

## Did you know ...

- Australia's population is growing at 1.6%, *nearly five times the average for industrialised nations*, and much faster than Indonesia's (1.2%)?
- Every five years, Australia's *State of the Environment Report* has shown that almost every environmental indicator is continuing to go backwards?
- All of Australia's river flows added together amount to only half the flow of the Mississippi?

### It's a world-wide problem:

- The world's population quadrupled, from 1.5 billion to 6 billion, during the 20th century.
- Globally, 25,000 people die of malnutrition every day, mostly in nations with high population growth.
- The current world population of 6.9 billion is on track to grow to 9.2 billion by 2050.
- Hundreds of millions of families in the developing world would love to have smaller families, but do not have access to contraception—they cannot afford it as they are living on less than \$1 a day.

### And an Australian problem:

- Each extra person born in or moving to Australia puts pressure on a unique desert continent and creates three times the emissions of a person in Britain.
- Business lobby groups, especially the housing and property development industries, push for an increase in immigration and fertility rates. They have a clear vested interest in higher population growth.

## Sustainable Population Australia

(SPA) was formed in Canberra in 1988 by people who felt that the issue of population numbers was overlooked, or regarded as too contentious, by many of those striving to preserve Australia's environment. We have grown to become a national organisation, with branches in all States.

We fear the world our children will inherit will be overpopulated and too environmentally degraded to support the quality of life everyone deserves.

SPA produces six newsletters a year to encourage informed debate about how Australia and the world can achieve an environmentally sustainable population.

### Aims and objectives

- To contribute to public awareness of the limits to Australian population growth from ecological, social and economic viewpoints.
- To promote awareness that the survival of an ecologically sustainable population depends in the long term on its renewable resource base (especially water, soil, plants, animals).
- To promote policies that will lead to stabilisation of Australia's population by encouraging low fertility and low immigration rates.
- To promote urban and rural lifestyles and practices that are in harmony with the realities of the Australian environment, its resource base and its biodiversity.
- To advocate low immigration rates while rejecting any selection of immigrants based on race.
- To promote policies that will lead to stabilisation, and then reduction, of global population.



### Further Information

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- **climate change**
- **traffic congestion**
- **unaffordable housing**
- **water shortages**
- **infrastructure overload**
- **loss of soil and bushland**
- **declining biodiversity**

**... all made worse by population growth!**

Australia's current growth rate could take our population to a staggering 45 million by 2050. Sustainable Population Australia (SPA) opposes this. We work to raise awareness of population issues in Australia and globally.





Sustainable Population Australia works for social development, rather than endless growth, to be recognised as our most important national objective.



**Sir David Attenborough**

“Instead of controlling the environment for the benefit of the population, maybe we should control the population to ensure the survival of our environment ... I've never seen a problem that wouldn't be easier to solve with fewer people, or harder, and ultimately impossible, with more.”

**Kelvin Thomson MP**

“It is time for governments and policy makers around the world to come to their senses and take steps to stabilise the world's population. It needs to happen in every country, including here in Australia.”



**Dick Smith**

“The big decision about a population increase is, ‘what's in it for most Australians?’. I believe the answer is ‘less and less’.”



**Our patrons**



SPA is honoured to have five eminent Australians as patrons (pictured, clockwise, from top):

- Dr Paul Collins,
- Hon Bob Carr,
- Professor Ian Lowe,
- Dr Mary White,
- Professor Tim Flannery.



# The little big country

Australia is often called ‘the big country’, but less than 6% is good agricultural land. Although comparable in size to the United States, the fertile areas cover less than the area of New Zealand. But we don't have New Zealand's recent volcanic activity, so even our ‘fertile crescent’ along the east coast has very thin topsoil with low and variable rainfall – it is indeed a sunburned country, a land ‘of droughts, and flooding rain’.

Over 223 years, new settlement has inflicted huge damage on this land, with river systems like the Murray Darling driven beyond their limits during our prolonged droughts. Many animal and plant species have been lost, artesian bores are being emptied, salinity is leaving land unusable, fish stocks have been depleted – well, you know the story ...

All this damage has been done by a population that has now grown to 22.8 million – and yet former PM Rudd told us we must grow to 36 million by 2050, with our major cities nearly doubling in size!

SPA believes that at the very least, there should be no further population growth until our *State of the Environment Reports* start showing improvements in all indicators, rather than continual decline as at present.

A country needs a healthy environment to keep a strong economy and a strong defence capability (a clapped-out environment is good for nothing). The Productivity Commission has shown that increased immigration will not result in significant *per capita* economic benefits (less than \$3 a week extra in your pay packet by 2050), but *does* have a lot of associated costs such as urban traffic congestion and environmental damage that can't be measured (at least, by economists).

Australia's immigration has been more than tripled since 1996, under the Howard and Rudd Governments. This no doubt gives great satisfaction to land developers and real estate agents who like to see housing prices go ballistic, but it's time we started telling our politicians that we're overloading Australia.

# You can make a difference

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