



NEWSLETTER

Sustainable Population Australia Inc

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Formerly Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population

Patrons:

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Dr Paul Collins

Perish the thought that we can handle a bigger population

Bob Carr

Premier of NSW from 1995 to 2005

smh.com.au November 19, 2009

In the sprawling Austrian classic *The Man Without Qualities* by Robert Musil, famed for its unreadability, the anti-hero, Ulrich, reads in a newspaper about “the racehorse of genius”.

That a “racehorse” can be a “genius” triggers a flash of alienation. From that moment Ulrich cannot trust the values of his society.

Some Australians must have felt similar estrangement when they read that the federal minister Lindsay Tanner defended Australia’s runaway immigration targets, playfully comparing our population densities with those of Bangladesh.

That Tanner is one of the best minds in federal politics will only deepen the rift valley between 90 per cent of Australians and their political and business leadership over population policy, or rather the absence of any policy except “more”.

In March the Australian Bureau of Statistics projected that one scenario, with ramped-up immigration, could mean a population as high as 42.5 million by 2056. Its mid-range scenario comes in at 35.5 million.

I need only summarise the indictments of such high-end population growth. It assumes rainfall reliability not reflected in any known data. It ignores evidence that high immigration has only a marginal impact on age distribution over the long term. It glides over the proof marshalled by **Ross Gittins** that high immigration worsens, not relieves, skill shortages. It also spikes the cost of land and cruel

housing affordability.

It defies “carrying capacity” constraints. One windy day blows our onion paper-thin soil 1400 kilometres. Our rivers are mere creeks compared with those fed by the Alps, the Rockies or the Andes. Two capitals, Adelaide and Brisbane, have come perilously close to running out of water.

National security? Ramped-up immigration will never close the gap between us and the Indonesians.

Leave these arguments for another day.

In the meantime I would like Canberra and big business to level with us about the implications of soaring immigration.

Will they, for example, stand shoulder to shoulder with state planning ministers when prime farming land on the city fringe has to be ploughed up for housing and low-density suburbs rezoned for high-rise? Residents of Ku-ring-gai opposed to flats along their rail corridor should remember these rezonings were to help facil-

tate a Sydney population of 5 million. Now we are headed for 7 million. Their placards belong outside the Department of Immigration, not the Department of Planning.

Don’t believe that there is a magic potion called Good Planning that will settle every argument. The Metropolitan Strategy, gazetted in 2005, defines Sydney as a city of cities; not just one CBD but regional and sub-regional centres based on public transport hubs (Parramatta, North Sydney, Chatswood, Strathfield etc).

Population growth will occur in these centres and along rail corridors, easing pressure on the fringe. The plan is



Keith Nesbitt, Glencoe South Australia

based on an extra 1.1 million by 2031. The increased intake will add half a million to this.

The strategy is robust enough to cope - the fall in the size of households is now eveneing out - but planning will always be a rolling argument. Differences about where the densities go and how you accommodate unavoidable growth on the fringe will always be with us. It's the same with what you do with public resources that are always limited. Increasing numbers just makes these tensions more acute.

In fact capital city water is a bigger anxiety. Since 2006 every mainland state has thrown up a desalination plant; NSW as insurance against drought, the rest for everyday supply. Now Queensland will build two more. Ten desal plants in three years. If this drought lengthens we will need them.

Yet none of the Canberra bureaucrats who ticked off high immigration were required to link rising population numbers to water. Not to the fragility of the Murray and Adelaide's reliance on it for 90 per cent of its drinking water; to the unpredictability of south-east Queensland's rainfall; or to the unknowns about Perth's Yarragadee aquifer.

Melbourne is building Australia's biggest desal plant and drought conditions have already mandated use of its full capacity.

A single dam, as Anna Bligh now knows, requires an environmental impact statement.

But letting annual arrivals blow out to 500,000 a year required not even a one-page summary of environmental implications.

And an EIS on migrant numbers would have had to discuss the base-load energy to power the soon-to-be numerous desal plants.

We celebrate every advance for thermal and photovoltaic solar, clean coal, natural gas and energy efficiency. But there is a risk high population growth may mandate new coal-burning power plants, especially in Victoria. And they send any national greenhouse targets through the roof.

Unless we go for nuclear, which surely joins the checklist of possibilities. If an environmental impact statement on our new population target canvassed that option, you could praise the high-growth advocates for their honesty.

Tanner suggested people in high-density countries would consider strange our reservations about high immigration. The implication is that every last place on this battered planet should cheerfully sign on for the population explosion.

I think other countries can understand that Australia has a narrow fertile coastal strip and the rest is arid and semi-arid. We resemble North Africa more than North America. Curious as we are, I think Australians don't want to be packed tight, and remain attached to space, air, the natural world.

And instead of more coastal suburbs they may even

prefer the glimpse of waves breaking on golden sand through the branches of a eucalypt.

Funny that!#

HIGHEST NUMBER OF BIRTHS REGISTERED IN AUSTRALIA

Australian Bureau of Statistics (cat no 3301.0)

In 2008 there were 296,600 births registered in Australia, 11,400 (4.0%) more than in 2007. This was the highest number of births ever registered in a calendar year in Australia.

Increases in Fertility rates

Australia's total fertility rate (TFR) in 2008 was 1.97 babies per woman, up from 1.92 babies per woman in 2007 and the highest since 1977 (2.01).

The increase in the TFR between 2007 and 2008 was largely due to births to women aged 30 to 39 years, who accounted for 55% of the increase.

Fertility rates increased for all age groups of women between 2007 and 2008, except for women aged 45-49 years for whom the fertility rate remained the same.

Women aged 30-34 years experienced the highest fertility rate of all age groups in 2008, with 127.8 babies per 1,000 women. This was the highest rate recorded for women aged 30-34 years since 1961.

Women aged 25-29 years continued to record the second highest fertility rate of all age groups, with 105.8 babies per 1,000 women in 2008.

The fertility rate for women aged 35-39 years continued to increase, reaching 70.9 babies per 1,000 women in 2008. This was the highest rate for women aged 35-39 years since 1948.

The fertility rate for women aged 20-24 years increased to 57.1 babies per 1,000 women in 2008. This was the second time that the fertility rate for women aged 20-24 years has increased since 1990, the first being in 2007.

At the national level, the teenage fertility rate in 2008 was 17.3 babies per 1,000 women aged 15-19 years, slightly higher than in 2007 (16.0 babies per 1,000 women).

More details are available in Births, Australia, 2008 (cat. no. 3301.0) available for free download from the ABS website <www.abs.gov.au>. Regional, State and Territory information is also available on the website.#

New W.A. Cities

WA Premier, Colin Barnett has plans for new cities in the north west to accommodate the State's growing population. His plan incorporates high rise apartments, cappuccino strips, shopping centres and marinas in centres such as Dampier, Port Hedland with Karratha as the hub, Livable cities with good environmental qualities is the key to residential development of the north west rather than its present role as simply a base for fly-in fly-out workers#

Kelvin Thomson's 14 point plan for population reform.

There is an alternative to runaway population

(Only the plan itself is presented here. For Kelvin Thomson's discussion and justification of these proposals see <http://www.kelvinthomson.com.au/speechesdocs/091111%20Population%20Reform%20Paper%20ac.pdf>)

The first 11 points outline how we can stabilise Australia's population.

1. Stabilise Australia's population at 26 million by cutting the net overseas migration program to 70,000 per annum.
2. Cut the skilled migration program to 25,000 per annum.
3. Hold the family reunion program at 50,000 per annum.
4. Increase the refugee program from 13,750 to 20,000 per annum.
5. Alter the refugee criteria to include provision for genuine climate refugees.
6. The revised number of annual permanent arrivals from these programs would be 95,000 - 50,000 family reunion plus 25,000 skilled plus 20,000 refugees. Two more factors need to be considered: the number

ly between skilled migrants and family reunion, and allowing New Zealanders to also apply and compete with other applicants under these normal migration programs.

7. Reduce temporary migration to Australia by restricting sub-class 457 temporary entry visas to medical and health related and professional engineering occupations.
8. Require overseas students to return to their country of origin and complete a two-year cooling off period before being eligible to apply for permanent residence.
9. Abolish the Baby Bonus.
10. Restrict Large Family Supplement and Family Tax Benefit A for third and subsequent children to those presently receiving them.
11. Dedicate the savings from abolishing the Baby

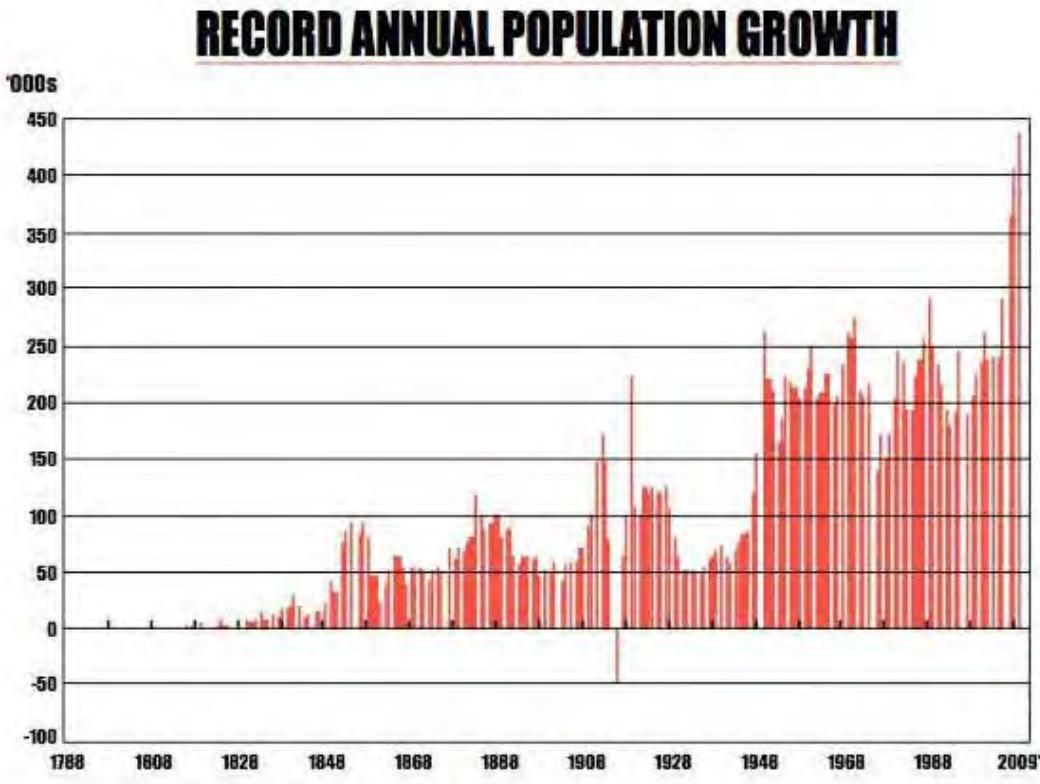
Bonus and reduced expenditure on Family Payments for third and subsequent children towards increased investment in domestic skills and training through Universities and TAFEs.

The final three points go to how we can play a role in helping stabilize global population.

12. Increase Australia's aid to meet the United Nations target of 0.7% of Gross National Income with money saved by abolishing Fringe Benefits Tax concessions for company cars, and greater use of off-the-

shelf purchases in defence equipment purchases.

13. Use more of Australia's aid budget for educating girls and women, and for better access to family planning and maternal child health, and advocate in the United Nations and international fora for other countries to do likewise.
14. Put overpopulation on the Agenda for the Copenhagen Climate Change talks.#



Source: ABS, September 2009. *Figure for 2009 is year to March

of people departing permanently from Australia, and the number of people arriving permanently from New Zealand. To reach a net overseas annual migration target of 70,000, the number of automatic places available for New Zealanders needs to be restricted to the number of departures from Australia over and above 25,000. The Trans Tasman Travel Arrangement would be renegotiated to achieve this, splitting available places for New Zealanders equal-

The boiling cauldron; population.

edited Paddy Weaver

Population has hit the media in a big way thanks to the continued efforts of Kelvin Thomson and of journalist Ross Gittins. But the issue came to the boil when Secretary to the Treasury, Dr Ken Henry voiced his ‘personal concerns’ at a Queensland University of Technology Business Leaders Forum on October 22nd. He dealt with the usual concerns of economists, the global financial crisis, GDP and so forth. From the 3 Ps, population, participation and productivity for which Mr Rudd promised growth before the last election, it was population that was the focus of Ken Henry’s frank statement of personal concern. Surely when such a senior economist speaks out even a Prime Minister should take heed. But will he?

The relevant section from Dr Henry’s speech is as follows:

“Until recently, we had been thinking about population dynamics in terms of ageing and a rising dependency ratio. But last month the Treasurer shone a light on a whole new dimension of our thinking when he announced that, since publishing the *Intergenerational Report 2007*, our long term projection for Australia’s population had increased from 28.5 million in 2047 to more than 35 million people in 2049.

This 25 per cent increase in our 40 year projections reflects the combined effect of higher net overseas migration and a recent pick up in the fertility rate of Australian women.

Today’s population is about 22 million. So we are now projecting an increase of 13 million people, or around 60 per cent, over the next 40 years.

A population expansion of this order has a host of implications for the Australian economy and society; and it raises a number of profound issues for economic policy.

First set of issues: Where will these 13 million people live in our current major cities and regional centres or in cities we haven’t yet even started to build? We have given this matter some thought in the Treasury. On quite reasonable assumptions, we can imagine Sydney and Melbourne growing from 4½ and 4 million people today to cities of almost 7 million. Brisbane will, we think, more than double in size, to be 4 million people 40 years from now. Among them, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth will have almost as many people as the entire Australian population today.

How will Sydney cope with a 54 per cent increase in its population, Melbourne a 74 per cent increase and Brisbane a 106 per cent increase? Surely not by continuing to expand their geographic footprints at the same rate as in the past several decades. Surely not by loading more cars and trucks onto road networks that can’t cope with today’s traffic.

However our cities do cope, they will have to find ways of securing a sustainably higher level of investment

in public infrastructure.

Second set of issues: What sorts of jobs will this larger population want? How will they acquire the skills they need to do those jobs? How will the location of the jobs be reconciled with preferences about where people want to live?

Third set of issues: What types of services will our governments of the future need to provide to their citizens, both young and old?

Fourth set of issues: Are Australia’s natural resource endowments, including water, capable of sustaining a population of 35 million? What are the implications for environmental amenity of this sort of population growth? Must it mean an even greater loss of biodiversity – difficult as that might be to imagine, given our history of species extermination?

We don’t know the answers to these questions, even though all of us would have opinions. My own opinion on the last of these sets of issues – and I must stress that it is a personal view, not to be taken as a Treasury view – is pessimistic. In the last decade, permits have been issued to allow the commercial slaughter of 49.6 million kangaroos in the last decade primarily to give household pets a bit of variety in their diet. That is but one instance of a set of behaviours that suggests that with a population of 22 million people, we haven’t managed to find accommodation with our environment. Our record has been poor and in my view we are not well placed to deal effectively with the environmental challenges posed by a population of 35 million.

Whether you share that pessimistic view or not, and whatever your opinions on the other sets of issues I have outlined, one thing on which we will all agree is that substantial additional investment, in both private and public infrastructure, economic and social, will be required to support our larger human population. We should also be able to agree that quite sophisticated infrastructure planning is going to be required if we are to address these questions in a way that improves the wellbeing of the Australian people in a sustainable way.”

Rudd’s response:

On the 7.30 Report the Prime Minister enthused about Australia’s population growth.

“I actually believe in a big Australia. I make no apology for that. I actually think it’s good news that our population is growing”.

Mr Rudd was happy to acknowledge that this population growth was largely a result of higher immigration.

The net increase from immigration reached record levels of 280,000 in the last year, a level that is causing increased concern for Australians living with the symptoms of excessive population growth, overcrowding, inadequate services such as education, health, sewerage

and prisons, unaffordable housing and inadequate public transport. And of course in this dry continent the universal water shortages.

Columnist Ross Gittins has recently focused attention on population growth and the cost to our society of roads, hospitals, schools, police stations and other infrastructure needed for the very high immigration that the government is imposing. With concern in the community rising rapidly one has to question the government's motives. Is it responding to business desires for growing markets or for wage restraint? Alternatively perhaps it is the temptation of a new resources boom, riding the coat tails of the growing Chinese and Indian economies?

Indeed, when a Senior economist voices his concerns it is a foolish leader who doesn't listen. #

State of World Population, 2009

Facing a changing world: women, population and climate

This 2009 edition of The State of World Population shows that climate change is more than an issue of "energy efficiency or industrial carbon emissions; it is also an issue of population dynamics, poverty and gender equity."

In the overview to this 104 page report the point is made that the international community's approach to population policies has developed into a people centred approach based on human rights and informed choice rather than the old topdown focus on demographic change. The authors predict that the fight against climate change is more likely to be successful if policies, programs and treaties take into account the needs, rights and potentials of women. This begins with upholding the right of women and couples to determine the number and spacing of their children, and creating or expanding opportunities and choices for women and girls, allowing them to fully participate in their societies and contribute to economic growth and development.

The link between population and climate change is heavily emphasised in the text. The authors point out that "thirty-seven of the 41 National Adaptation Programmes of Action, or NAPAs, that developing-country Governments had submitted to the UNFCCC by May 2009 explicitly link climate change and population and identify rapid population growth as a problem that either exacerbates the effects of climate change or hinders the ability of countries to adapt to it. Through the preparation of NAPAs, the least developed countries state their priorities and needs for adapting to climate change. The growth of population can contribute to freshwater scarcity or degradation of cropland, which may in turn exacerbate the impacts of climate change. So too can population growth make it more difficult for Governments to alleviate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals."

To read the full report see <http://www.unfpa.org/public/>#

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The Impact of Population Growth on Tomorrows World

From the Royal Society

This special topic volume edited by Roger Short and Malcolm Potts featuring articles from experts in a variety of disciplines illustrates clearly that population is a key factor in many of the problems facing the world today. Slowing population growth is essential if the world's poor are to be lifted out of poverty and if the next generation are to live in a biologically sustainable economy.

One important issue updated in this volume is the belief that people need to become wealthier or better educated to reduce the size of their family. With a better understanding of the many barriers that limit women's access to family planning even poor, illiterate populations can reduce their family size. The inter relationships between different aspects of population and social and environmental factors are covered in the article.

Copies of this volume are being distributed to all delegates attending the Copenhagen UNFCCC meetings.#

Aid for agriculture needed for a billion hungry people.

Helping the world's hungry people, now over 1 billion, achieve self-sufficiency in agriculture was the key to food security.

This was the message from Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General of the UN at the opening of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) meeting meeting of 200 nations in Rome. The fraction of international aid allocated to agriculture has steadily declined over the past 30 years. Helping the hungry has largely entailed rich donor countries sending food assistance rather than technology, irrigation help, fertilizer or seed.

While the meeting supported the need to increase agriculture's share of international aid, it did not allocate the \$US44 billion annually that FAO says is necessary to feed a population expected to grow to over 9 billion by 2050. The meeting did not endorse a proposed pledge to eradicate hunger by 2025.#

Report on October Washington Population Meeting

Jenny Goldie

If you want my definition of happiness, it is to be in a room of 74 like-minded people including a number of heroes like Lester Brown and Richard Heinberg. My happiness was thus complete at a meeting organised by Bill Ryerson in Washington in October.

Bill, who we hosted in Australia in March, is now holding these meetings annually. He is held in such regard that he can call in the big names. When I said I needed speakers for a side event at the Barcelona UNFCCC talks, he said: "Oh, do you want me to ask Paul?" Paul Ehrlich was duly asked and duly came to Barcelona.

The meeting was preceded by a dinner the night before for a few of us at the Population Institute with a talk by **Jack Alpert** on 'The Non-Linearity of the Elephant Problem'. He argued we are heading for collapse unless we adopt a one-child policy and the global population rapidly declines to less than 100 million people.

On the first day of the meeting itself, **Jack Marshall** from Advocates for a Sustainable Albemarle Population (a county surrounding Charlottesville, Virginia) spoke about ASAP's campaign to cap population in the county. They work with the local councillors to stop growth in housing supply and in turn demand for new businesses.

Joyce Tarnow of Floridians for a Sustainable Population then addressed us on how FSP got eight per cent of the state's voters to sign a petition for a ballot in 2010 to amend the state's constitution to constrain further growth. Their theme was: "Either we save it or they'll pave it."

Don Weeden then spoke about the Apply the Brakes website and campaign <www.applythebrakes.com>. They call for fertility of 1.4 as in Europe and for immigration to the US of 500,000 in line with the Jordan Commission's recommendation. They want population stabilisation, "anyway we can get it".

Bill Ryerson, of the Population Media Center, then took the stage to talk about PMC's communication strategies in effecting behavioural change. Simply supplying contraceptives are not enough since there are 1.8 billion people who don't have access to contraception *but don't want it*, for whatever reason, be it fear, misinformation or cultural and religious reasons for having big families.

Then came some media advice, first from **Joe Bish** of PMC on how they are getting population experts onto talk shows and doing news interviews across the US. Bob Howard, a communications specialist, then gave us advice on what to do and what not to do when being interviewed for television.

Lester Brown arrived after lunch to give us an update on the world food situation. He signed a copy of his book *Plan B: 4* for me and, on reading it later, found much of what he said in the book itself (so read it!). The situation is grim to say the least. 400 million people are currently dependent on food crops, irrigated by water from wells that are rapidly going dry. Himalayan glaciers are shrinking and the Ganges and Yellow Rivers may well become seasonal.

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Ice melting everywhere means rising sea levels and loss of food-growing areas - Bangladesh will lose half its wheat cropping areas with a three-foot rise in sea level. A matter of great concern now is the buying up of land in poorer countries by affluent countries, such as Saudi Arabia, to grow food crops. Some of these poorer countries like Ethiopia are the recipients of food aid and can hardly afford to lose any of its own arable land.

Martha Campbell (Venture Strategies) spoke about those surveys that showed women wanted big families. When shown that contraception was in fact safe, however, they changed their minds and said they wanted fewer children.

Bob Walker of the Population Institute spoke about their campaign to generate letters to editors and on lobbying Congress and President Obama. His advice: Make it brief; make it personal; make it factual; make it relevant to what they are working on; do your homework; know your stuff; be repetitive; and take time to say thank you. *Civility does count*, he said.

I then spoke to the meeting on the work SPA has been doing at UNFCCC to try and get population included in the Copenhagen Agreement and of the need for a coalition of like-minded groups to help achieve this. They were all amenable to the idea but left it to SPA to follow through and get back to them.

The next morning there was a top-up meeting to the main event but it was as good as, if not better than, the day before with an amazing collection of speakers: William Catton Jnr (author of the 1980 classic *Overshoot* and the more recent *Bottleneck: Humanity's Impending Impasse*); Laurie Mazur (Director of the Population Justice Project); Dennis Meadows (the 1972 classic *Limits to Growth* and its 2002 sequel *Beyond the Limits*); Richard Heinberg (Post Carbon Institute and author of several books including *The Party's Over* and *Peak Everything*); and Peter Victor (founding president of Canadians for Ecological Economics and author of *Managing Without Growth*).

William Catton Jnr said the modern US human load is equivalent to 64 Brontosaurus per square mile and we should thus be known as *Homo colossus*. **Laurie Mazur** warned of the abuses of population control and said the population problem could be solved by sticking to the principles inherent in the 1994 Cairo Conference on Population and Development. **Dennis Meadows** said global society would change more in the next 20 years than it had in the past 100 years, the main forces for change being climate change and resource scarcity. **Richard Heinberg** noted that a number of essential resources, notably oil, are peaking or in rapid decline. He warned that, if population increases, per capita consumption will decline more rapidly and resource conflicts are likely. **Peter Victor** concluded with the need for a new economy that accommodated the needs of the poor but within environmental limits.#

The run-up to Copenhagen – SPA's presence in Bangkok and Barcelona

Jane O'Sullivan

There is little hope of mitigating climate change, or of preventing massive casualties from it, if human population growth is not contained. But silence on the issue is deafening in the international climate change debate. Thanks to a big prod from Victorian member Peter Schlesinger, SPA stepped forward to champion this cause, applying for and receiving UNFCCC registration as an observer organization in May. Jenny Goldie attended the negotiation meetings in Bonn in June and August, and reported on these in the August newsletter.

The final session of preparatory meetings before Copenhagen was split between two weeks in Bangkok (28 September to 9 October) and a week in Barcelona (2-6 November). Three SPA delegates attended the Bangkok meeting: myself for all but the last two days, Jenny Goldie for only two days en route to other meetings in USA, and Peter Schlesinger for the second week. I was the only SPA delegate to travel to Barcelona.

The talks comprised two parallel conferences, of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP), and of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA). The AWG-KP is the more hard-headed political forum, addressing the legally binding commitments that developed countries will make in the immediate term. The AWG-LCA is taking a broader and longer-term view, to implement the Bali Action Plan. The problem is that there is substantial overlap between the two groups, but no mechanism for rationalizing them. An ongoing thread of tension exists between mainly developed countries who would rather see the processes unified, and many developing countries who see this argument as a ruse by developed countries to weede out of their Kyoto commitments and set the whole process back by years. These countries may prefer Kyoto because it explicitly excludes them from obligations.

Negotiations occur in subgroups, dealing with specific sections of text, such as the shared vision, mitigation efforts and the facilitation and funding of adaptation to climate change impacts in developing countries.

It became increasingly clear that our best chance for inclusion of a population reference would be in the adaptation text. What we want to achieve is enhanced attention and funding for universal access to family planning. Reducing the vulnerability of communities to climate change impacts is ample justification for this, without arguing the mitigation benefits – there is understandable resistance to any suggestion that emissions reductions should be sought from poor people in developing countries, when the developed world is dragging the chain so badly. Nevertheless, it helps our case to point out that money spent on family planning would reduce emissions more than that spent on any renewable energy technology.

With the hope of convincing one of the African or Least Developed Country parties to propose our text to their group, Peter and I lobbied hard to spread our message to their delegates. Delegates were generally very supportive and sympathetic, but did not feel able to take up the issue themselves. We also raised the relevance of population issues at a number of side events. But we left Bangkok realizing we had a long hard row left to hoe.

While in Bangkok, Jenny and I also managed to meet with Dr. Mechai Viravaidya, Thailand's 'Condom King'. This was an enormous honour and inspiration to me. It could be argued that Mechai almost single-handedly brought down Thailand's fertility rate from 7 children per woman to below replacement in one generation, and in doing so enabled the economy to take off. He also headed off the AIDS epidemic in Thailand, saving over 7 million lives according to a World Bank review. In his 80s, he is as active and innovative as ever with development, education and environmental awareness programs.

The Barcelona climate change talks were very different in character to Bangkok. With only a few days left for negotiation before Copenhagen, there was an air of high tension, frustration and increasing hopelessness. There were also very few open meetings of Parties where observers could follow the debate, but a full schedule of side events. These were generally of a high standard, but poorly attended due to the number of simultaneous meetings. It was often possible to raise population issues in discussion, but rarely to influential listeners.

SPA succeeded in booking a side event at Barcelona. Thanks to Jenny's networking in USA, and we were extremely fortunate that Paul Ehrlich offered to speak for us. He was to be in Barcelona that week to receive a prestigious prize for his contribution to ecology, from the government of Catalonia in honour of the pioneering Catalan ecologist Ramon Margalef. At the last minute, Roger Martin from the UK's Optimum Population Trust (OPT) also volunteered to come and speak. Both spoke eloquently.

Our event, on the first day, clashed with opening sessions of various subgroups, but we had about 20 attending (not as many as we hoped). Nevertheless, a few of those present became valuable allies to our cause. Among them was a Danish journalist, who interviewed Roger on tape afterwards and has since published a feature article on 'The Big Taboo' in a weekend paper in Denmark.

My lobbying of delegates did not progress, with most leads from Bangkok reaching dead ends but a couple of new leads holding possibilities for us.

Jenny Goldie will take up the baton for us in Copenhagen, and will be joined by delegates from OPT. We don't expect a breakthrough in Copenhagen, but that's not the end of the road.#

India's New Focus on Education

India's focus on higher education and its refusal to fund universal education has been widely criticized in the past. More than 35% of the population is illiterate and 50% of women cannot read. The good news is that India's parliament has now passed a law providing free, universal and compulsory education for all children aged between 6 and 14 years.

It is to be hoped that this will assist in reducing the population growth projected to increase from 1.132 billion in 2007 to 1.747 billion in 2050. Perhaps India's population would not have reached these levels if universal education had been launched before the nation's recent first nuclear submarine and first moon probe satellite. Education, particularly of women has been found to be an effective means of reducing population growth.#

Sky Trails



In the image above you could be forgiven for thinking the streaks are caused by aircraft contrails of which most would be familiar. Contrails can influence the climate by increasing the cloud cover in heavy traffic regions. The image above was taken from the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) on NASA's Terra satellite.

The accompanying text explains "Clouds can have contradictory influences on the climate, depending on their extent, thickness, and altitude, among many factors. Clouds can cool the climate by blocking incoming sunlight, and they can also warm the climate by absorbing energy radiated from the Earth's surface."

But so too can ships! "On March 4, 2009, the skies over the northeast Pacific Ocean were streaked with clouds that form around the particles in ship exhaust." With around 55,000 merchant ships on the seas today that's a significant contribution to Climate Change. <http://earth-observatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/view.php?id=37455#>

Obituary for Dianne Proctor

Jenny Goldie, immediate past president of ACT branch

In 2004, after nine years as CEO of the Australian Reproductive Health Alliance (ARHA), Dianne (pronounced Dee-anne) Proctor decided to devote her energies to SPA. She and her new husband Reuben joined the ACT committee and, at various times, Dianne was vice-president and representative on the national executive. About a year ago, however, as her emphysema forced her onto oxygen day and night and she required a mobile scooter to get around, she confined herself to email involvement with the committee and with PopForum. In June this year, we gave her and fellow committee member Christopher Dorman a combined 70th birthday party. Less than five months later, Dianne died in Canberra hospital as an indirect consequence of her emphysema and increasing disability.

An ardent feminist, Dianne's signature to her emails included the immortal words of Rebecca West (1913): "I myself have never been able to find out precisely what a feminist is. I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat". Dianne was certainly no doormat. She could be prickly at times, but never without intelligence or courage. And she was always good for a laugh.

Dianne was born in the Channel Islands, UK, but moved to the US with her American husband and had a son Andrew there. She was genuinely shocked by the racism in the South in the 1960s. She accepted a job in New Zealand near her mother but her husband failed to follow so she raised Andrew alone there and later in Australia. She remained a devoted mother and, subsequently, grandmother of three. Dianne was director of the Woden Community Centre in Canberra for ten years before heading the Family Planning Association. In this role she joined the Government delegation to the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development in 1994. She remained committed to the ICPD goals thereafter. In this respect, she was ideally suited as founding CEO of ARHA that was created with the express purpose of implementing the ICPD Programme of Action.

We miss Dianne and extend our condolences to Reuben and Andrew.

Dianne Proctor OAM 19/6/1939 - 29/10/2009.

UNICEF Plea for a Billion Children

The latest report from UNICEF issues just before the FAO World Food Conference in Rome comes 20 years after the UN adopted a treaty guaranteeing children's rights. It reports that more than 24,000 children under 5 years of age die every day from preventable causes like pneumonia, malaria, measles and malnutrition. Almost 200 million children have stunted growth because of malnutrition. One billion children are still deprived of food shelter, clean water or health care according to the report.#

The Hunger Project

Peter Strachan SPA member, WA

I recently visited the hugely overpopulated and desperately poor nation of Bangladesh. The people of Ganges Delta were not always poor. This is after all, one of the most fertile parts of the planet. The ancestors of the people who currently live around the Bay of Bengal, have a long history of civilisation and a complex cultural background, most of which has now been subsumed by a 250 million strong, tide of people who now swarm over the whole region, lifting the population density to over 1,200 people per square kilometre. With so many people to feed, the pursuit of happiness or of attaining even a few simple pleasures from life, become illusory as each day descends into a basic struggle for mere survival. Under such conditions, human beings seem to have more in common with other members of the animal kingdom. This existence is far removed from what we in the West have come to know as a life in which we can indulge our intellect in the practice self actualisation.

The Hunger Project (THP), which organised my visit to Dhaka and its surrounds, is unlike other aid agencies. THP does not build schools, dig wells or set up clinics. Instead, THP focuses on motivating and training poor people to lift themselves out of hunger so that they can make a sustainable difference to the quality of their own lives.

Bangladesh is the recipient of over US\$1 billion of foreign aid each year, yet it has little to show for all that largess. It is an all too sad fact that much of the world's official aid from wealthy donors, ends up in the pockets of middlemen and not enough actually hits the ground. It is clear from the evidence in Bangladesh, that traditional aid from non-government organisations (NGOs) has a tendency to create an 'aid industry', which supports the givers and creates dependency amongst the receivers, without delivering a sustainable improvement in the livelihood of the target group of poor or hungry inhabitants. Bangladesh is not alone in hosting this pattern of misguided and ineffective welfare in fact; the situation of Australia's own aborigines holds many parallels.

By contrast, THP teaches volunteers to be 'animators' who then work in villages and urban communities to improve literacy rates, especially amongst the women. They act as motivators and facilitators (literally, making things move) for those in the village who take up the challenge to improve their lives. Animators are imbued with a positive vision for the future of their country and themselves as



Dr Badiul Majumdar Country Director, The Hunger Project Bangladesh

human beings, which is often lacking in poor people, whose main concern is limited to finding a daily meal and shelter. Donors who support THP are called investors, because they work alongside animators to generate a social return on the money they provide.

THP trains its people to have commitment and to act to make a difference. It then sends them out to take action on behalf of themselves and their community. Groups within a community are urged to initiate income generating activities, such as fish farming, plant nurseries, textile production

or food processing, to name a few. Health and sanitation standards are addressed by the people themselves, so that the community takes ownership of improvements and THP can assist the community with family planning and other health related issues.

While grass roots activism is at the heart of THP's work, the organisation also works at the regional administration level to expose corruption and to keep officials accountable to the people they serve. Having built up enthusiastic support amongst the people of a region, THP often finds itself in a strong position to support clean-skin candidates to stand for elected office.

Alarmingly, statistics show that the people of Bangladesh are becoming smaller and thinner. Any farmer knows that when there are too many animals in a paddock, the whole herd suffers, and there are too many people in that 'paddock'. Here in Australia, we have a somewhat different paddock but ultimately, the whole planet is one big paddock with finite resources, so that what happens in Bangladesh is already impacting on our quality of life.

What choices do we have? Business as usual will see human population climb from 6.8 billion to beyond 9 billion in 30 years, with commensurate pressure on food availability and increased competition for scarce resources. It is now well beyond the time to begin to raise global awareness of the future that awaits mankind, unless we rapidly begin to control our numbers. Remarkably, humans have an intellect and more importantly a consciousness of who we are in time and space, yet when it comes to matters of our own population numbers, we seem paralysed by our biology (or ideology) and behave much like amoeba or rabbits in a field.

This task will not be easy. There are religious and cultural roadblocks along the way. But we must act in the interests of our survival as a species, since the alternative looks bleak indeed.#

Letters

Alarming (but not Amazing!)

I wrote a letter to Treasurer Swan (16/1/08) with one thought uppermost – POPULATION.

The reply took me aback. Not the usual three lines of thank-you, your thoughts will be passed on for consideration but a Mr. Ian Davidoff, an Economic Adviser to the Minister, replied extending to two pages.

In part he wrote – and I quote slightly out of sequence – ‘you appear to advocate a command economy (---) a policy for Australia of one child per woman’.

I thought I made that quite clear. I did.

As a father, grand and great grandfather of numerous, it twirls a serrated knife in my guts to advocate such a direct population edict. But unlike the majority who still condemn China’s ‘dictator’ leadership back in the 1970’s I have come to be humbled by a profoundly resolute and humane action. History will judge.

I shan’t labour the point. It would be useless as exercising the democratic right to write letters, but – put simply – ***There are too many of us and our planet has reached ‘peak out-give’.***

NOW – DICTATOR Rudd has altogether another view. Yes ‘Dictator’ Mr. Davidoff. .. History will judge his ambitions but I suspect his economic Advisors also help warp his judgement.

By ‘ordering’ a dramatic increase in population he has committed us to a future life style that plunges into

the territory China has extricated itself from. Not even a public debate – let alone a democratic referendum in this harsh, thirsty land.

Well – I shan’t labour the point either other than to remark that this is an arbitrary policy decision more grave than making war in Iraq and Afghanistan or ignoring Israel behaving badly.

The same bloke, incidentally, spearheads our Delegation to Copenhagen.

It is Cinderella’s slippers to a thinly worn swagie’s shoestring that he does not carry a Population baton in his haversack.

Now that is truly alarming.

Keith Nesbitt South Australia#

Editor, SPA Newsletter

In the October 2009 newsletter there was a statement that letters from members were not printed (“insufficient space”) but could be found on the website.

I wonder how many readers rushed to the website to read member’ letters? Not many, I’ll wager, because of the bother involved.

Members’ letters are far more interesting than the “preaching to the converted” articles which monopolise the newsletter. I believe that most readers would prefer that the former be printed and the latter be trimmed.

Please print this letter so that we can discover if other members agree.

Trevor Sauer Queensland SPA member#

Call for Nominations for Election to the SPA National Executive Committee at Annual General Meeting, 2010.

The SPA Annual General Meeting will be held in Melbourne, Victoria on the 20th March 2010 at Buzzard Lecture Theatre, Trinity College, Melbourne University Royal Parade, Parkville 3052.

At that meeting the elections for **all** SPA Committee positions will be held. Nominations for these positions are now called.

The tenure for these positions is 12 months.

You can nominate for more than one position e.g. Secretary and Committee member. The positions are: National President; Vice President; Secretary; Treasurer; and three to five committee members.

These are crucial positions providing leadership for the organisation into the future. Members are urged to consider standing.

A nomination form is included with this Newsletter. Additional copies are available from the website at www.population.org.au, the State Branch offices or from the National Office in Weston Creek (email info@population.org.au or phone (02) 6288 6810) and must be completed and returned by midnight (EDST) on the 15th January, 2009

Proxy voting forms will be distributed with the February 2010 Newsletter which will also include a list of candidates for positions and any candidate statements.

Sandra Kanck, National President.#

State Branch Reports



New South Wales Branch Report

The NSW Branch held its AGM on the 24th of October which saw the re-election of the same office bearers and committee with the addition of Will Bourke who brings some much needed marketing experience to our team. The DVD *The Great Squeeze* generated great interest although it tended to highlight the extreme challenges of the future while being a little short on detail about how we go about avoiding the nightmare ahead.

Nola Stewart and Kris Spike have attended some interesting events recently. Greens MLC Lee Rhiannon addressed the STEP group on the politics of population in Australia which revealed some encouraging aspects to their policies ie. reducing business migration and ending the baby bonus but also highlighted their unwillingness to talk about any need to address population growth in the immediate future.

The Nature Conservation Council held its annual conference recently and Nola and Kris were able to make a presentation on population which seemed to be well received however it must be noted that were it not for this session the topic of population would not have been raised by any of the participants or guest speakers.

The topic was raised however at the World Environment Day Awards with the guest speaker, Richard Kingsland leaving the audience in no doubt that Kevin Rudd's vision of a bigger Australia would make the prospect of success in conservation and sustainability all the more difficult.

The branch is currently negotiating with comedian Rod Quantock to do his show for us early in 2010.

This year's Walk Against Warming is on December 12. Meet under the SPA banner in Martin Place (nr. war memorial) at 1.00pm.#

ACT Branch Report



Like SPA members in other parts, we've been gobsmacked by the total lack of understanding of Australia's looming ecological predicament shown by our 'Big Australia' Prime Minister, and more recently by the Minister for Finance, Lindsay Tanner. Everlasting growth? No worries, mate, we've got the policy answers for any little problem that might pop up.

Praise be, then, for the likes of Kelvin Thomson and the Treasury's Ken Henry with the intelligence and integrity to speak out against such hubristic nonsense. That a much wider debate is now developing in the Australian community about population issues owes not a little to the courage of such people.

Locally, the main focus of our activities has been on the forthcoming end-of-year event in which Richard Denniss of the Australia Institute will be the guest speaker, and in developing our ideas for spreading the population message

- and, hopefully, bringing in new members to SPA. To that end we're proposing to do a trial run on a survey of present members who come along to hear Richard Denniss on 2 December. We'll keep you posted.#



Victorian Branch Report

Population growth and its effects are in the local mainstream media every day. *Population booming! Melbourne growing by 2% p.a.*

The Victorian branch of SPA made submissions to the Victorian Climate Change Green Paper and to the Victorian State Government Legislative Council Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Select Committee Inquiry into the impact of State Government's decision to extend the Urban Growth Boundary.

The Victorian Government in September to November held "Victoria in Future" forums throughout country and metropolitan areas to prepare people for rapidly growing population. These were not well publicised but SPA Vic members on email were notified via our branch to increase our presence at these growth fests. Jill Quirk Jonathan Page, and Walter Grahame attended one in a southeastern Melbourne suburb and managed to dominate the round table discussion. Gloria O'Connor attended one in Pak-enham area.

Committee meeting was held on October 17- where we expressed our appreciation of Peter Schlesinger's initiative and effort in attending the UNFCCC talks in Bangkok. (with Jenny Goldie ACT and Jane O'Sullivan SEQ)

State government is introducing legislation to fast track development- re transport and urban planning.

Letters sent to all non ALP MPs asking them to vote against the "Transport Facilitation Bill" to fast track transport decisions. (Failed in attempt to thwart this Bill as it was supported by the Opposition)

Decision made on venue for National AGM March 20th - Melbourne University Trinity College- an attractive Theatrette with accessible garden and adjacent room for afternoon tea.#

Victorian members can you help, please?

We need volunteers to help man our stall at the Sustainable Living festival February 19th-21st Feb 2010 at Federation Square Melbourne. We would have a minimum of 2 people working together in 3-4 hour shifts. If you can help us please contact Jill Quirk- jillq@optusnet.com.au or 0409742927 or 95097429#

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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Corrections

In issue #88 two errors occurred which need correction. In the table of 'Estimated Resident Population' on the 'Back Page' (p12) on the last line of the table, the Australian figure was listed as 3.1% on the hardcopy version. This should have been listed as 2.1%. And on Page 6, the article 'Contraception is "Greenest" Technology' was incorrectly attributed to 'Jackdaw 15 p14 - Optimum Population Trust August 2009. It should have read Optimum Population Trust, August 2009 www.optimumpopulation.org/reducingemissions.pdf#



A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

As this is the last issue for 2009, the editors wish to thank the Executive for their continued support, the members of the ACT branch who voluntarily attend the office every two months and prepare over 600 printed copies of the Newsletter for distribution, Nasreen Hafesjee in the Canberra Office for the support in completing the distribution , the contributors who have made it what it is and last but not least, the SPA members for whom this newsletter is produced.

Thank you all for your contributions and support throughout the year and both Paddy and I wish you all a **Merry and Joyous Christmas and New Year** but most of all we wish you a safe Festive season and we look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.#



ABS Population Clock

World Population estimated on 22nd November, 2009 by the US Bureau of Census:

6,798,708,266

Australia's resident population on the 23rd November, 2009 is projected to be:

22,063,322

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#