



NEWSLETTER

Sustainable Population Australia Inc

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Formerly Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population

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Now its perish as we populate.

Ian Lowe

Patron SPA

Emeritus Professor of Science and Technology at Griffith University and President of the Australian Conservation Foundation, published in the Canberra Times 25th September 2009.#

The latest population figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics are alarming. New demographic figures show Australia's population grew by 439,000 in the year to March 2009, including net overseas migration of 239,000. The growth rate of 2.1 per cent was the highest since the 1950s.

The growth rate threatens our living standards as well as worsening our environmental problems. A responsible government would be acting now to curb the unsustainable growth, rather than celebrating the disastrous trend.

Australia's rate of population growth is now among the highest in the industrialised world. Among Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development countries, only Turkey and Mexico had higher annual growth rates in recent years. Irresponsible increases in migration have added to the recent surge in the population.

If 2008 fertility and migration levels were to continue, Australia's population would triple by the end of this century and remain on a growth trajectory. With more sensible policies, we could stabilise our population around mid-century. That should be our goal.

Three national reports on the state of the environment have concluded that the important trends are going in the wrong direction. Our inland rivers, the coastal zone, rural land and our unique biodiversity are all threatened. Australia's greenhouse pollution is spiralling out of control, the product of a rapidly growing population and increasing energy use per person. We must stabilise our population and consumption at levels that can be sustainably supported. There is a clear link between population growth and environmental damage. Growing populations require additional energy, water and other resources.

All our major cities are under strain from their increasing numbers. We see pressure on water resources, loss of natural habitat on the urban fringe, increasing greenhouse pollution from transport and other energy use, air quality impacts and loss of the built heritage. The problems are particularly evident in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, where there is increasing community concern at the erosion

of the quality of life. Even in Adelaide, where the state government seems disappointed that the population isn't growing as rapidly as other cities, the semi-rural fringe is being concreted over at an alarming rate. The pressure on our cities is being compounded by smaller households. There were 3.5 people per dwelling in 1960; the figure now is 2.5 and falling. At the same time, the average house has got larger.

Outside our major cities, there is pressure to develop resources, intensify agricultural production, and over-extract water from natural systems as a function of increasing urban consumption. The intense development of many coastal areas, for holiday homes and "sea change" migrants from urban centres, is eroding the quality and resilience of natural coastal systems.

The arguments for continued growth are not consistent or honest. We are being told we need to bring in more migrants to fill alleged job shortages. At the same time, it is claimed we can't provide work for young Australians and that government needs to work on "jobs, jobs, jobs". Those two claims cannot both be true. We are also told we need to fear an ageing population, but migrants grow old just like the rest of us.

Peter McDonald, director of the Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute, has said the argument that migration can keep our population young is "demographic nonsense". What is the alternative? Our aim should be to stabilise our population. This means we must have a look at migration levels.

Immigration has enriched Australia's cultural and social life. We have important international humanitarian responsibilities, including the need to accept refugees. But more than 50 per cent of recent migrants arrived as "skilled" people, with only 7 per cent coming on humanitarian grounds. Overwhelmingly, migration has been serving the business community's wish for a pool of labour, rather than meeting our responsibility to accept refugees. Australia can meet and increase its humanitarian obligations and continue to accommodate family reunions, while

reducing overall migration to more sustainable levels.

Demographic studies show that if the net inward migration is about 70,000 a year or less, the population will stabilise in about the 2050s. If the net migration figure is above 70,000 a year (it was 253,400 in 2008) the population keeps increasing far into the future. That is a grim prospect of continuing decline in our quality of life and the state of our environment.

There is no realistic prospect of meeting responsible targets for reduced greenhouse pollution if we keep increasing population numbers. For the sake of future generations, we need a serious community debate about population.#

Try Limiting Population to Ease Global Warming

Ross Gittins,

the Sydney Morning Herald's economics editor.
Writing in The West Australian Newspaper 23/09/09
(WANews.com.au)

You little beauty. Kevin Rudd's admission that the world's leaders are a long way from reaching an agreement on how to respond to climate change means there's no reason to get his carbon pollution reduction scheme passed by Parliament before the meeting at Copenhagen in December. And if the leaders can't reach an agreement then, we may need do nothing at all.

Wow. Off the hook. All the nastiness that was the emissions trading scheme - a new tax, by any other name ñ no longer needed. Some countries have all the luck.

Yes, I am being sarcastic. Listen to the Opposition and you'd think our problem wasn't that the world's getting hotter, the weather wilder and the sea level higher but that limiting those things may involve some unpleasantness. A new tax? Surely global warming can't be that bad.

The Government is little better. Of Rudd's 100 top priorities, responding to climate change is just one. He can't resist playing politics. He advances the most timid policy at home, then jets off to lecture others on the need for concerted action. And boy, doesn't Kev look worried about the planet as he mixes and mingles with the great and good.

It's clear the penny hasn't dropped. Neither our leaders nor we have any real appreciation of the severity and urgency of the problem we face. We can't focus on the problem for more than a few minutes. We can't stir ourselves to action.

Everyone (rightly) condemns economists for their failure to foresee and warn us about the global financial crisis but here's a climate crisis we've seen coming for years - and whose early effects we've witnessed - and we can't take it seriously.

Even the economists who brought us the emissions trading scheme don't adequately appreciate the problem we've got. They think all we have to do is switch to low-carbon energy sources (ideally by capturing all the carbon emitted by burning coal) and the economy can go

on growing as if nothing had happened.

Being economists, they see us as all living in an economy, with this thing at the side called the environment that occasionally causes problems we need to deal with. As usual, wrong model. In reality, the economy exists within the ecosystem, taking natural resources from it, using them and then ejecting wastes, including sewage, garbage, pollution and greenhouse gases.

The global economy grows as the world's population grows and as material living standards rise. The problem is that the human population and material affluence have grown so much over the past 200 years that our economic activity is putting increasing pressure on the ecosystem that ensures our survival.

On the one hand we're chewing through non-renewable resources at a rapid rate and using renewable resources faster than their ability to renew themselves. On the other, we're spewing out wastes faster than the ecosystem can absorb them.

Global warming, an example of the latter, is just the most acute respect in which global economic activity is undermining the healthy functioning of our ecosystem.

We're destroying the world's fish stocks, farming practices are causing acidification, desertification and erosion of land, dams and irrigation are destroying our rivers and human "progress" is destroying species.

All this is happening with only about 15 per cent of the world's population enjoying high material living standards similar to ours.

Now consider what happens to the global economy's use of natural resources and generation of wastes when China and India - accounting for almost 40 per cent of the world's population - get on a path of rapid economic development to raise their citizens' standard of living to something approaching ours.

Since the rich countries are reluctant to countenance a decline in living standards, to put it mildly, and the poor countries most assuredly won't abandon their quest for affluence, there's one obvious variable that could be used to limit global economic activity's deleterious impact on the ecosystem: population growth.

Limiting population growth in the developing world and allowing population to continue on its established path of decline in the developed world wouldn't be easy but it would be easier than trying to prevent rising living standards among those already living.

Hence my dismay when Wayne Swan's announcement last week, that Australia's population in 40 years is now expected to be 6.5 million greater than was expected just three years ago, was received without the blinking of an eyelid. Ho-hum, tell me something interesting.

From 21.5 million today, our population by about 2050 is now expected to reach not 28.5 million but more than 35 million. That's growth of 65 per cent rather than 33 per cent. The revised estimate is driven by "a greater number of women of child-bearing age, higher fertility rates and increased net overseas migration", Swan explained.

Even at an upwardly revised total fertility rate of more than 1.9 births per woman, we're still well below the long-term replacement rate of 2.1 births. So it's likely that most of the upward revision comes from higher immigration, which would also increase the number of women of child-bearing age.

You might think that, once people have been born, it doesn't matter to the global environment what country they live in.

But if they move from a developing to a developed country - as in our case most would - their standard of living (and thus their use of natural resources and generation of wastes) greatly increases.

Our apparently universally approved determination to maintain high immigration greatly increases the difficulty we'll have reducing our carbon emissions, puts a lot of upward pressure on house prices and raises questions about whether we're exceeding our Earth's "carrying capacity".

But never mind all that. Did you know Our Kev had breakfast with the great Bill Clinton? Bill had an omelet but Kev had fruit salad.#

Population Consumes growth performance

by Crispin Hull

5th Sept, 09, Canberra Times

Crispin Hull is past editor of the Canberra Times, Journalist, Lawyer, and currently teaches Journalism at the University of Canberra.

At last, Australia is out of recession. "What?" I hear you ask, "I thought Australia had escaped the recession."

Not so. Those eagerly awaited National Account or GDP figures which came out this week do not tell the full story. And, incidentally, this is the 50th anniversary of the publication of those figures.

Australia has been in recession since about mid-2008, but the economists will not tell you that.

You see, the GDP figures add up national income and determine whether the economy has expanded or contracted. But they do not account for population growth. In the past year population growth has been greater than the growth in the economy. So income per head has gone down, not up as the Government and economists would mislead you into believing. Now you know why you have been feeling the pinch.

I hasten to add that this is not the Australian Bureau of Statistics' fault. It just produces the figures. Unfortunately, it cannot do everything at once. The national account figure is seen to be more important than the income-per-head figure so is done first.

But you can do back-of-the-envelope figures. The population is growing at an astonishing 1.9 per cent - at poverty-causing Third World rates (2.1% latest figures *Eds.*). But between mid last year and now, the economy

as a whole was growing at less than that rate. So we were going backwards. It is now growing at an annual rate of 2.4 per cent, just ahead of population.

And even then, GDP on its own is not a good measure of human well-being. Yet every quarter the government, the economists, business and financial journalists gather round like supplicants waiting for the statue of the Virgin Mary to shed tears of blood and announce, "We are saved. We are saved. The economy has grown."

But population growth always takes some, and sometimes takes all, of the growth. Moreover, there are obvious costs to higher population which far outweigh any benefits.

Higher costs of water (witness this week's Cotter Dam cost); land (witness the unaffordability of housing); longer commuting times; infrastructure costs or infrastructure degradation if the money is not spent; and extra competition for space in cities and wild places.

Despite the costs to the many and the unpopularity of high immigration, governments of both complexion continue it.

Immigration is at record highs. It has more than doubled in the past 10 years to more than 200,000 a year (if you count New Zealanders), plus another 650,000 or so on work, holiday and student visas - many of whom will want to stay permanently.

Why is this policy continuing without much debate, and to the obvious detriment of the existing population?

Beware bipartisanship. The major parties are heavily funded and influenced by interest groups who profit from high immigration to the detriment of the general population.

They are also lobbied by industry groups who may not give donations but who act, quite reasonably, in the interests of their members (some of whom might). And this is very often is not in the interests of the whole population. When, for example, has the Housing Industry Association ever said that high population growth should be curtailed because it is one of the obvious causes of poor housing affordability? Rather it argues for policies that will profit its members. Similarly for any number of industries.

The only way to stop this bipartisan folly is to restrict the big bucks from the big end of town going into political parties' coffers and also to do what President Obama has done: require that all submissions made by lobbyists and industry groups to be made public.

Political parties don't do any focus groups on population policy, like they do in so many other areas. They ignore the voters' views of perhaps the nation's most important policy. The only time it has been mentioned by a major party was when the Howard Government wanted to exploit a few refugees all the while allowing hundreds of thousands of immigrants in.

It is not racist to seek a sane population policy for Australia. Let's cut employment immigration deeply and double our refugee intake of about 13,500 and have none with white faces - except, perhaps, those escaping racism

in Zimbabwe.

We should have a population policy that aims at improving well-being not impairing it.

You can call this a folly. Historian Barbara Tuchman in her splendid book *The March of Folly*, laid down the characteristics of political folly (as distinct from misfortune): pursuing a destructive policy, which is known to be destructive at the time, against which many had cautioned, and for which there was a reasonable alternative. History is replete with them.

Australia will bitterly regret this immigration surge. It is adding to or causing nearly every policy woe we have: water shortage; agricultural land being consumed by urban sprawl; congestion; high house prices; climate change; destruction of habitat including the great barrier reef; strains in public education and health; higher food costs and so on and on.

For 50 years now we have foolishly looked to the National Account figures as a measure of our well-being. It is not the ABS's fault. It does measurements for well-being, but they are practically ignored by government, economists and political journalists.

We need a measure that takes into consideration things like commuting time; costs of water and energy; access to health and education; housing costs and so on.

What is the point of extra income if it takes longer to commute to earn it; causes higher food, water and energy costs and living costs generally?

We are adding one person to Australia's population every 1 minute 24 seconds. Ten years ago the estimate was we would hit 23 million by 2021. We are almost there 12 years early. Immigration is causing 60 per cent of the increase.

But if you add all those people, total GDP is more likely to increase avoiding a technical recession. And the Treasurer and all the foolish financial commentators cheer. Pity, though, that most of the individuals comprising the ever-growing aggregate will be worse off while a few at the top can escape the degradation. #

Grievance Debate Speech in the House of Representatives, 17/08/09 'POPULATION'

**Kelvin Thomson MHR
Member for Wills#**

We all know that the world has plenty of problems. Let me run out some that come to mind without much effort – global warming, food crisis, water shortages, housing affordability, overcrowded cities, transport congestion, fisheries collapse, species extinctions, increasing prices, waste, terrorism. We scratch our heads and try to come up with solutions.

It staggers me that so often we ignore the elephant in the room – increasing population. Each of these problems is either caused by, or exacerbated by, the global population explosion. In the first two million years of human

existence, the global human population was only a few million. Up to 1950, it had managed to climb to 2 billion. In the fifty-odd years since, it has trebled to 6 billion people. The population is projected to double again.

The consequences of the present population pressure are dramatic. In my opinion it is not plausible that the world's population could double without the consequences becoming catastrophic. And yet when it is suggested that the world's population is a problem, there is zero interest from policy makers. In my view it isn't so much a problem as the problem. Let me return to that list of problems, and describe the impact of population on them.

1. GLOBAL WARMING

Population plays a critical role in global warming. We have one earth, one atmosphere, and every carbon dioxide molecule we release into it contributes to global warming. The more of us there are, the more carbon dioxide is released. Simple, undeniable. Al Gore identifies population growth as one of the big three drivers of the rapid spurt of greenhouse gases during the past 50 years. People who believe we can meet serious carbon targets without curbing population growth are kidding themselves, they are delusional.

There is no reasonable prospect that Australia will reduce its total level of greenhouse emissions, while our population grows by 1 million every four years, as is presently the case (*Eds' note latest ABS Figures show population grows by 1 million in 2.3 years*) - Population stabilisation must be part of the plan to contain greenhouse emissions, not merely for Australia, but for the rest of the world as well.

2. FOOD CRISIS

The combination of declining arable land and continued population growth has caused the world's per capita food production to go into decline. We are now in a situation where there is a global shortage of food which is set to get worse. In future, more people will starve, not fewer.

Figures released by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization show that the number of people suffering from chronic hunger is rising, not falling. In June last year the Australian Government's Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation said that world agriculture is experiencing a growing crisis, and its first named demand side factor was increasing global population.

3. WATER SHORTAGES

As with agricultural decline, population growth is fuelling water shortages, both indirectly through climate change and directly through extraction and pollution. Around the world one in three people is suffering from water shortage. Assuming modest rates of population growth, we will use 70% of the world's accessible fresh water by 2025. Already 400 million children worldwide are drinking dangerously unclean water, and one child dies from a waterborne disease every 15 seconds. According to Melbourne Water, water scarcity in and around Melbourne is being driven by both climate change and population growth.

4. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability in Australia has undergone a period of dramatic decline. John Edwards, (*Chief*) economist with HSBC (*Bank*) has noted that Australia's high level of migration – the highest level in our history – is going to keep upward pressure on house prices. The same goes for rent. The General Manager of Australian Property Monitors, Michael McNamara, said the shortage of rental properties would continue to worsen because of rising migration.

5. OVERCROWDED CITIES

Our cities are too large. They dwarf people. The sheer scale of them is overwhelming for some, who lose the plot and fall victim to mental illness or drug and alcohol abuse. And for the rest of us the madding crowd swells every year, giving us that little bit less room. Every square metre of space is fought over.

In Africa and Asia, the accumulated urban growth during the whole span of history, is in the process of being doubled between the year 2000 and 2030. A United Nations Population Fund report released in June 2007 says that as a result a billion people – one sixth of the world's population – live in slums.

The overcrowding of cities is not merely a Third World phenomenon, either. In my home city of Melbourne, a lot of people of goodwill have supported high rise as preferable to urban sprawl. What they don't realise is that it isn't halting any urban sprawl at all. Suburbs continue to march out onto the horizon. Property developers are having their cake and eating it, too. We're growing upwards and outwards. Melbourne is becoming an obese, hardened-artery parody of its former self.

There is something intangible but important about the personal space of a backyard. I believe the children who grow up in concrete jungle suburbs are subject to more bullying and harassment, and are more vulnerable to traps like crime and drugs.

6. TRAFFIC CONGESTION

More people equals more cars. And the more cars there are out on the roads, the longer it takes us to get anywhere. . The time motorists spend on the roads in and out of Brisbane for example – to the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast, and Ipswich – is truly appalling.

And each suburb we build out of the city fringes means more traffic coming through the inner suburbs, more congestion, more pollution, more noise. It does nothing for our calm, our quality of life, our sanity. We think we have no choice but to grin and bear it. It's not true.

7. SPECIES EXTINCTIONS

The USA based National Academy of Sciences has reported that human activities are leading to a wave of extinctions over 100 times greater than natural rates. Over 12,000 varieties of animal, plant and water life are critically endangered. Thirty percent of Australia's 760 bird species are under threat.

The world has entered the twenty-first century with little more than 10% of its original forest cover intact.

According to anthropologists Richard Leakey and Roger Lewis all the forest cover will be largely gone by 2050.

Sometimes I think we have declared war on everything else. The more there are of us, the less there is of everything else. I consider it a grotesque piece of arrogance on our part as a species that we think that we have a right to destroy everything else on our way to affluence.

8. FISHERIES COLLAPSE

One of our favourite old sayings was "There are plenty more fish in the sea". Not any more. 90% of the large fish in the ocean are gone.

Australia is in the same boat as everyone else. Our annual catch has steadily gone down and a Bureau of Rural Sciences Fisheries Status Report says that two thirds of Australia's fisheries are either "overfished" or "uncertain".

9. INCREASING PRICES

Increasing population consumes resources and makes them scarcer, leading to price rises. . The rising price of petrol is a clear function of scarcity fuelled by population growth. And the increased cost of basic resources like water and petrol feeds into everything they contribute to – food costs, transport costs, insurance, housing etc.

Some economists argue that increasing population will create economies of scale and put downward pressure on prices. In reality, this downward pressure on prices is sighted less frequently than Elvis Presley.

10. WASTE

A vast area of the Central Pacific Ocean has become smothered in plastic. It's referred to as the great Pacific Garbage Patch. The area affected is larger than Texas and to a depth of at least 30 metres. What a disgrace!

11. TERRORISM AND WAR

Analysts spend a great deal of time assessing the political and religious factors leading to the scourge of terrorism and war in the modern world. They spend less time noting the underlying cause – conflict over scarce resources – scarce land, scarce water, scarce oil – brought about by increasing population.

A Pentagon Report in 2007 detailed a range of scenarios in which population displacement caused by global warming and triggered by extreme weather events world lead to border tensions and armed conflict.

An Oxford University study has estimated that 26 million Bangladeshis, 73 million Chinese and 20 million Indians are at risk of displacement from rising sea levels.

CONCLUSION

In short, it is time for governments and policy makers around the world to come to their senses and take steps to stabilize the world's population. It needs to happen in every country, including here in Australia. Especially here in dry, arid Australia.

And it is time people and communities stood up and demanded better of their policy makers than the "she'll be right" growth fetish which is making an utter mockery of our obligation to give to our children a world in as good a condition as the one our parents gave to us.#

CONTRACEPTION IS “GREENEST” TECHNOLOGY

Family planning cheapest way to combat climate change

Optimum Population Trust, August 2009

www.optimumpopulation.org/reducingemissions.pdf

Contraception is almost five times cheaper than conventional green technologies as a means of combating climate change, according to research published today (Wednesday, September 9).

Each \$7.50AUD (£4) spent on basic family planning over the next four decades would reduce global CO2 emissions by more than a tonne. To achieve the same result with low-carbon technologies would cost a minimum of \$35.60AUD (£19). The UN estimates that 40 per cent of all pregnancies worldwide are unintended.

The report, *Fewer Emitters, Lower Emissions, Less Cost*, commissioned by the Optimum Population Trust from the London School of Economics (at www.optimumpopulation.org/reducingemissions.pdf), concludes that “considered purely as a method of reducing future CO2 emissions”, family planning is more cost-effective than leading low-carbon technologies. It says family planning should be seen as one of the primary methods of emissions reduction.

Meeting basic family planning needs along the lines suggested would save 34 gigatonnes (billion tonnes) of CO2 between now and 2050 – equivalent to nearly six times the annual emissions of the US and almost 60 times the UK’s annual total.

Roger Martin, chair of OPT, said the findings vindicated OPT’s stance that population growth must be included in the climate change debate. “It’s always been obvious that total emissions depend on the number of emitters as well as their individual emissions – the carbon tonnage can’t shoot down, as we want, while the population keeps shooting up. The taboo on mentioning this fact has made the whole climate change debate so far somewhat unreal. Stabilising population levels has always been essential ecologically, and this study shows it’s economically sensible too.

“The population issue must now be added into the negotiations for the Copenhagen climate change summit in December. This part of the solution is so easy, and so cheap, and would bring so many other social and economic benefits, from health and education to the empowerment of women. It would also ease all the other environmental problems we face – the rapid shrinkage of soil, fresh

water, forests, fisheries, wildlife and oil reserves and the looming food crisis.

“All of these would be easier to solve with fewer people, and ultimately impossible to solve with ever more. Meanwhile each additional person, especially each rich person in the OECD countries, reduces everyone’s share of the planet’s dwindling resources even faster. Non-coercive population policies are urgently needed in all countries. The taboo on discussing this is no longer defensible.”



photo: Courtney Walker via flickr in <http://www.treehugger.com/files/2009/09/contraception-five-times-less-expensive-than-low-carbon-technology.php>

The study, based on the principle that “fewer people will emit fewer tonnes of carbon dioxide”, models the consequences of meeting all “unmet need” for family planning, defined as the number of women who wish to delay or terminate childbearing but who are not using contraception. One recent estimate put this figure at 200 million. UN data suggest that meeting unmet need for family planning would reduce unintended births by 72 per cent, reducing projected world population in 2050 by half a billion

to 8.64 billion. Between 2010 and 2050 twelve billion fewer “people-years” would be lived – 326 billion against 338 billion under current projections.

The 34 gigatonnes of CO2 saved in this way would cost \$AUD252 billion – roughly \$8 a tonne. However, the same CO2 saving would cost over \$1trillion if low-carbon technologies were used. The \$8 cost of abating a tonne of CO2 using family planning compares with \$28 (£15) for wind power, \$58 (£31) for solar, \$66-96 (£35-51) for coal plants with carbon capture and storage, \$105 (£56) for plug-in hybrid vehicles and \$150 (£80) for electric vehicles.

However, the study may understate the CO2 savings available because the estimates of unmet need are based on married women alone, yet some studies suggest up to 40 per cent of young unmarried women have had unwanted pregnancies.

Mr. Martin added: “The potential for tackling climate change by addressing population growth through better family planning, alongside the conventional approach, is clearly enormous and we shall be urging all those involved in the Copenhagen process to take it fully on board.”#

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REPORT ON UNFCCC TRIP, BONN III

Jenny Goldie,

National Secretary, SPA and UNFCCC Delegate

It was back to Bonn, Germany, for more Preliminary Meetings of UNFCCC (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) for a week in August. Because there have been two other such meetings in Bonn, one of which I attended in June, this one was known as Bonn III.

I had sent a letter from our president, Sandra Kanck, to 82 Parties/countries in the week before, asking them to accept the concept of 'population as a driver of climate change'. By the second day of Bonn III, however, it was evident that I needed to give the Parties specific changes to the negotiated text (the one for ultimate acceptance in Copenhagen in December at COP15), not just a concept. Following all the additions made by Parties at Bonn II, the text was now, according to UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Yvo de Boer, "200 pages of incomprehensible nonsense with 2000 square brackets and two weeks to turn it around". (What is bracketed is not yet agreed upon). He exaggerated only slightly. There were, in fact, nearly three weeks to turn it around if you count the two-week session in Bangkok starting late September.



The Marriott Hotel Bonn

By the time I'd worked out wording, however, Parties were in no mood to add anything, especially as the Chair of the Ad hoc Working Group on Long Term Cooperation (AWGT-LCA), Michael Zammit Cutajar, had said we needed 30 pages or less. (The Kyoto Protocol was 30 pages.) Nevertheless, for the last two days I thrust our suggested amendments into the hands of unwilling Parties. It's not something I enjoy, though I would have felt better had other population/environment organisations been around.

At Bonn III there were no side events so, apart from writing suggested text, all I could do was observe the various meetings and attend the daily Women's Caucus meetings which are great fun and full of wonderful women. I hope, however, that by Bangkok we will have signed up with Climate Action Network Australia (CAN) so we can attend CAN International meetings as well. Not that those other environmental groups are falling over themselves in support of our position but there is the occasional very impassioned support from individuals.

Just prior to Bonn III, CNN news did a short clip on a paper out from Oregon State University quantifying greenhouse gas emissions per every extra baby born. It

made the point quite clearly about the need, particularly in richer countries, for people to have fewer children as emissions from just one extra US child was equivalent to that from 160 extra Bangladeshis.

I used this figure when we in 'civil society' met with UNFCCC Executive Director Yvo de Boer on Tuesday. I sat near the front and asked him a question on population. When I said population stabilisation was particularly necessary in the developed countries, he was apparently sanguine about the US and Australia increasing their populations for whatever reason (ageing etc). He finished that answer with: "Well, population is important but at this conference we have a job to do and we have to get on with it", missing the point entirely about population numbers and growth being drivers of climate change.

There will be side events at Copenhagen so we have applied to hold one on December 10. I hope that we can line up some of the biggest names in the population movement (Attenborough, Ehrlich, Holdren, Suzuki, Porritt...) to be part of the panel. It might generate the kind of publicity we need.

In the meantime, Jane O'Sullivan will attend all of the Bangkok session on behalf of SPA, and Peter Schlesinger and I will go for a week each. Whether we go to the Barcelona meetings in November will be decided after Bangkok. In early October I will go from Bangkok to Washington to attend a



The Conference Hall

meeting of population groups - organised by Bill Ryerson of the Population Media Center in Vermont - so that we can get more support in the UNFCCC process. Eric Rimmer from Optimum Population Trust in the UK, at least, has promised to join us in

Copenhagen in December.

My great thanks to members who donated money and helped make all this possible.#

Please Note

We have several letters from members but there is just insufficient space to publish them all. We will place them in the SPA website under a page titled - letters. Please accept our apologies. Eds

POPULATION CONCERN AROUND THE WORLD

by Simon Ross
Jackdaw, Issue 15, p14,
Optimum Population Trust

Population concern is a global issue. There are other OPT's. We'll be profiling some in the next few issues and we start with Europe. There are fewer, smaller, organisations than the US: OPT is the largest. There was an umbrella organisation in the 90's (now defunct), the European Pherology Organisations Confederation (EPOC).

In the UK, Our Future Planet www.ourfutureplanet.org is an environmental website and community which recognises population is an issue, as does the longer established People and Planet www.peopleandplanet.net. The Population and Sustainability Network www.populationandsustainability.org aims to bring together development, environment and reproductive health NGOs, government departments, academics and others to increase leverage on population issues.

The name of the Norwegian www.nupeo.org is short for numbers of people. Their focus is to reduce the human population and their site has a video of our patron Jane Goodall. In Denmark, the Demografi sk Rad og Selskab www.demografi.net/index.html seeks to promote sustainable decisions in population issues both in society and for individuals.

The Club of 10 Million www.overbevolking.nl is named after their goal for the Netherlands population versus the current 16 million. Their slogan: 'More humanity with fewer humans'. France has both the Mouvement Démographie-Ecologie and Démographie Responsable www.demographie-responsible.org the latter founded last year with a goal of stabilising and reducing the population through voluntary means.

In Germany, the Herbert-Gruhl-Gesellschaft www.herbert-gruhl.de has a belief that 'Less is more' and seeks population reduction and balanced migration. In Switzerland, there is the Schriftstellerin Esther Schmid www.esthersonjaschmid.ch and Ecopop www.ecopop.ch which believes that 'Over population is a major cause of environmental degradation. Long term, the population in Switzerland, in Europe, in the world must fall to environmentally and socially acceptable levels.' Finally, to Italy for Rientrodolce www.rientrodolce.org which considers overpopulation the primary cause of the humanitarian, environmental and energy crisis of our planet. The name comes from Marco Pannella's idea of a 'mild return' to a world with 2 billion.

So, an opportunity for us to help existing groups grow and new ones start. We'd welcome those from abroad joining OPT and would encourage any members with links or languages to join these groups or at least their discussion fora. And if you fancy a role in OPT's organised international activity, contact admin@optimumpopulation.org .#

Mark Diesendorf and Rod Quantock on the need for urgent action on climate change

Shirley Proctor, SPA Member

As a new member of the Mount Alexander Sustainability Group centred on Castlemaine, Central Victoria I went along to the August meeting – Mark Diesendorf launching his new book *Climate Action: A Campaign Manual for Greenhouse Solutions*. (UNSW Press, July 2009, 256pp) He gave a very clear logical presentation clarifying many issues and pointing out the problems with the Carbon Pollution Reinforcement Scheme (CPRS). His book clearly gives the answers to 14 of the major fallacies about greenhouse solutions. As well as informing the general public I can see it being used widely in schools helping to prepare debates. He points out individual citizens exercising their democratic rights carry little weight but can greatly strengthen their influence by being active in a Climate Movement Organisation (CMO). Technologies alone will not solve the climate crisis – the government will need pressuring to put in place processes and policies to transform economies into steady-state systems and to stabilise population numbers.

The next week my science book club who were reading *The Upside of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity and the Renewal of Civilization* by Thomas Homer-Dixon (*Text Publishing 04/08/2008*) took a minibus to Melbourne to see the irreverent but much loved Victorian comedian Rod

Quantock in his show : *Bugger the polar bears, this is serious* (<http://quantock.com.au/>). Rod had read *Climate Wars*, was horrified at the prospects and was moved to get the message out to inform as many people in as short a time as possible in his own wacky style. While he may have been preaching to the already converted, his mad cap presentation should be taped to show on TV where so many more may get the message – not everyone responds to the Al Gore style. I think Rod is intermittently touring rural Victoria with his show.#



Snippets

Population Policies#

In a statement issued last month, OPT called on climate change negotiators to ensure that population restraint policies are adopted by every state worldwide to combat climate change. Family planning programmes in poorer countries should be treated as legitimate candidates for climate change funding. The statement was endorsed by OPT patrons including Sir David Attenborough, Dr. James Lovelock and Jonathon Porritt. See: www.optimumpopulation.org/submissions/climatechange09.pdf.

CSIRO report on sustainable water in Northern Australia.

August, 2009

Claims that northern Australia will provide a food bowl for a climate change future have been challenged by the recent CSIRO report (*Water in Northern Australia, August 2009, Northern Australian Yields Project, CSIRO*) that in reality the region was 'water limited'. While rainfall in the 1.2 million square kilo-metres north of Broome to Cairns was high, most fell on the flat coastal strip with 95% falling from November to April.

The lack of suitable dam sites and the increase in evaporation compared to climate change rainfall were major obstacles to storing and utilizing the massive water flows.#

Review of Australia's Immigration

The Minister for Immigration, Chris Evans, has foreshadowed a review of Australia's Immigration with an opportunity for public consultation. We urge every member to prepare brief submissions now. The number of submissions from the public has been reducing greatly for most issues.

Feedback suggests these can be quite short - 1 to a maximum of 5 pages expressing your viewpoint and your reasons for this view. SPA and other organisations will certainly submit longer arguments but the numbers of individual submissions is an indicator of the extent of public concern.

Use a spare moment to write your views now and keep this ready to send. We will provide details for submissions when this is available.#

Obituary: Norman Borlaug, Father of the Green Revolution.

The high yielding, disease resistant, wheat and rice strains developed by Norman Borlaug, provided additional food supplies that converted food deficient countries such as Mexico and India to net food exporters. Today most people associate Borlaug's work with increasing demand for fertilizer needed by these varieties and the criticism that use of his systems destroyed traditional agriculture in these countries resulting in environmental degradation.

It appropriate here to recognize that this Nobel prize-winner was motivated by strong concern for the poor and Page 9 – SPA Newsletter No 88, October, 2009

starving in these developing nations. He did not view his new varieties as a long term solution to world hunger. Receiving his Nobel prize he warned that the struggle against hunger had not been won. He responded to criticism of his techniques by pointing out the problem was not his agricultural techniques but the exploding human population growth that made them necessary.

Borlaug's passing should remind us all that there are no 'silver bullets'. Today's solutions so often create tomorrow's problems. Without reduced population growth increased efficiency just leads to increased consumption. Norman Borlaug died in Dallas Texas, he was 95 years of age.#

Treasurer using the ageing scare tactic

Sandra Kanck - President, SPA

Media Release' Friday, 18 September 2009

This government is using the ageing population as a smokescreen to cover up its active pursuit of population growth says environment group Sustainable Population Australia.

SPA National President, Sandra Kanck, says the only positive about the Treasurer's comments on population increase is his recognition that it creates a burden.

"But his comment that we have to merely 'adapt to changing demographic trends' is a matter for despair and outrage.

"Population growth is already exerting enormous pressure on greenhouse gas emissions, water, housing, urban sprawl, roads, energy, the environment, and on health (for people of all ages and not just the ageing).

"Under the Rudd Government there has been a huge increase in the skilled migration program and they have failed to curtail the previous government's baby bonus.

"Wayne Swann tells us that Treasury got their population projections wrong two years ago, but unfortunately they have got it wrong again today. Either that or they are deliberately understating the problem.

"The Treasurer has told the media that in 40 years time Australia's population will hit 35 million. Yet, with the present annual growth rate (ABS figures) of 1.9%, we will hit 44 million – double our current population - in that time.

"Why does Wayne Swann use the ageing scare tactic when the fact is there are twice as many births as deaths in Australia at the present time? It can only be to create a smokescreen to hide this government's deliberate policy of increasing our population.

"Governments are in the fortunate position to make policy, but today's announcement shows that the Rudd government is gutless – bending to the whims of business rather than adopting a policy to limit and stabilise our population within environmental constraints" said Ms Kanck.

Further comment: Sandra Kanck phone 08 8336 4114#

A Big Thank You!

from the President
Sandra Kanck

The response to my request for donations to the Population Fund distributed with the last newsletter can only be described as overwhelming, with thousands of dollars donated.

With the concurrence of the trustees of the Fund, we will be able to ensure a presence at the UNFCCC talks on climate change all the way up to Copenhagen.

We have been able to fund Queensland member, Jane O'Sullivan to attend the forthcoming Bangkok meeting. and are already planning the Barcelona and Copenhagen representation.

My thanks go out to the many members who gave donations, large and small - a real example of putting our money where are mouths are. What a passionate lot we are!#

State Branch Reports (Cont).

South East Queensland Branch Report



The Queensland Conservation Council held a business breakfast function on Population in July, with Andrew McNamara as keynote speaker. Andrew's brilliant speech has since been widely circulated. Andrew also spoke on 9 September to the local group Doctors and Scientists for Sustainability and Social Justice.

Several members have been involved in developing submissions to the Queensland Government's Draft SEQ Climate Change Management Plan, and engaging a range of environmental and planning professionals with the nexus between population growth and climate change impacts as part of this process.#

South Australia Branch Report



South Australians are deeply conscious of water problems, with Lakes Alexandrina and Albert drying out, and the bottom half of the RAMSAR-listed Coorong now five times saltier than seawater. So our most recent public meeting on the subject of water was a most stimulating one.

We heard from two excellent speakers. Wine writer, Philip White, spoke on the issue of unwanted, but burgeoning vineyards that are soaking up precious Murray-Darling water, and political activist, Professor Dianne Bell, spoke about the lower lakes of the River Murray and how the government's actions are making things worse.

Our committee meetings continue to be held at the Conservation Centre, 1st floor, 157 Wakefield St on the third Wednesday of each month at 7.30 p.m. All members are welcome to attend. However, please contact our state President, Peter Martin, to let him know you are coming: poitgm@hotmail.com or 0429 779 228.#

New South Wales Branch Report



The latest IQ Squared event on September 15 debated the proposition that Australia's immigration intake is too high.

Tim Flannery valiantly put forward the environmental case against record immigration levels while John Sutton of the CFMEU outlined the negative effects on employment and working conditions.

Bob Birrell from Monash University argued that we were better off training our own young people than bringing in skilled migrants.

Predictably the opposing speakers, Tenveer Ahmed, Helen Hughes and Tom Keneally tried to turn the topic into a debate about the value of immigration in the past and appealed to our compassion for the welfare of people

State Branch Reports

West Australian Branch Report



The visit by our President, Hon. Sandra Kanck, was successful with a well-attended (48) meeting, radio coverage and a meetig with WA Council of Social Services.

Prof. Barry Walters and Dr Harry Cohen addressed a meeting at Perth's major maternity hospital on population growth. The talk included a suggestion for establishing a Chair in Family Planning. Letters have been published from a number of members in the West Australian newspaper including from Professor Peter Howat and Professor Barry Walters on recent population growth.#

North Queensland Branch Report



The North Queensland Branch has been suspended as it overdue for an Annual General Meeting. The existing branch representative (David Kault) has been co-opted to the Executive. Urgent attempts are being made to meet the Constitutional requirements for an AGM, to establish a committee and to hold regular committee meetings which is difficult when most of the members are regionally based.#

Tasmanian Branch Report



The Tasmanian Branch will hold its Annual General Meeting at 6pm on Wednesday, 28 October at 24/1 Collins Street, Hobart. Please RSVP to Tom Nilsson on 0410211155.#

State Branch Reports (Cont)

living in desperate poverty and danger.

The audience voted for compassion with 60% indicating that they were comfortable with our current intake. The evening highlighted the fact that many people give far less weighting to environmental concerns than they do to issues of social justice and economic well-being. The lifeboat analogy may have been a good one to use to get people to see that compassion may eventually sink the boat that we are all collectively sailing in. The debate can be seen on www.iq2oz.com.

The NSW Branch will hold its AGM on Saturday the 24th of October at 2.00pm in the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts. The meeting will be followed by a screening of the DVD *The Great Squeeze- Surviving the Human Project*. Light refreshments and discussion to follow.#

Victorian Branch Report



Victoria steams ahead with “development” and population growth, welcomed and encouraged by the State government. As a consequence there is a cascade of sacrifices on the part of the environment and the people of Victoria.

The 4 main approaches to accommodating population growth reported in the media over the last few months are:

1. More urban densification, moves towards more centralised planning and reduction of council powers in planning: “Fast tracking” is the order of the day. The State Government has ordered new housing “capacity assessments” of Melbourne’s 31 municipalities to ascertain housing requirements for each area. A tender notice for this job was advertised in “The Age” recently. An extra 316,000 new dwellings will be built in established Melbourne suburbs in the next 20 years. Preliminary studies have shown that a number of areas are destined to hold more than twice the number of the present inhabitants!
2. Proposed extension of the Melbourne Urban Growth Boundary and incursion into “Green Wedges”: SPA Vic made a submission to “Delivering Melbourne’s newest sustainable communities project” opposing the proposed extension of Urban Growth Boundaries and incursion into Green Wedges to accommodate projected population growth.
3. Proposed levelling of houses along tram and train routes to make way for high rise buildings.
4. Higher populations in regional areas. The Dept of planning and Community Development is holding meetings all over the state in September, October and November as to how more population can be accommodated. The public can register to attend and contribute. See on department website “2009 Urban and Regional forums - Victoria in Future 2008 population projections”

In September SPA Vic president Jill Quirk met Kelvin

Thomson with other organisers of July 14th protest rally against extension of UGB, Annexation of Green Wedge land and taxation on landholders at point of sale (Growth Areas Infrastructure Contribution). The far reaching issue - a result of massive projected population growth - was identified as particularly politically sensitive.

This matter has not been passed in the State Upper House and our advice from the Victorian Parliament with regard the Proposed extension of Melbourne’s UGB is that it will be considered by the “Outer suburban/interface services and development committee. “ Deliberations had not yet started on 9.9.09.

Jonathan Page attended a rally against an suburban densification high rise building project, interacting with state politicians re population as a symptom of the need for controversial and upsetting building projects in residential areas.

SPA Vic plans a general meeting on Sunday November 29th at the North Melbourne Library at 2.00pm.#

ACT Branch Report



The ACT branch has grown thanks to committee member Greg Delaney following up expired memberships – 15 members have re-joined.

Greg has been appointed Membership Officer in response to the request from the National Executive, and has been a tireless letterboxer. We are hoping that letterboxing over the past three months will result in a good number of new members, but the results have not been encouraging – we can count only three new members from the letterboxing, one of them with a \$100 donation.

On the face of it, the experiment has shown that ‘scattergun’ recruitment by letterboxing is a failure – but there are still a significant number of brochures to be distributed and we think it is too early to write it off entirely.

In the meantime committee member Michael Banyard has introduced an initiative for more targeted marketing. Michael’s idea is to find out as much as possible about SPA’s ‘market’ so that our precious time and money is used to maximum effect in recruiting new members. One of the initial steps will be to find out more about the motivations of SPA members, and to that end he is drafting an anonymous questionnaire that may go out to members soon.

Former ACT President Jenny Goldie was guest speaker at the Branch’s quarterly public meeting, attended by 35 people on Saturday 12 September. Jenny spoke on “The Road to Copenhagen: will population make it?”, giving an interesting account of her attendance at the preparatory sessions in Bonn and foreshadowing her attendance at Bangkok and Washington.

The next public meeting will be addressed by the Executive Director of the Australia Institute, Richard Denniss. The tentative date is Wednesday 2 December at 7.30pm. This will be confirmed later.#

The Back Page

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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Prelim. Data	Pop.at end March Qrt	Change over previous year	Change over previous year
	'000	'000	%
NSW	7 076.5	112.5	1.0
VIC	5 402.6	111.9	2.1
QLD	4 380.4	112.7	2.6
SA	1 618.2	18.8	1.2
WA	2 224.3	67.6	3.1
Tas	801.8	5.0	1.0
NT	223.1	4.8	2.2
ACT	349.9	6.0	1.8
Aust.	21 779.1	439.1	2.1

ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION

The preliminary estimated resident population (ERP) of Australia at 31 March 2009 was 21,779,000 persons. This was an increase of 439,100 persons (2.1%) since 31 March 2008 and 135,100 persons since 31 December 2008. Preliminary natural increase recorded for the year ended 31 March 2009 (160,800) was 15.2% (or 21,200 persons) higher than the natural increase recorded for the year ended 31 March 2008 (139,700). Preliminary net overseas migration for the year ended 31 March 2009 was 278,200 persons.

POPULATION GROWTH RATES

Australia's population grew by 2.1% during the 12 months ended 31 March 2009. Natural increase and net overseas migration contributed 37% and 63% respectively to this total population growth.#

ABS Population Clock

World Population estimated on 27th September, 2009
by the US Bureau of Census:

6,786,897,584

Australia's resident population on the 3rd August, 2009
is projected to be:

21,995,958

This projection is based on the estimated resident population at 31st March, 2009 and assumes growth since then of:

- 1 birth every 1 mins 44 secs
- 1 death every 3 min 39 secs
- gain of 1. international migrant every 1 min 53s
- Australia's overall population increase is one additional person every 1 mins 12secs.

These assumptions are consistent with those used for Series B in Population Projections, Australia 2006 to 2101 (cat. no. 3222.0)

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics#