tight city

Sydney Morning Herald, 21 February 2014

In Mumbai, one of the world's fastest-growing cities, up to a million people can be crammed into one square kilometre. *Amrit Dhillon reports on a megacity collapsing under its own weight.*

Like everyone condemned to life in a cell, Jeeta Avekar pines for a little patch of blue sky. Her dream is a home with a window. She lives in the Mumbai neighbourhood of Mahim, a fishing village, but also one of the city's many slums.



Jeeta Avekar, husband and daughter photo Amrit Dhillon

On the railings on the main road, small plastic packets containing "bummalo", the fish used for a famous local delicacy known as Bombay Duck, hang out to dry in the sun.

Off this main road is the rathole that is Avekar's home. She shares it with her partially paralysed husband, mother-in-law and 21-year-old daughter, Prachi. The approach is through a dark tunnel with a wet floor, which can take the width of just one person, a short person. There is no furniture, save the fridge.

A metal ladder in one corner leads to an opening in the low roof into which Prachi and her grandmother crawl at night so that Avekar, 40, and her husband have enough space to sleep on the floor. In some Mumbai tenements, living quarters are so cramped that family members sleep on the floor in shifts.

Avekar must share a communal lavatory with 50 other families. "I have to get up at 4am to go to the toilet," she

says. "If I leave it till six or seven, I'll have to wait in the queue for two hours."

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/world/mumbai-bright-lights-tight-city-20140220-333yk.html>

Inaugural World Wildlife Day Brings Dire Warnings

Environment News Service, 3 March 2014

"Some of the world's most charismatic animals are in immediate danger of extinction as a result of habitat loss and illicit trafficking," warned UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, as the world marks the first World Wildlife Day.

From Geneva to Tokyo and from New York to Nairobi, people around the world are attending special events to mark the day in Bangladesh, Belgium, China, Germany, Mongolia, New Zealand, Peru, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, the United Kingdom and the United States, among others.

At UN Headquarters in Geneva at the opening of the "Wild and Precious" exhibition, featuring photographs of dancing manta rays, elephants, apes and majestic trees, Ban said today, "Wildlife is part of our shared heritage. We need it for our shared future."

"Wildlife remains integral to our future through its essential role in science, technology and recreation, as well as its place in our continued heritage," said Ban, calling on all countries to protect biological diversity and halt environmental crimes.

Read more: <http://ens-newswire.com/2014/03/03/inaugural-world-wildlife-day-brings-dire-warnings/>

Melbourne's salad days are over, says Lord Mayor Robert Doyle

Herald Sun, March 19, 2014

Lord Mayor Robert Doyle has slammed the destruction of market gardens on the city fringe to make way for housing.

Cr Doyle said that places like Clyde in the outer southeast were prime food-growing areas, but were threatened by urban sprawl.

"We grow Melbourne's salads there, but it's not the highest and best use," he said.

"So over that wonderful arable land, growing in good soil with proximity to water and access to market — instead we're going to roll out houses."

Cr Doyle urged governments to stop building new suburbs where there were no jobs, no public transport and a lack of other infrastructure and services.

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/leader/south-east/melbournes-salad-days-are-over-says-lord-mayor-robert-doyle/story-fngnvmhm-1226859336856>

Branch Reports

VIC/TAS: In mid February the branch took part in the three-day Sustainable Living Festival “Big Weekend” Those who volunteered their time for our stall were - committee members, Vivienne Ortega, Jenny Warfe, Sue James, Jill Quirk, Gloria O’Connor and Michael Bayliss, as well as SPA members Graeme Bales, Mike McKeon, Peter Schlesinger, Linda Baird, Margit Alm, Jennie Epstein, Kelvin Thomson, Graeme Henschell, Shirley Proctor and Paul Prentice. Thanks to all! Mark O’Connor took part in “The Great Debate” on the Friday night on whether or not environmentalism is in denial (on climate change) cleverly swinging the topic around to population. Mark spoke on ABC 774 radio on the Saturday morning and then gave a very well attended talk “Conservation demands population policy” on the Saturday afternoon.

Unfortunately the growth roller-coaster goes in Melbourne, with prospects of large overflows into regional areas. The panel hearings on the East-West Link through Royal Park - a huge symbol of growth and de-naturing of our environment - are happening through March-April with community groups and councils opposing it. Five new tower blocks in the city have been approved and the Lord Mayor, Cr. Robert Doyle recently spoke on ABC radio very excitedly in favour of Melbourne’s high population growth and with no sensible justification. After a constant refrain over many years from SPA members, often in published letters to the editor, about the loss of agricultural land on the city’s fringes due to development the Lord Mayor has declared his concern over this. Unfortunately he declares himself happy with population growth as long as it is “smart” meaning, of course higher density living in Melbourne.

Committee member Michael Bayliss had a meeting with MP Adam Bandt in March to discuss Greens policy with respect to population. *Jill Quirk*

SA: Anticipating the SA election on March 15, SPA-SA convened a 'meet-the-candidates' event on Tues March 4 for the key seat of Adelaide. Each of the four main candidates were given 5-10 minutes to present their party's policies on 'Economic growth, population growth and sustainability'.

After a long and irrelevant preamble, the ALP candidate, David O’Loughlin, said proudly that his party had no population policy. Of course he didn't say that their policy settings and targets are all about doubling the state's population by 2050 - but perhaps a government with no actual 'population policy' document can technically claim that. It was a slippery position, and hardly edifying. It was interesting, however, that he was critical of GDP as a measure, and expressed the

view that coal exports should cease because they made climate change worse. David has a long history in property development, and is currently Mayor of Prospect and CEO of the Local Govt Association.

Rachel Sanderson for the Libs came across as genuine, and was listening, but she clearly knew very little about growth and sustainability, let alone the big underlying issues that concern the environmental movement globally. Anna Tree for Dignity for the Disabled Party was refreshingly open and frank about what she didn't know, and drew an excellent parallel between the point of the meeting and her party's concern for quality of life.

Mark Parnell (Leader of the Greens in SA, and standing in for their candidate) was the only speaker who came anywhere near understanding the topic for the evening. As outlined in the last SPA newsletter, the Greens’ policies at least recognise the urgent structural, resource and environmental issues our society faces and what transition to sustainability might mean.

In the election on March 15, the ALP directed its preferences to the Greens. Whether this will help the Greens hold their second seat in the upper house is yet to be seen. *Peter Martin*

(Editor’s note: In the Legislative Council, counting at March 22, had Stop Population Growth Now (SPGN) with ~ 3000 votes state-wide out of an electorate of ~ 1.1 million. Labor has retained government.)

QLD: The Queensland Branch continues to meet monthly on third Mondays at Toowong Library. There will be no April meeting as it falls on Easter Monday. In February we viewed the video 'Enough is Enough' which summarises the case for a steady-state economy presented in the book of the same name. We discussed whether SPA should integrate its call for ending population growth with advocacy for steady-state economy, and the general view was that this would dilute and distract from our message. In March, we discussed how we might engage with the C20 consultations. This is the civil society (NGO) process that is going on in parallel with the G20, whose main summit will be held in Brisbane this November. Because Australia is this year's G20 host, the civil society process is also hosted here. Although it probably will not influence the G20, it is an opportunity to raise awareness among other humanitarian organisations of the centrality of population factors to their social goals. We felt that submissions to C20 on population would be best targeted at their references to food and resource security, and to provision of infrastructure and employment. Any members who are interested are encouraged to look at the web site at www.c20.org.au

SPA News

and contribute to the online discussion. The branch is also booking stalls at upcoming community events. Currently we have three events coinciding on World Environment Day, Sunday 8 June - at Logan, Sunshine Coast and Toowoomba. Volunteers to help out on these stalls would be greatly appreciated. *Jane O'Sullivan*

NSW: Rod Quantock's show for NSW SPA was a successful event with Rod focusing his finely judged wit and sarcasm on our society's woeful unpreparedness for looming resource crunches. A big thankyou to George Carrard for his work in organising the event and to Nola Stewart and Elsa Hocking for forgoing the show so that the audience had a good feed at interval.

The branch was also involved in staging an event with some other sustainability minded groups around the subject of questioning growth and its impact upon climate change and the economy. The afternoon began with a screening of the Growthbusters film *Hooked on Growth*. Three speakers from the Centre for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy (CASSE) gave compelling arguments for ending our addiction to endless growth and attendees were also able to have input into developing strategies for moving to an economic system which will not gobble up the planet. CASSE will be running the Fenner Conference in October and the line up of speakers is making it look like a very worthwhile event to attend. *Kris Spike*

Does Size Matter?

This was the question posed by the title of Assistant Shadow Treasurer Andrew Leigh's talk to the Lowy Institute on Thursday 13 March. The answer arrived at the end of his talk was that the quality of people was more important than the quantity. The talk was billed as giving an economic perspective on the population debate and this is exactly what the audience got. Absent were inconvenient scientific perspectives like ecological footprint, climate change, water and energy security. This was a talk high on optimism that technology can solve all of our problems and that more of the right kind of immigrants will give us a better chance of developing that technology.

The event promo also claimed that several myths about the population debate were going to be dispelled. Some were welcome observations such as the point that the population debate was separate to the refugee issue and that high immigration was not the answer to population ageing. Malthus also came in for a serve but you have to wonder how intelligent people can be so quick to ridicule Malthus when the UN estimates that two billion people cannot get adequate food. The subject of infrastructure overload was mentioned but again Mr Leigh's optimism dismissed this as a mere failure to

adequately plan for the future rather than laying the blame on high population growth.

The institute's namesake Frank Lowy would have given smiling approval to the thrust of this talk. Immigrants have a greater entrepreneurial spirit and benefit the Australian economy in numerous ways we were told. In the end the idea that numbers were not important in the population debate did not ring true. Mr Leigh lives in Canberra which is the size of Australia's annual growth. You have to hope that when he drives around that city he may come to the realisation that the reason we cannot build this amount of infrastructure every year is not because of planning but because it's just a physical impossibility. Perhaps I'm being a little optimistic.

Kris Spike, NSW branch president of SPA

OBITUARY

Giff Jones

11/3/34 – 10/3/14



Giff with son Mike and grandson Max

Giff went from farm boy riding to school on a Shetland pony in New Zealand, to important jobs in the Australian Public Service, including a stint as chief of staff to Hawke Government Minister Clyde Holding. Once retired,

however, Giff performed the role of SPA's ACT branch secretary, and occasionally of branch president, with competence and wry good humour. He preferred the secretarial role as he was quietly spoken and not one to seek the limelight. His writing skills were often manifest in letters to the editor in the *Canberra Times*, which were often ironic and funny. As he reached his mid-seventies, he left the more active positions of the branch and took on the important role of Public Officer for SPA. A year ago, he stepped down owing to a return of cancer. Despite failing health he nevertheless turned up occasionally at the bimonthly wrapping of the newsletter. Giff died a day short of his 80th birthday, surrounded by a loving family. He had clearly passed on his sense of humour to his two sons who shared the eulogy at his funeral which Giff himself had organised. It included the Monty Python song "Always look on the bright side of life"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJUhlRoBL8M>. Only Giff could have requested that for his own funeral. We'll try to look on the bright side, Giff, but much harder with you gone. *Jenny Goldie*

(continued from page 5)

9. Sustainability with Ageing

The care implications of a UK population of 60m in 2050 rather than the projected 76m.

- For population above 50m, pension costs rise little as a % of GDP; health costs remain manageable;
- 2050 population sizes below 50m would struggle with rising pension and health-care costs.
- Increased participation of women and older people in work would enable economic growth with a smaller workforce. Smith, Adam LSE 2010

www.populationmatters.org/documents/ageing_society.pdf

10. Fewer Emitters, Lower Emissions, Less Cost

- Family planning costs £4 to abate a carbon tonne; low-carbon technologies average £19.
- Meeting unmet need for family planning (215m) would save 34bn carbon tonnes over 2012-50.
- These figures ignore the impacts, 100% abated in for a modest one-off cost, of an (unwanted) non-existent person's non-existent descendants in perpetuity. Wire, Tom LSE 2009

www.populationmatters.org/documents/reducing_emissions.pdf

SPA AGM

11am Saturday 5 April 2014

Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture
15 Blackall Street, Barton ACT
Morning tea and coffee will be served at 10.30am

Followed by a symposium on
The Ethics of Migration

1.30 to 5pm

\$5 entry fee (pay at door) – afternoon tea provided

Dinner: Members and friends are invited to join members of the SPA national executive for dinner at 'Choices' Vietnamese restaurant, Palmerston Lane, Manuka, at 6.30 for 7pm that evening. \$26 for a banquet meal. BYO. Pay on the night but please book in advance with ACT branch president Christopher Dorman on act@population.org.au or by phone 02 6251 1945.

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.

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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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