Editorial

Australia’s Population figures for the year 2007

- Australia’s Resident Population 21,181,000
- Population increase for the year 331,900
- Rate of Increase 1.6%
  (World average increase : 1.2%)
- Net Overseas Migration 184,400
  (immigrants – emigrants = 56% of total increase: 1,100 arrivals  620 departures/day)
- Natural Increase 147,400
  (Births – deaths = 44% of total increase)

By State or Territory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resident Population</th>
<th>Growth Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW 6,927,000</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC 5,246,000</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD 4,228,000</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA 1,592,000</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA 2,131,000</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAS 495,800</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>NT 217,600</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT 340,800</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
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</tbody>
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Interstate Migration

Net Population Gain

- QLD 25,600
- WA 3,800
- NT 860
- ACT 350
- TAS 290

Net Population Loss

- NSW -24,000
- SA -3,800
- VIC -3,100

From Australian Demographic Statistics,
December Quarter 2007 (ABS Cat No. 3101.0)¹

Population has been a ‘hot’ topic since the last newsletter. Cardinal Pell raised media interest with his claims there was “a crisis in the developed world where not enough babies were being born to stabilize the population.” With current concern regarding climate change and release of Garnaut’s draft report on emissions trading, the population issue was picked up by a wide range of media. The ABC presented a recording with Professor Bartlett from several years ago, the late night program even ran a segment in the early hours and a timely publication by Bob Birrell and Earnest Healy on “Labor’s Greenhouse Aspirations” (People and Place, Vol 16, No.2, 1 – 15) provided an opportunity for a Counterpoint discussion featuring Dr Birrell and our President, Dr John Coulter.

The population factor was largely ignored in the Garnaut report. Birrell and Healy in their recent paper have calculated the greenhouse gas produced by the energy needs of a population increasing both at the current rate and at nil net migration up to the target date of 2050. They estimate that Australia’s population will reach 31.6 million by 2050 at the current growth rate. With no net migration, population peaks around the year 2030 and drops to 21.97 million by 2050. From their analyses they conclude that it will be very hard to meet the 60% target reduction if population growth continues at current rates.

They conclude that the impact of adding an extra 11 million people through current immigration of 180,000 per year will be very large, around 276 million tonnes of emissions or 25 million tonnes per million persons.

The authors also point out the error in the often heard comment that it doesn’t matter where people live since their emissions add to the global load wherever they live. Australia’s per capita greenhouse emissions are many times greater than those of the Asian countries from which most of our immigrants come and more than double those of the UK, another important migrant source country.

The authors conclude that:

“We are left with a major puzzle. The Rudd government is well aware that some business interests (abetted by the Coalition) will oppose a tough emissions trading scheme. Why then has it signalled its intention to pursue record high immigration levels? The government must know that this policy will add a massive additional hurdle to the achievement of its 2050 greenhouse emission target.
Garnaut’s silence on the matter is equally puzzling.”

The Victorian Premier, John Brumby voiced his own concern at Australia’s high immigration and population growth. He is concerned at the pressure on Victoria’s health and transport systems and sees his State’s population “at the limits of growth”. Victoria is the fastest growing non-resource state.

Today Australia is experiencing some of the highest population growth in its history. Since 2001 half or more of this increase has come from net migration and the proportion is increasing. The bulk of immigration now comes from the skills program to meet the demands of business and resource developers. It is encouraging to see that at least one Premier recognises the pressure that this high growth creates.

At the last election many voters chose the Rudd government on their promises for a greener and more socially aware future. Proposals to further increase the immigration skills intake, to increase the long stay visa program and institute guest worker programs while ignoring the social and environmental impacts do not fulfill these promises. The issue of population must be discussed and included in environmental and social planning. It is not just Victoria’s health and transport to be considered but the future of all Australians.

And Mr Rudd, do remember, Australians are well and truly reproducing themselves. Births have outnumbered deaths by close to 2 to 1 for many years and will continue to do so well into the future, even with zero net migration.

ABS figures for 2006: Births – 265,900; Deaths - 133,700

We didn’t get the chance to broadcast it at the time, but have now retrieved it from the archive.

In it, Professor Bartlett predicted that peak oil and declining world food production capacity through environmental degradation made getting population growth to zero an imperative.

ALBERT BARTLETT (AB), WORLD POPULATION EXPERT: The world population is growing about 1.3 per cent per year. Now, that’s such a small number that most people have a hard time imagining that that could ever give any problems. But what it means is that the world population now is so large that 1.3 per cent of that every year is like 75 million people additional every year. And these people have to be fed and clothed and supplied with resources, and as we know from the news, there are big deficiencies - people are starving, people are malnourished.

QD: Emeritus Professor Albert Bartlett visited Australia in 2005. Presciently, at that time, he predicted a world crisis through the statistical convergence of population growth, peak oil and declining food production efficiency and capacity.

AB: World petroleum production is expected to peak sometime in the next few years. I had a paper published five years ago and my numeric analysis suggested the peak was in the year 2004. You’ll have to wait a half a dozen so years after the peak before you know the peak was back there. You need several points of the downturn before you know the peak was past. So the peak is anytime imminent, anytime now. And what one notices then is that after the peak you’ll have growing world population, you’ll have growing world per capita demand for oil and you’ll have declining supply. And you know pretty well what’s gonna happen: the prices will rise very rapidly.

QD: Professor Bartlett says while alternatives to oil would be pursued by governments, the cost per capita of re-engineering food production and transport systems with other fuel sources would be prohibitive. This week at a World Youth Day news conference, Sydney’s Catholic Cardinal George Pell entered the population debate from another angle.

GEORGE PELL, CATHOLIC CHURCH: There is some degree of a debate in Australia about raising our population to say 50 million to maintain what everybody enjoys as a high level of prosperity in this country. And that’s what seems to have gripped the politicians of our country: that we need higher population growth because we’re an ageing population, we’re not replacing ourselves by the natural birth rate and therefore...
we must enhance the migration program to enhance our economic growth.

AB: Well, I hear that - the same thing in the States: that we have to have economic growth and population growth. It’s interesting that most of Europe is at zero population growth and it hasn’t been the end of the world. They are somehow learning to work on improving the quality of life without improving the number of people.

QD: Professor Bartlett says it’s now imperative for the world to adopt sustainable population policies. That means zero population growth worldwide, not just western Europe, where zero population growth has been achieved, to save the planet from further environmental degradation.

Incidentally, predominantly Catholic Spain and Italy have very low birth rates. Population growth is exponential. Just look at this growth meter. At current growth rates, according to sustainable population Australia, world population will be nine billion by 2050, up from the current 6.7 billion.

AB: We have to get our population growth down to zero, so that it’s stable and then begin to reduce it - the population, slowly - to the point where it can be sustained, where sustainability means in terms of food production. And I suspect what’s happening in food production around Sydney here is similar to what’s happening around many American cities. There used to be an agricultural belt around the city: food is grown and brought into the city. These are all being paved over. And so now the food has to come from a greater distance. That requires petroleum. Petroleum’s in trouble. So, everything hinges on population growth, but I haven’t encountered any real political leaders in the States who are willing to address the population problem.

QD: Let’s talk about China. China has addressed the population problem with a one child policy for many, many years now. Do you advocate something like that?

AB: They are a totalitarian state. And I think for one thing, the population of China is already too large so China could never be a democracy. China’s too big to be a democracy. Okay, what they have done - what they offered as an explanation for that one child per family policy some thirty years ago when it was first introduced, they said that population growth interferes with economic development. They have cut their population growth rate in half. They’re now growing something like six tenths of a per cent per year. That’s still a disaster, but it’s much better than what they’d had: 1.3, 1.5 per cent per year. And as a result of that decline, they have been able - look at the way their economic growth is going. They’re walking all over the rest of world in terms of economic growth. The first perversity is that many politicians around the world say we have to have population growth to have economic growth. The Chinese recognised that that was not true, so they cut their population growth in half (by very totalitarian ways which we don’t approve of). But they were able then with that cut to take better care of the people they have, rather than spend all their resources trying to accommodate new people.

QD: Professor Bartlett says Singapore, with zero population growth and sustainable economic growth, is about the best regional model of policy effectiveness. Population growth policy is not often prominent in the domestic Australian political and economic debate. With climate change and World Youth Day, thanks to Cardinal Pell, that’s all changing.

Cardinal Pell’s (white) baby push is environmental madness

Of the many letters and opinions expressed in response to Cardinal Pell’s contribution to the population debate within Australia, Charles Berger, Director of Strategic Ideas at ACF, writing in Crikey on the 15th of July, 2008, seemed to sum up the reaction of thinking Australian’s so well (Eds):

“Cardinal George Pell’s claim that "no Western country is producing enough babies to keep the population stable" is a pure flight of fancy. The United States and New Zealand both have fertility rates of about 2.1, which is the long-term replacement level.

True, fertility rates are below the replacement level of 2.1 in many Western countries. Interestingly, the traditionally Catholic countries of southern Europe, including Italy and Spain, have among the lowest rates in the world. But this does not mean populations are declining or will decline any time soon.

For Australia, with a fertility rate of 1.85, the most recent ABS projections suggest our population will grow to between 25 million and 33 million by 2050. It may well continue to grow beyond that. Nor is this due solely to migration: Australia’s "natural increase" -- the excess of births over deaths -- was around 130,000 last year and will continue to be positive for at least another few decades as individuals born in previous periods of high fertility move through their reproductive years.

One has to wonder also about Cardinal Pell’s preoccupation with fertility in Western countries, when the global population is projected to peak at a minimum of 9 billion by 2050. Surely he’s not suggesting the Joneses have to keep up with the Lius and the Hassans in some sort of global population contest?

The growing material expectations of a growing global population are adding immensely to the great stress that unsustainable lifestyles in industrialised countries have placed on our natural environment.

There are many challenging goals Australia should be aiming for in the next 50 years, but having more babies is not one of them. If Cardinal Pell is in favour of growing populations, he should be prepared to explain how that preference can be squared with the imperative to rapidly reduce our greenhouse pollution levels and to adjust to a world in which water, oil and other key resources are nowhere near as plentiful as they have been in the past.”

Time for a Genuine Migration Debate.
John Sutton,
National Secretary
CFMEU
11 June 2008

It is time for a serious and informed debate on immigration policy.

Big business is successfully applying pressure for substantial increases in immigration (both for temporary and permanent migrants). At the same time, the Rudd Labor Government is about to commit to a temporary unskilled program for Pacific Islanders to work in seasonal agriculture. And business is already calling for it to be extended even before it is announced. Yet all of the focus is solely on economic considerations - particularly the much talked about (but rarely analysed) skills and labour shortages.

The trouble is that we currently have a one dimensional neo-liberal discussion heavily influenced by economic rationalists and the corporate world. But there is much more to this policy area than simply the supply and demand for labour.

Population policy has a direct bearing on many of our key social and environmental issues. The new government is grappling with the problem of climate change, carbon trading schemes and how we best limit CO2 emissions. We also have huge challenges in how we manage our water usage.

At the same time, our cities are bursting at the seams. Urban congestion is a large and growing problem. There is a crisis in housing with the twin problems of fewer dwellings than we need and a major issue with housing affordability across the country. Social inclusion is also a key consideration. Our multicultural society is still experiencing some xenophobic fraying at the edges - and the lop-sided emphasis on skilled workers (frequently single males) at the expense of a strong family reunion component is not assisting with social outcomes. There are other issues to consider in the immigration debate but everything is getting lost in the white noise from employer groups.

The CFMEU is not anti immigration and never has been. Australia needs immigration. We favour permanent immigration over temporary work visas because it allows communities to grow with certainty and lessen rates of exploitation that you so often find around contingent workers. But we do believe that it is time for a proper discussion and sound policy outcomes.

The Rudd Labor Government needs to broaden the scope of the discussion to take into account demographic changes, environmental factors, housing and social considerations. Naturally the broader economy must be considered but the Rudd Government should take the steering wheel off the big business lobby and ensure Australia's environment, community and workers' interests are all taken into account.

In short a serious debate about Australia’s population policy must be initiated by Rudd Labor now!

CFMEU Website at http://www.cfmeu.net.au/topics/2117.html#

Life Expectancy in US continues to rise.

Life expectancy in the United States continues to increase as age adjusted death rates fell significantly in 2006 over 2005 according to preliminary data released by the U.S. National Centre for Health Statistics on June 11.

Life expectancy at birth in 2006 was 78.1 years, a 0.3 increase from 2005. A recent release from the Centre also stated that "Record high life expectancy was recorded for both white males and black males (76 years and 70 years, respectively) as well as for white females and black females (81 years and 76.9 years)." http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/08newsreleases/mortality2006.htm. The resident population of the US is projected at 304,332,224 for June 2008 with a net gain of one person every 10 seconds. (http://www.census.gov/population/www/ popclockus.html)

By comparison the average life expectancy at birth for Australians over the years 2003-2005 is 78.5 years for males and 83.3 years for females. The projected population for Australia at June 2008 is 21,326,987 (see back page).

For less developed countries the average life expectancy at birth is around 64 years while for the African Continent it’s around 50 years. http://www.aihw.gov.au/mortality/data/life_expectancy.cfm#

Does Immigration aggravate labour shortages?
by Paddy Weaver

The over-riding focus of the Rudd/Swan budget is the economy, maintaining the resources boom and satisfying the clamorous demands of business for increased access to labour sources overseas.

Now is the time to question if government has considered that raising immigration may aggravate rather than relieve the labour shortage.

Treasurer Swan commented shortly after the election that immigration was an effective solution to labour shortages when the community has the capacity to absorb the immigrants. Does Australia have this capacity today?

Bob Birrell, Director of Population and Urban Research at Monash University, speaking on ABC Opinion, commented that migrants are said to curb inflationary pressures because they fill vacancies in the workforce. He added, “This is a doubtful proposition because the research literature indicates that migrants create as many
jobs as they fill. They do this in part because migration is currently providing most of the additional households in Australia’s metropolises and is thus the main source of demand for additional housing and associated urban infrastructure.”

Logic suggests that the size of this inflationary and demand effect depends on the numbers of people arriving. With low numbers and excess capacity in community infrastructure, migrants may well curb inflationary pressure. Increase the numbers and thus reduce “spare” community infrastructure and the effect is likely to flip from counter inflationary to driving inflation and demand.

There are few of us who would not recognise today’s Australia as the ‘no spare infrastructure’ scenario. Housing shortages and escalating rents, increasing numbers of homeless, hospital queues, overcrowded and understaffed schools and traffic gridlock are just a few of the telltale signs. We may even recognise the process that gave us today’s chaotic social and environmental mess. A resources boom that initially required specialist petroleum and mining engineers, a past decade of neglect of education and training, governments eager to grasp the financial benefits flowing to their coffers, transfer of infrastructure costs to the taxpayer with the introduction of fly in/fly out staffing and inflated housing costs and rental charges.

There is no environmental issue that is likely to be improved by population growth.

The old argument that strong economies provide the wealth for environmental care is proving a red herring with Australia’s mounting burden of social deficits. And let’s face it, people have votes. The environment and other species don’t.

Minister Evan’s message that the skills shortage has become a labour shortage is surely evidence of an aggravated problem. Almost every occupation conceivable is now claiming labour shortages. And community infrastructure is being neglected as the needs of resource projects are met. The Treasurer in Parliament (26th May) pointed out that the participation rate for sections of the Australian workforce was around the middle of the OECD range, lower than UK, USA and Scandinavia. Increasing workforce participation does not increase demand on community infrastructure and may avoid a catalytic effect from increasing immigration.

Surely, this approach is preferable to increasing immigration?#

Robert Engelman wrote: Talking to reporters and others about my new book, More: Population, Nature, and What Women Want, I’m sometimes asked where consumption fits into the population picture. A review in the intriguingly named magazine Bitch, for example, criticized the book for “failing to adequately distinguish between the individuals who are overpopulating the world and the individuals who are responsible for the type of overconsumption that causes environmental deterioration.”

Well, the book actually doesn’t identify any individuals who are “overpopulating the world.” I explain on the book’s second page why I don’t like the word overpopulation. And for many years I chaired the board of the Center for a New American Dream, which works to make North American consumption a sustainable model for the world. I see ‘More’ as being in one sense all about consumption, because it is through what we use, consume, and discard that human beings affect the environment.

Unfortunately for open discussions, consumption is often placed in opposition to population, as the Bitch review does - as if one part of the world has no population and only consumes, while another has no consumption and only populates. That’s not how the world works. Population and consumption multiply each other everywhere, in rich countries and poor, even though the dynamics and magnitude of each force vary widely across and within countries.

One obvious connection between the two is that if populations had never grown large, the consumption levels of individuals wouldn’t have much impact on the environment. We worry about consumption precisely because there are so many of us affecting nature and natural resources.

A second point, which I explore in ‘More’ (p. 230), is that population growth itself has historically driven people to innovate in ways that often boost individual consumption. The exhaustion of forests as European populations kept growing drove people in the 16th century to use coal, long considered a dirty fuel inferior to wood. Improvements in coal mining made possible the Industrial Revolution, which in turn facilitated the hazardous alteration of the Earth’s atmosphere today. In modern industrialized nations, sprawl and the great distances many people drive have a lot to do with high population densities.

As ‘More’ makes clear, we’re not going to solve human-induced climate change or most other serious environmental problems through any one policy change, technological breakthrough, or change in individual behavior. It’s going to take action on every level, and even then we’ll be adapting to a rapidly changing environment for generations to come. A world of 6.7 billion people can’t easily change its behavior to leave no imprint on the Earth.

What’s attractive about addressing population is that it will stop growing, for the best of reasons, if we can satisfy the wants of women everywhere for reproductive choice. A stable or gradually declining world population offers the
best demographic platform for a sustainable future, one in which consumption is environmentally safe and meets the needs and reasonable wants of people everywhere.#

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**Deniers of the Population Holocaust:**

**The Monbiot Fallacy**

Extracted from Chapter 17 of Mark O’connor’s and Bill Lines forthcoming Book “Overloading Australia”.

The book is due to be published in the next few weeks.

Related to denial is population-blindness. In early 2008 the British environmentalist, George Monbiot invented the Monbiot Fallacy. As a man who prides himself on recognising that economic growth is incompatible with preserving environments, Monbiot has long argued that total economic growth is a good surrogate for total environmental destruction. Granted that economists demand a minimum of 3% growth per year, he predicts massive destruction of the natural world by the year 2100. This seems right, since at that 3% rate we will see the world’s economy double four times — grow 16-fold. Yet current projections are that in that time the world’s population will only increase by half. Therefore, Monbiot suggests, that ‘economic growth this century could be 32 times as big an environmental issue as population growth.’ He thus feels justified in not being too bothered about Britain’s rapid population growth — and in hinting at unpleasant views of those environmentalists who are. 16

Yet as we saw at the end of Chapter 5, even if the planet could provide such a quantity of services and products, there is no precedent for assuming that economic growth can owe so little to population growth. Existing statistics show population growth and growth in per capita consumption as almost equally important.

In Australia for instance — as John Coult (President of SPA) pointed out to Monbiot — over the past 25 years the economy has been growing at 3.2% while the growth of per capita GDP has averaged 1.9%. This indicates that, in terms of growth in environmental impact, 60% of the growth is due to rising per capita demand and 40% to increase in population. Monbiot has also scrambled the maths. Even on his figures, 16-fold economic growth divided by 1.5-fold population growth, means about 11-fold per capita growth: a ratio of about 1 to 7 between the two factors, not 1 to 32!

A better way out of the Monbiot Fallacy is to argue thus: If the nature of our economy ensures a doubling of total consumption every 20 years or so for ever, then most hopes of saving the environment and warding off climate change are lost. The present population of the Earth, plus the increases in per capita consumption that economists will demand of them, is enough to doom the Earth.

However if we are serious about fighting such runaway growth, then both the factors that drive it (population and per capita consumption) must be kept as low as possible. Granted that per capita consumption, even of necessities like energy and food, may need to be voluntarily pinched in, the larger the number of individuals to be supplied and fed, the less chance there will be of them agreeing to do so.

Monbiot should also have considered the scenario where nature or lack of resources does the job for us — relieving the pressure on the environment but giving us the problem of human misery to alleviate. Imagine that peak oil bites sooner than expected, the economy goes into recession, there is so little fuel oil that private cars can run only by permit and homes can be heated only a few hours a day. Will not these privations be crueller for an expanded population than for a smaller one?

Numbers matter.

(Endnotes)

1 George Monbiot, ‘Population growth is a threat. But it pales against the greed of the rich’, Guardian, 29 January, 2008. http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/story/0,2248614,00.html: ‘So why, like most environmentalists, won’t I mention the p-word? ... We should still support the measures required to tackle it . . . But to suggest, as many of my correspondents do, that population growth is largely responsible for the ecological crisis is to blame the poor for the excesses of the rich’. For refutations see http://ecologicalcrash.blogspot.com/2008/01/criticism-of-george-monbiots-latest.html#

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**AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA**

Dr R.G.Chittleborough

So it’s been said openly at last (The West Australian; 14/04/2008, pp 10-11 -- article by Dr. Jorg Imberger & Paul Murray -- "IT’S TOO LATE TO BEAT CLIMATE CHANGE"). At the time Jorg Imberger stated -- "Since 1900, the sea level at Fremantle has risen 18cm. (180mm.) of which 10cm. has occurred in the past 20 years." He claimed that most of this rise was due to thermal expansion of the ocean, as surface temperatures of the seas (especially in the tropics and sub-tropics) rose. But Jorg Imberger infers that this will continue solely by thermal expansion as ocean surface waters warm, and he predicts another rise of 15 cm. by 2040. That is an incorrect extrapolation.

Throughout the first 60 or 70 years since 1900 sea level rises averaged about 1mm. per year, due mainly to thermal expansion. By 2001, thermal expansion accounted for nearly 10cms. of sea level rise at a tiny linear rate, which no one thought highly important.

Then about 2002, not only did the ocean surface warming accelerate, but another factor began to make itself felt -- a self-accelerating, runaway feedback loop, of the meltdown of the Greenland Ice Cap. About that time, the gentle rise in sea level doubled to 2mm per year. That
seemed to persist for 2 - 3 years, when it redoubled again as the meltdown of the Greenland Ice Cap accelerated. Towards the end of 2004, the sea level rise re-doubled to 4mm per year.

A couple of years later, ocean warming accelerated, world currents were affected, and the Western Antarctic Ice Cap started to move into meltdown; so sea level rises re-doubled again, to 8mm. per year. Thermal expansion of the warming ocean surface continued but was swamped by these two polar meltdowns, thus we have a total rise in sea levels of 8mm. per year. By this time, the gross rise in sea level was about 140mm.

Other experts had already estimated the total volumes of glacial ice in the Greenland Ice Cap and the Western Antarctic Ice Cap. We know that once initiated, those meltdowns will raise sea levels of the world's oceans by 10-12 Metres! When the Eastern Antarctic Ice Cap joins the other two runaway meltdowns, the sea level will rise by another 60+ metres.

That, of course, is unthinkable -- yet is now facing us!!

Now that the meltdown of the Greenland Ice Cap is well established, and the Western Antarctic Ice Cap is joining in, we just don't know where it will stop'. These self-accelerating feedback loops are now in action. Sea levels are rising at accelerating exponential rates (ie. re-doubling every 2-3 years.)

I have traced gross rises in sea level ahead, as far as 2020 (see Fig. 1). This shows that by 2020, the sea level rise could reach 1.3 metres -- some four (4) times greater than the more linear rise predicted by Jorg Imberger by 2040!! This enormous difference is simply a reflection of the vast difference between a simple linear expansion of the ocean waters, and the self-accelerating runaway feedback loops which I know we are experiencing!

Our biggest problem now is that we have reached a point of over-consumption, which is really threatening us. We have encouraged each other to consume ever more of our resources claiming that ever increasing consumption keeps up demand for economic growth which has become the god which most of us chase. But a few (sadly, too few,) ecologically minded people realize that on a finite Earth, perpetual growth is just not possible. There seems to be a race to consume more than others so that we overwhelm our competitors by over-breeding. (A fact we don't like admitting).

Some thoughtful people have concluded that with a bit of belt-tightening, we might be able to reduce our consumption demands, so that we can continue the race. But is it just a "race" –where the winner is the last one standing? That puts an odd twist on the definition SUSTAIN-ABILITY. Thoughtful people are emphatic that we cannot continue to breed unsustainably in today's world.

Although it has become unpopular to say this, there is no way we can go on breeding like we are in this over-populated world, nor can we (in Australia) invite in another 20-60 million environmental refugees (which we cannot feed, as our small proportion of arable land shrinks by rising sea levels).

With the impending rapid rise in ocean sea level, our Murray-Darling basin will quickly disappear under a shallow inland sea, slashing Australia's food production even further. And it won't stop there, but rapidly spread to inundate the salty regions of Lake Eyre, Lake Frome, and Lake Torrens (already well below present sea level). Consequently, we will rapidly revert to the shallow inland sea of the Miocene Epoch (some 10--24 million years ago) except that the ecosystems destroyed will be different.

In effect we will have implemented the Bradfield Scheme, published in the 1930's -- at no direct monetary cost. John C Bradfield (1865 - 1943) was the engineer who designed and built the Sydney Harbour Bridge. His scheme of re-creating a shallow inland sea, has been closely examined seven times during the past 70 years - each time it has been rejected as too costly or impractical.

For too long we have entrusted the EPA to safeguard our future. That has been at an extremely high cost especially in TIME! The writing is now on the wall - AUSTRALIA, IN FACT, ALL HUMANITY IS NOW IN DEEP TROUBLE! We have set in motion the feedback loops of a runaway meltdown of the Greenland Ice Cap, and initiated a similar process in Antarctica.

Our options are fast disappearing. It is just possible that if we instigate harsh measures we might be able to slip by without much more than a 5 - 6 degree rise in temperature. Can we try that at once, in the hope that some humans will survive?

Sincerely

Dr. R.G. Chittleborough, BSc (Hons); MSc, PhD, DSc, (retired)

Dr. Chittleborough is a long time member of SPA, is currently a SPA Trustee and has a long history in the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources including the Head, Marine Studies Branch Western Australian Department of Conservation and Environment, Perth (Eds.)#
Most politicians seem to have an obsession with a couple of abstractions called "the economy" and "economic growth" on which, they say, our prosperity and well-being depend. Ask what they mean by "the economy" and the best answer you are likely to get is that it is an aggregate, with a few adjustments to avoid double counting, of all the things on which we spend money, expressed as a magic number, Gross Domestic Product or GDP. An increase in GDP is called "economic growth" and usually celebrated as an achievement, regardless of the purpose and effect of the increased spending.

Economics has no morality. It makes no distinction between good and bad or between essential and non-essential. While GDP includes essential food, clothing, housing, education, health services and law and order, a large part of it is non-essentials, such as professional sports, advertising, car racing, fireworks displays, festivals, luxury and sports vehicles, fashion clothing, speculative finance, alcohol and tobacco, gambling, tourism and other parasitic indulgences and extravagances. In fact GDP might better be called Gross Domestic Profligacy.

The eventual and inescapable end effects of everything we buy or do are increasing waste and pollution, greater environmental degradation and more rapid depletion of finite resources, especially oil. The more of us there are and the more we spend and consume, the worse the end effects become. This is the reality of what we call "economic growth", an egregious misnomer and foolish delusion but we accept it because it sounds good and helps us keep our heads in the sand, while leaving the mess for our grandchildren to deal with.

Over the last 20 years the rate is 25 percent faster than the rate in any twenty years period in the preceding 115 years (Rahmstorf et al., Science Express, 2007, Potsdam Institute of Climate Impact Research, 2007).

Leading climate scientists, including Professor James Hansen (NASA's chief climate scientist) and Professor Steffen Rahmstorf (Potsdam Institute of Climate Impact Research), project sea level rise on the scale of metres through the 21st century. Paleo-climate studies by Glikson and Brook (submitted to Geosphere) indicate sea level rise rates of well over 5 metres per 1 degree C, consistent with these projections.

Sea level rises reflect melting of the Greenland ice sheet, where melting since measurements began in 1979 increased by 30 percent (S. Konrad, University of Colorado, AGU, 2008), and of the west Antarctic ice sheet which is losing ice at rates 60 percent faster than 10 years ago (British Antarctic Survey, Nature Geoscience, 2008).

Given the consequences of sea level rise around the world in terms of inundation of cultivated delta, coastal and lower river regions, where hundreds of millions of people live, and the flooding of port cities, including major Australian coastal cities, the warnings presented in the Garnaut Review would appear to underestimate of the global effects of sea level rise, should the levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and associated carbon cycle feedbacks continue to rise.

(Dr) Andrew Glikson
Earth and paleoclimate scientist
Australian National University#
species loss, urban sprawl, traffic congestion and rising prices are some of them. Unless we stop growth and reduce consumption they can only get worse.

We are ignoring a fundamental fact, that in a world of finite resources the more people there are the worse off we become. While we talk of carbon trading (which would transfer the problem from the rich to the poor), fritter around with mandating half-flush toilets, banning incandescent light globes, subsidising hybrid cars and sticking efficiency labels on appliances, we need more positive and effective action.

What can we do? The real problems are that there are too many of us and that we are wastefully spending and consuming more than we need, so here are some ideas for a start –

- Stop the lunacy of paying people for having children
- Stop allowing expenditure on advertising and promotion as a taxation deduction.
- Make foreign aid contingent on recipient countries having effective education programmes for fertility control with means for control readily available.
- Allow immigration on humanitarian grounds only
- Get rid of our obsession with economic growth.

On the question of immigration, while it is said there is a skills shortage, this depends upon how you view it. From another direction it could be said there is a surplus – a surplus of greedy, money hungry companies who want to rip out our mineral resources and flog them off to foreign buyers as fast as they can. When they have taken all they want, find some other gullible suckers elsewhere in the world and move off to repeat the performance, leaving us to clean up the mess. In effect, our country is being used as a quarry and turned into a big rubbish dump - a good example of economic growth.

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**Sexually Reproductive Health**

By Dr. Mal Washer

Vice Chair of the Parliamentary Group on Population and Development and member for Moore.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s) established in 2000 AD through the U.N. by 189 Governments are crucial targets of social and environmental progress to be achieved by 2015. Australia was one of these 189 countries.

The MDG’s are to:
1. Eradicate extreme poverty
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health which should include sexual reproductive health (S.R.H) (opposed by the Vatican, and the U.S. Government).
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases including TB.

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7. Ensure environmental sustainability

There is no doubt that sustainable development, strong civil society, a productive economy; regional security, social development and poverty alleviation all depend on better S.R.H.

Direct spending on S.R.H in Australia’s Overseas Development Assistance budget for 2005/6 was less than 5% with much of that spending dedicated to HIV/AIDS programs not integrated with S.R.H service delivery or training. This should be increased to 10%.

In 1950 global population was 2 billion, currently it is 6.7 billion and by conservative U.N estimates will be 9.2 billion by 2050.

The great majority of this growth will be in the poorest countries of the Asia Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa.

We currently have the largest generation ever, entering reproductive age. The MDG’s failed to account for the population growth factor. This has negative impacts on socio-economic development, human health, regional stability and the environment.

**Poverty alleviation** - No country with the exception of a few oil rich states, has risen from poverty whilst still having high fertility rates, which also impact directly on levels of maternal and child mortality. 40% of pregnancies are unplanned. In poorer countries in Africa and the Asia Pacific 33-40% of maternal deaths would be eliminated if contraceptive needs were met, and there would be a 20% reduction in deaths in children under 5 years, if women could use contraception to space their births by 2 years or more.

In East Timor where there is a 7.39 births/women there is 20 times greater maternal death rate compared to Australia which has a rate of less than 1 in 10,000.

In many poor countries in our region, one in every 150 women dies during pregnancy and delivery.

The death of a mother increases from 3 to 10 times the chance of her children below the age of 10 years, dying within 2 years.

Approximately 200 million people would like to control their fertility. Many live in extreme poverty. They are denied this basic right of empowerment in their lives.

High fertility rates causes spiralling poverty. For example 20 years ago, Thailand and the Philippines were neck in neck, economically. Thailand then developed a serious family planning regime, while the Philippines did nothing to address contraception and family planning and now are a backwater economy of poverty compared with Thailand. Countries that already struggle to feed themselves are set to double their population every 36years unless fertility is reduced.

Asian fertility decline accounted for 1/3 of Asia's economic growth. In total, inequality and discrimination against women costs Asia-Pacific economies about US$80 billion a year due to restrictions in access to employment and education.

**Climate Change and sustainability** - there cannot be environmental sustainability without population sustain-
ability. Most of the increased in greenhouse gasses will come from carbon fuelled developing economies where population is growing.

Remember that 20% of green house gasses (GHG's) are due to deforestation in developing countries.

65% of agricultural land in Africa has degraded soils and current rates of degradation will halve yields in 40 years.

Globally the population grows by 77 million people every year. The amount of water required to meet their needs is equivalent to the annual flow of the Rhine. At constant consumption rates we will be using 70% of available water by 2050, and if consumption increases we could be using 90%.

Gender based violence, maternal mortality and morbidity, sexually transmitted infection and HIV/AIDS and unsafe abortion adversely affects all aspects of family and community life, including the ability to maintain sustainable environmental practices.

Conflict - High rates of population growth can contribute to the potential for civil conflict where they involve pressure on limited land or water resources, mass migration, and high rates of youth unemployment particularly young men. Recent examples of this include Somalia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Northern Uganda.

Migration - Poverty and Population growth are closely related to increase migration. According to the Stern Review the Effects of Climate Change in developing countries, when combined with population growth, will exert significant pressure on migration rates.

We must promote gender equality and empower women. Fewer and spaced births by enabling women to control their fertility is vital and the provision of education of contraceptive services, enhances the opportunity for education of their children, especially girls.

This allows a greater contribution to the labour market and maximizes economic growth. We must reduce gender based violence such as domestic violence, female genital mutilation, rape and sexual abuse and provide services to manage the consequences, and a social and legal system to act as a deterrent, and provide compensation, women must be supported to have healthier pregnancies and safe deliveries by better pre and post natal care. They must have Access to services for treatment of sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS which is now undergoing increasing feminisation, and its prevention would be helped by enabling women to negotiate condom use.

A women's ability to terminate an unwanted pregnancy and to avoid the morbidity and mortality associated with unsafe abortion is her fundamental right and a cornerstone of empowerment. Unsafe abortion is responsible for at least 13% of all maternal deaths globally and of those who survive many are permanently injured adding to the cycle of poverty and ill health.

Universal primary education is a must. Currently less than 50% of pupils complete primary level in sub-Saharan Africa. Two million extra teachers per year are needed to maintain existing standards of education assuming class sizes of 40. Unless we strengthen the education of the girl child we will never achieve the sexual and reproductive health that poorer countries deserve.

It must never be forgotten, however, if we are to address gender based violence, sexually transmitted infections, maternal mortality or morbidity, unsafe abortion and universal education to primary level for children, it will have to be both a male and female issue.

State Branch Reports

Victorian Branch Report

June 25th - Presentations by Jill Quirk and Sheila Newman to a meeting of community conservation group "Friends of Frankston". Following showing of an edited version of Al Bartlett's "Arithmetic Population and Energy" Jill's talk gave an historical overview of global population growth and then with a focus on Australia. Sheila spoke of the drivers of population growth in Australia and suggested a community response for the future.

June 26th - submission made to State Government Green Paper on Land and Biodiversity emphasising the adverse affect of population growth and development on maintaining habitat for wildlife and biodiversity. (Jennie Epstein and Jill Quirk)

First meeting of the 2008-9 committee was held on July 5th following the Climate Emergency Rally on the same day for which S.P.A. Victoria was officially listed as a supporter. SPA Vic has a continuing active role in local growth related issues - members attended and helped with the campaigning against road tunnels to the north of the city - intersecting with Royal Park. These issues are inextricably linked with the push for population and infrastructure growth in this state.

On July 6th many SPA Vic members attended a major meeting in Mooney Valley organised by a local coalition - "Planning Backlash" comprising groups infuriated by recent changes to planning mechanisms - to fast track the transformation of Melbourne into a much higher density megalopolis and also by other projects such as channel deepening in Port Phillip Bay making way for growth in imports and ship size for a larger population. About 400 people heard speakers voicing our long held concerns. Actor Geoffrey Rush questioned the need for continued rapid population growth and asked the audience to consider how large Melbourne should be as he officially opened a new website

http://www.marvellousmelbourne.org/drupal/?q=node/130 <http://www.marvellousmelbourne.org/drupal/?q=node/130>

http://www.marvellousmelbourne.org/drupal/?q=node/130
Planning and development issues affecting our quality of life can and will be discussed on this site.

SPA members will also be interested in commentaries on these and other population related issues which are updated almost daily on http://candobetter.org/ <http://candobetter.org/>

**July 9th** - Jennie Epstein gave a presentation to the Wyndham group of the Australian Plant Society including discussion of the SPA Vic. Land and Biodiversity Green Paper submission. It was a good opportunity to make use of the new SPA population/biodiversity poster.

**West Australian Branch Report**

The July meeting, addressed by Dr. Mal Washer (see article on page 9) was attended by 48 members and visitors. Thanks to Phil Haberland (6PR Sunday) and his ‘Radio Cafe’ for promotion.

The August meeting will be held in the
Meeting Room, Lottery House 2 Dehi Street West Perth Sunday 24th August 2008 at 2pm.

The meeting will focus on biodiversity and our native wildlife. Dr Alexander Watson of the Wilderness Society will speak on “Our Ecological Heritage and The Great Western Woodlands”. The Woodlands project is an exciting proposal for a major conservation reserve, vitally important to species survival with climate change. Please promote this meeting to conservation groups and friends.

**South East Queensland Branch Report**

SPA SEQ branch has re-organised and is fully functional after running its AGM early this year, some old and new hands make for a good branch committee. SPA SEQ has produced 2 newsletters this year.

SPA SEQ members are working with organizers to again run a Population focused public event at the Woodford Festival for 2008.

Simon Baltais has spoken on ABC 612 about Pell’s comments ‘Populate or Perish’ and has a further invitation to speak on population at the ABC on Tuesday 22nd July.

The Courier Mail has asked Simon if it can use some of his work in a perspective piece on population, which leads Simon to believe that the media are very interested in population issues. The secret is if it is a secret, seems to be to link it to contemporary stories of the day.

Deb Henry is continuing to do exciting work with the Redland City Council and the President, Sheila Davis has been very active ‘hoisting’ the population flag at every opportunity with the Press.

**South Australia Branch Report**

The last six months has seen the South Australian Branch of SPA active in a few key areas.

In April, State Democrats MLC and current SPA member Sandra Kanck launched a Legislative Inquiry into the future impact of peak oil on South Australia. In response, SPA-SA prepared and forwarded a submission highlighting various aspects of the peak oil issue and its relevance in the context of population. A copy of this submission can be found on the South Australian link of the national SPA webpage at http://www.population.org.au/issues/index.html. As a result, SPA-SA members Peter Martin and John Coulter will be given an opportunity to speak to the submission before the Committee on September 16th.

On 18 June, SPA-SA members met in the new (but temporary) Conservation Council of South Australia headquarters in the city. The group had not formally met since the previous Annual General Meeting in September 2007 and was a good opportunity to catch up, establish CCSA’s building as SPA-SA’s official meeting space (at least until CCSA find new and longer term premises) and discuss suggestions for new initiatives for the group.

With much of the recent discussion and debate in the group centred around the South Australian Government’s Strategic Plan 2007 and its population target of two million people by 2050 (South Australia currently has a population of approximately 1.5 million), the most prominent idea to come out of the discussion was for the group to prepare a short version of an alternative State Strategic Plan. This alternative plan, which could be used as a vehicle to highlight the issue of population in the media and through government policy processes, would properly consider environmental factors in its overall strategic direction and would be based upon an alternative vision to the dominant socio-economic paradigm of economic growth and GDP. It is intended that SPA-SA will put a proposal to the National Executive to obtain potential funding for the preparation of such a document.

**New South Wales Branch Report**

Futures Trader Karl Levy was guest speaker for NSW Branch’s July Forum, Peak Oil is Now. Karl stressed that oil depletion is far more advanced than our politicians acknowledge. As usual a lively discussion followed Karl’s talk. Graham Wood facilitated the discussion, and efficiently brought the meeting to a close to allow time for drinks, cheese and biscuits and socialising.

Our Branch AGM will be held at 2.00PM on Saturday 18 October, at the Mitchell Theatre, Sydney Mechanics’ School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney.
ABOUT SPA
The SPA Newsletter is mailed bi-monthly to members of Sustainable Population Australia Inc. Membership is open to all who agree with SPA’s aims and objectives. For further information, please contact the SPA National Office or your nearest SPA Branch. All membership applications, renewals and Newsletter contributions should be sent to the National Office.

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Not sure what to do with your ‘Back Copies’ of the SPA Newsletter after you have read them?
Why don’t you take them along to your local Doctor’s, Dentist’s, Podiatrist’s Surgery and drop them among the ‘New Ideas’ in the waiting room? Spread the word!#

Correction to the CASSE link placed in issue #80!
In the last issue of the SPA Newsletter, the link to CASSE was inadvertently truncated. The correct link is:
http://www.steadystate.org/CASSEPositionOnEG.html#

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 Editors.#

Help us to help you!
Update Your Personal Details Including your Email Address!
If you have changed any of your details as recorded in the Membership register (such as home address or email address), please contact the SPA National Office or your Branch Secretary and provide your latest details. Losing contact with our membership will happen if our records are not kept up to date and we would not like you to miss receiving new issues of the SPA Newsletter.

Each Branch Secretary has a listing of the State Membership data base so you can check your details quickly by contacting your State officer.

ABS Population Clock
World Population estimated on 04 August, 2008 by the US Bureau of Censuses:
6,714,572,026
Australia’s resident population on the 5th August, 2008 is projected to be:
21,383,333

This projection is based on the estimated resident population at 31st December, 2007 and assumes growth since then of:
- 1 birth every 1 mins 55 secs
- 1 death every 3 min 57 secs
- 1 net international migrant every 2 min 38s
Australia’s overall population increase is one additional person every 1 mins 33 secs.
These assumptions are consistent with those used for Series A in Population Projections, Australia 2004 to 2101 (cat. no. 3222.0)