

President's Report to Sustainable Population Australia AGM

Saturday, 23rd May, 2020

Achievements in the past year

A great deal has been achieved by us in the past year with strong emphasis on marketing to ensure a wider distribution of our message.

- We are justifiably proud of our high quality **discussion paper' Population growth and infrastructure in Australia: the catch-up illusion'** which was publicly launched in November by our Patron, Professor Bob Carr. We subsequently had extra copies printed for posting out to relevant Federal, State and Territory MPs, and a significant number of Mayors and Councillors in large councils or smaller ones where growth is being foisted on them. Unfortunately, timing was not good for us with the thoughts and actions of most politicians being focused on COVID-19. I particularly acknowledge the lead role of Executive member, Peter Cook, who first suggested to us that we should prepare a series of such papers, Jane O'Sullivan and Peter, for their intense involvement in the writing of the paper, and Jenny Goldie for the organisation of the launch.
- The launching odour **'Stop at Two' campaign** was an important initiative as it shows we are addressing the natural growth of population in Australia as well as immigration numbers.
- We commissioned the **production of an animation 'The Endless Growth Paradigm'** which has been viewed more than 12,000 times including by a substantial international audience.
- We **promoted the Australian premiere of the documentary '8 Billion Angels'** which explores small families and family planning as an effective way of addressing the myriad of environmental issues arising from human impact on the planet. In turn the **'Transitions Film Festival'** promoted our Communications Manager and SPA, with **Michael Bayliss spruiking the population message to the opening night audience.**
- Interacting with government is an essential task for us, and we have lodged submissions on the **review of the EPBC Act**, a second submission to the **Senate Faunal Extinction Inquiry** and the **Senate Inquiry into Regional Migration**. Sometimes we target individual MPs and we have written to a number of them on issues ranging from immigration to the extinction crisis (unfortunately many of them fail to respond, not even with an acknowledgement).
- And of course there are our media releases on topics including but not limited to immigration numbers, producing food on a drying planet, child marriage and Earth Overshoot Day.

Future plans

- Akin to last year's infrastructure discussion paper, we are midway into the preparation of a discussion paper about ageing and how this interacts with population issues. Most certainly it will address that most-loved furphy of demographers and politicians that we have to increase immigration to support an ageing population. We hope to afford an advertising campaign directed at that older demographic when the paper is released.

- We will also engage an author for a **third discussion paper** focusing on the vital issue of **water availability** as a constraint on Australia's population size.
- Our **website** is one of the important ways members of the public find us. We know it is outdated and, because appearances matter, we are **embarking on a major reconstruction**, modernising it and making navigation easier.
- We are planning to produce and launch a **podcast** series around what has become a most timely topic, that of **post-growth economics**.
- And we promise to continue our advocacy through submissions to government, letters to MPs and issuing of media releases.

Acknowledgements

An AGM is a time when we can acknowledge the contribution of the many people who keep SPA shipshape. I want to acknowledge **all of our Executive members**: they are volunteers and we present ourselves like swans, serenely sailing along yet paddling at a rate of knots below the surface. Similarly our **branch committees** work tirelessly and I hope you recognise their contribution, as I do. It's always dangerous to single out anyone, but on top of her work as Vice-President, **Jenny Goldie** puts the newsletter together four times a year so she is worthy of a special thank you.

As our Treasurer explains in his report, the Executive has decided to place three members of the Executive into the position of Managers of the Sustainable Population Fund. So thanks must go to **Ross Kingsland, Denis Saunders** and **Hugh Tyndale-Biscoe** for having performed this task for a number of years.

Alex Geppert performs miraculous things to keep our website operational. **Rod Taylor** with assistance from **Michael Bayliss** is responsible for website content, and **Andrew Verlei** as Membership Officer ensures our branches receive a current membership list every month. Thanks go to each of them.

And finally a big thank you to all **our wonderful donors**—large and small—who allow us to continue this great task.

Sandra Kanck

National President

20/5/2020