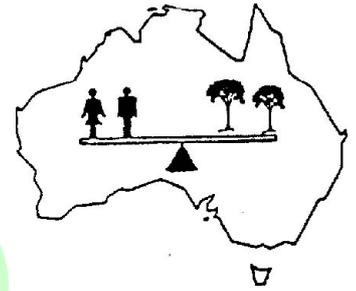


SUSTAINABLE POPULATION AUSTRALIA



Patrons:

Professor Frank Fenner
Professor Ian Lowe
Professor Tim Flannery
Dr Mary White
Dr Paul Collins

June 2001
No 50

The Newsletter of Sustainable Population Australia Inc
(formerly: Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population Inc)

Dr Mary White: SPA Patron

SPA members will be delighted and heartened that Dr Mary White, scientist and well known author of many books on the environmental challenges facing Australians, has joined our other prestigious patrons.

Mary White grew up in Southern Rhodesia and attended the University of Cape Town where the subject of her Masters Degree thesis in Botany was Palaeobotany. It was supervised by Professor Alex du Toit, a 'father' of Continental Drift, and from this chance association a lifetime's interest in Gondwana and its environments and biota has evolved. After University, an interest in systematic botany in Africa, travelling and living in the wilds with her geologist husband and young children, provided more background to understanding southern flora.

The White family came to Australia in 1955 and from 1956 until the 1980s Mary White was a consultant to the Bureau of Mineral Resources in Canberra, reporting on field collections of plant fossils and producing 55 *BMR Records*. She was also part-time consultant to mining companies, while raising five children. As a Research Associate of the Australian Museum in Sydney since 1975, she has curated at the plant fossil collections, establishing a fully documented research collection of 12,000 specimens and writing scientific papers on her discoveries in the collection. This work showed her that there was no book which presented the big, interdisciplinary, picture of the evolution of a continent and its



Dr Mary White addresses SPA
Conference in March 2001

flora through time, and inspired *The Greening of Gondwana*.

Since 1984, Mary White has been a full-time writer and lecturer, presenting her interests in the prehistoric world and the evolution of the Australian continent and its biota to the enjoyment of everyone interested.

The Nature of Hidden Worlds and *Time in Our Hands* (on the fossil record and semiprecious gemstones) and four children's books followed *The Greening of Gondwana*. An

account of how Australia became the driest vegetated continent, *After the Greening*, *The Browning of Australia* was published by Kangaroo press in 1994 and won the Eureka Prize. (*The Nature of Hidden Worlds* has been released as *Reading the Rocks* — Kangaroo press 1999 and *Time in Our Hands* is to be re-released in 2001) *Listen ... Our Land is Crying*, on the Australian environment, its problems and solutions, followed in September 1997. Its companion volume *Running Down - Water in a Changing Land* — was launched on the 23rd of October 2000 by Dr Graham Harris, Chief of CSIRO Land and Water.

It covers palaeodrainages, ancient river systems, what our rivers were like at the time of European settlement, and how they are today, groundwater and all aspects of Australia's most precious resource. *Listen* and *Running Down* explain how the geological history of the continent pre-determined many of the problems that European-style land and water use have caused.

The Greening of Gondwana, *After the Greening*, *Listen*

The SPA Newsletter is mailed quarterly 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 and renewals, and Newsletter contributions, should be sent to the National Office.

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Editorial

John Coulter

A challenge to SPA members

Recent polls have consistently shown that a Labor win is most likely in the forthcoming Federal election. Morgan Poll has the L-NP on 32%, the ALP on 44.5%, Democrats 10%, Greens at 4%, One Nation 5.5% and support for Other Parties and Independent Candidates at 4%. On a two-party preferred basis, support for the L-NP is 40.5% and support for the ALP 59.5%; a landslide win for Labor if these figures hold.

Labor Leader, Beazley has said that Labor would adopt a population policy but has preempted what that policy will contain by announcing a larger immigration intake and an attempt to stimulate a higher fertility rate at home. SPA members will be alarmed that our next government is therefore likely to take us further away from an environmentally sustainable future for our country and our children. This Labor direction shows the party turning its back on its traditional supporters and playing to the big end of town. The *light on the hill* is being snuffed as the party snuggles up to the bright lights and support of real estate speculators, the building industry, and retail and media interests, in turn supported by these businesses.

In this issue, the article by Sheila Newman compares immigration in France and Australia and shows that in France where urban and country planning are strong and government is a major provider of public housing, the pressure to increase population size does not exist. By contrast, in Australia where both urban planning and public housing have been emasculated and run down by Labor and Coalition governments since the days of Whitlam and Dunstan, real estate speculation, together with strong pressure for private building and construction interests have lobbied intensely, and largely effectively, for high immigration. Her article shows that the reason for this effectiveness lies in the fact that the costs of high immigration, while large in total, are spread thinly across a large population, while the benefits are concentrated in the hands of a few. It is these few who lobby hard, while the voices of the many remain muted.

Furthermore, immigration continues the dispossession of Australia's indigenous people. Non-indigenous Australians stole this land from its previous owners and now we invite more and more of our own kind in to share the spoils. Neither of the old parties, with their economic rationalist ideology, want immigrants with indigenous attitudes toward land and environment. But they actively welcome business and skill migrants who share the same exploitative values as themselves. The ATSIC submission to the Jones Inquiry into

Continued Page 8

Immigration, Housing and Land Speculation: Comparison of Australia and France

by Sheila Newman, *member SPA National Executive & former President of the Victorian Branch*

Soon after the Second World War, France and Australia encouraged population growth. In both countries, immigrants were brought in to supply labour for manufacturing industries. Australia also wanted to increase the size of its local market. Both France and Australia wanted a bigger domestic population for defence reasons. France feared Germany's higher birthrate; Australia feared the high birthrates of its Asian neighbours.

High immigration was a feature of both countries' population policies until the early 1970s. Then, following the first oil shock in 1973, France drastically reduced non-European immigration. Australia too cut immigration but then restored high levels after 1975.

Why did immigration policies of these two countries diverge so markedly? Much of the answer lies in their respective housing and land development policies.

Political scientist, Gary Freeman, has written extensively on immigration identifying 'diffuse' and 'focused' costs and benefits. Diffuse costs are borne by the general public and are difficult to quantify while focused costs are those borne by certain groups and are easy to identify. The groups affected are able to organise and lobby against them. Similarly, where benefits are focused, the beneficiaries lobby in favour of them.

Freeman argues that high immigration becomes entrenched in countries where its benefits are narrowly focused but its costs diffuse. This is true of Australia. Freeman says, "businesses like real estate and construction benefit from population growth". In France, on the

other hand, real estate and construction businesses do not benefit from high immigration since land development is state planned. Because they receive no focused benefit from higher immigration, neither they, nor any other significant group, lobbies for higher immigration.

In the early part of the 20th century, the French instituted a system of land development planning whereby the national government coordinated and planned land-use and development in consultation with local government. It grouped land for similar purposes - agriculture, housing, wooded reserves, conservation of existing open spaces.

This planning system was modelled on Haussman's famous restructuring of Paris between 1853 and 1869. The government has the power to acquire land cheaply for public purposes, including housing. There are taxes on unearned improvements in land value.

Companies with more than ten employees are required to pay one per cent of salaries in tax to subsidise employee housing. Industry also has major infrastructure obligations in localities where it sets up plant.

This planning philosophy was built on the concept of "social solidarity": that those who have become rich in a society owe a debt to the society as a whole, for their wealth has been acquired through many anonymous acts of co-operation over time. It provided an important rationale for taxing speculative profits.

In France, housing is regarded as a human right where the State has a duty to see that all citizens are provided with housing. It does this by building dwellings and by subsidising rents and purchases at all levels. Mortgages are state-guaranteed in cases of hardship and home loans are provided at low interest.

While there is a private home-building market, the public housing system serves

principally the lower socio-economic strata, which is that of the traditional immigrant worker.

After the Second World War there was a severe housing shortage in both France and Australia. In France, this lack of housing presented an obstacle to immigration and population building. Although employers were expected to provide housing for immigrant workers, they often failed to do so. French citizens were given priority in housing.

In 1962, when the French colony Algeria became independent, nearly one million French colonials and a few hundred Moslem refugees landed in France. This added to the already severe housing shortage. In 1975 a flood of South East Asian refugees added to the influx.

The repatriates from Algeria were frequently just as resented and traumatised as the Moslem refugees. But Moslems and other immigrants, if they did not have French citizenship, went to the bottom of the housing pile, to the *bidonvilles*, as the French call slums. There were fights, strikes, murders and fires associated with dreadful living conditions.

The Left saw the violence and degradation of the *bidonvilles* as a way to shame the right-wing government. They called for more housing for immigrants. This was financially costly and difficult to achieve logistically since most local councils (*communes*) did not want immigrant housing. Immigrants were concentrated in communist local government areas and their mayors wanted other neighbourhoods to take responsibility for immigrants as well.

Non-naturalised immigrants may not vote in local elections in France. Attempts were made to induce immigrants of *bidonvilles* to naturalise in return for housing but many were reluctant to apply. Problems finding suitable accommodation were a legal impediment to family reunion.

In 1973 Algeria stopped emigration to France on the grounds of racist treatment of Algerians. That same year, Germany and the other European Economic Community (EEC) countries formally closed their borders to non-EEC foreign migrant workers. In 1974, France did the same.

André Postel-Vinay, the Minister responsible for immigration, said ceasing immigration was a

preventative necessity due to: the doubling of the third world's population by late in the 20th century; the likelihood of profound and lengthy economic crisis; and the problem of the public housing shortage for both French and foreigners. This became the long-term policy in France and the EEC.

In 1974, following closure of its borders to non-EEC immigrants, French immigration was the lowest since the war. Natural increase was also low, and thus demand for new houses fell drastically. There had been almost no protest about the closure of the borders by the housing industry that had never benefited from immigrants.

Unlike the Australian property development and housing industries, the French residential construction and property development industry did not seek to bolster itself with international loans, from Japan, for instance. In Australia Japanese construction companies provided important conduits for international loans for construction projects in Australia during the 1980s. The chart below shows how the Australian housing industry maintained a high production rate, in contrast to the French housing industry, which was forced to adapt to new conditions.

Instead, the French and West European

residential construction industries rationalised, regrouped and restructured. They refocussed their designs and projects on energy-efficient renovation

immigration and the housing shortage, the speculative conditions of the 1850s goldrush were soon re-established. The property development industry became heavily dependent on immigration-fed population growth.

The combination of a baby boom and sustained high immigration meant that, in 1973, land prices increased by 46 per cent in Melbourne and 34 per cent in Sydney. In outer metropolitan areas, the demands of rapid population growth

exceeded the availability of serviced blocks. The Whitlam government attempted to bring about changes to land development, urban planning and public housing to remove opportunities for land speculation.

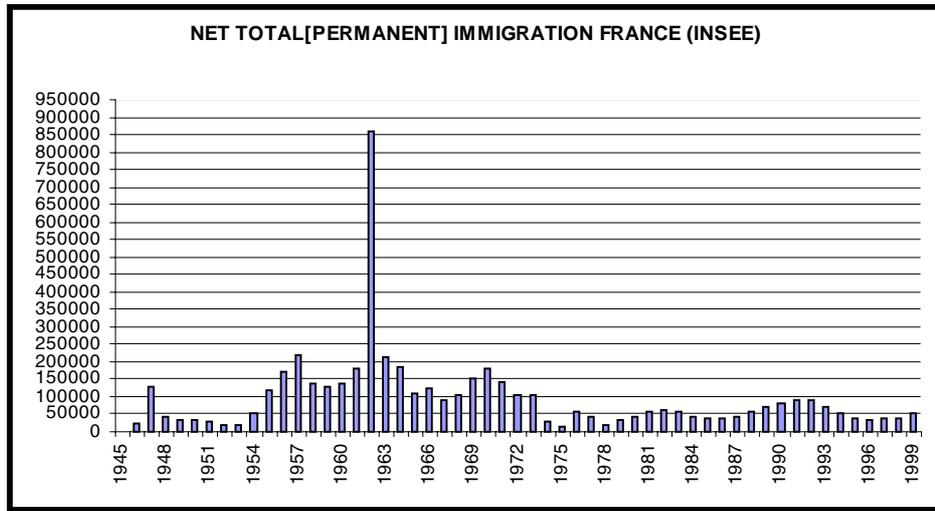
In this they were bitterly opposed by, among others, the Hamer government in Victoria which was later implicated in a variety of scandals involving speculation and public housing.

The Whitlam government also attempted, like the French, to drastically reduce immigration in order to protect local employment.

Also, like France, it attempted to make Australia energy self-sufficient and to rein in oil use. A project to create a vast pipeline network round the continent to distribute natural gas was proposed by the first Minister for Minerals and Energy, Rex Connor.

The Cabinet minutes of the infamous Khemlani loan of 1975, which ultimately brought the Whitlam government down, reveal a very distinctive policy:

“...to deal with exigencies arising out of the current world situation and the international energy crisis...[and] to provide immediate protection for



of existing structures.

Australia's property development and housing system, unlike that of France, is highly privatised and motivated by land speculation.

Although housing was affected by the depressions of the 1890s and 1930s, between the 1860s and the 1890s there had been a land speculation and building boom. This boom was largely immigration-dependent. Then gold ran out and drought set in. In the context of an international depression, immigrants dried up and Australians left the eastern states in search of gold elsewhere.

The 1903 the Royal Commission into the Decline of the New South Wales birth rate decided that the economic depression was due to a “birth dearth”, and they immediately banned contraception and attempted to encourage high immigration.

Most of the members of the Commission were directors on the boards of companies and banks which had tied their wealth up in property speculation - so boosting immigration and the birth rate was a personal issue for the members of the Commission

After 1945, with the long boom, high

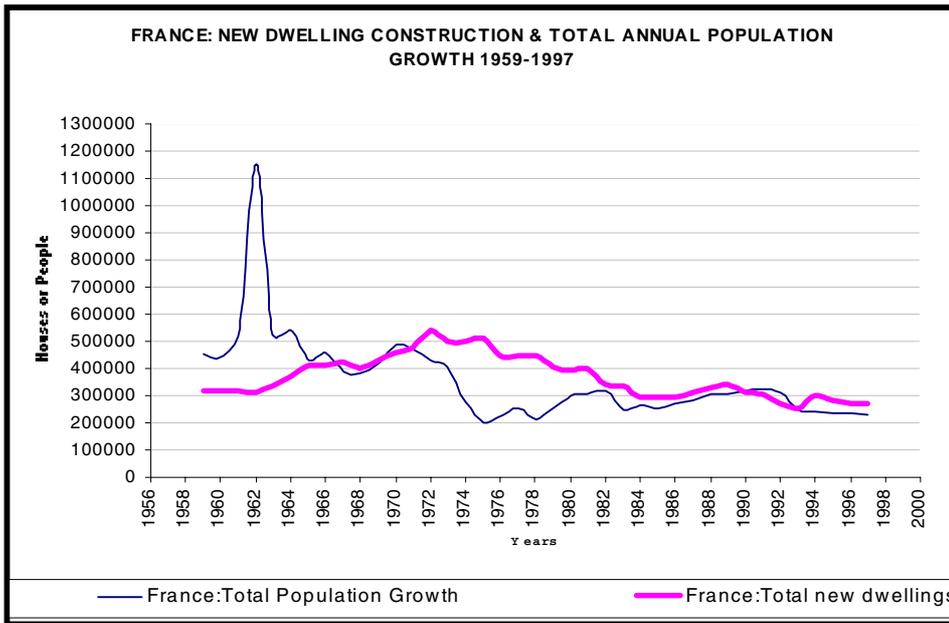
Australia in regard to minerals and energy and to deal with current and immediately foreseeable unemployment in Australia.”

Whitlam cut back immigration “due to the advent of world recession”, whilst “the Australian Population and Immigration Council was established to assist the government in the accurate assessment of Australia’s immigration

immigration rate drives private home-buying prices up, there is no strong national perception that population growth is costly - except perhaps environmentally.

Meanwhile, clearing of land, rezoning and speculation continue unabated, aided by the States. For instance, the Department of Infrastructure in Victoria provides a mirage of statistical trends

And, like the Kennett Liberal government in Victoria, the Bracks’ Labor government aggressively endorses high immigration and population growth. At the national level, Kim Beazley, Labor Leader of the Opposition, calls for a bigger population, as did Paul Keating, Robert Hawke, and Malcolm Fraser, three of the Prime Ministers between Whitlam and the incumbent John Howard.



Meanwhile in France, no one except the United Nations is talking up population, and France’s population is on a course to decline to 1960’s size.

Post-script: It is interesting to note that in 1996 France’s external debt was \$117.6 billion. That of Australia, with a third the population, was \$222 billion in 1999, nearly twice as big. France had net exports of \$23.9 billion in 1999 and Australia had net exports of minus \$9 billion.

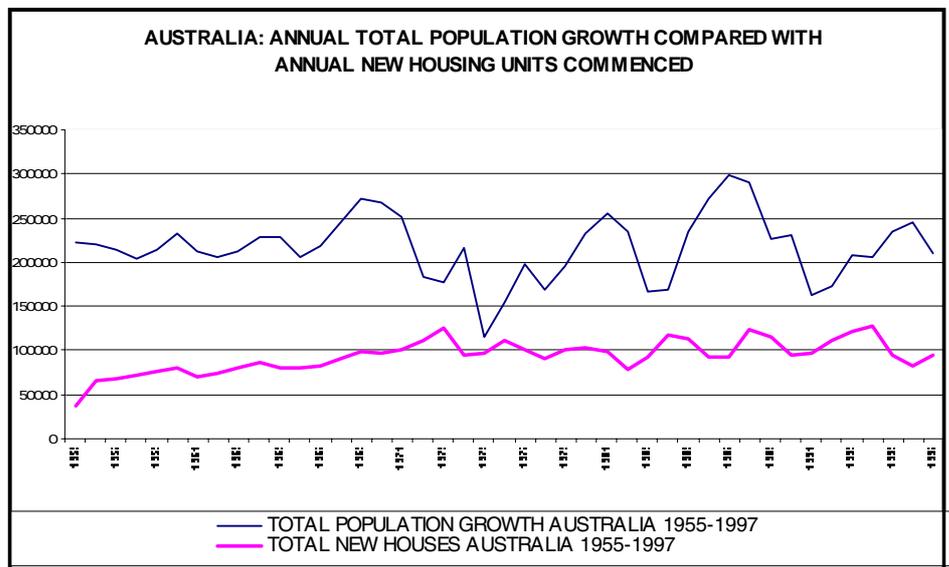
The longer paper is 43 pages long and will be available in .pdf form from the national website or electronically from

and population needs.” But the Whitlam government was sacked and these policies, which some with hindsight would say showed foresight, were dropped.

The succeeding Fraser government led a return to high-energy consumption and a population building policy. States vied for the foreign capital of Japanese construction companies. Australia sought to attract investment by offering cheap energy leading to massive infrastructure development for rural industries.

As the economy was opened up to free market forces, speculation and housing price inflation increased, with strong encouragement from Treasury.

In Australia, the private development and housing industries flourish in the virtual absence of public housing competition. Although the Australian



that make Victorians believe population growth is inevitable. It prepares barely referenced documents like *Challenge Melbourne* to encourage the surrender of yet more land to urban developments, with more houses per square meter.

Visit New SPA Website at
<http://www.population.org.au>
 Join a population Email discussion group through this

Our Habitat: Cleared Land

By Jill Curnow

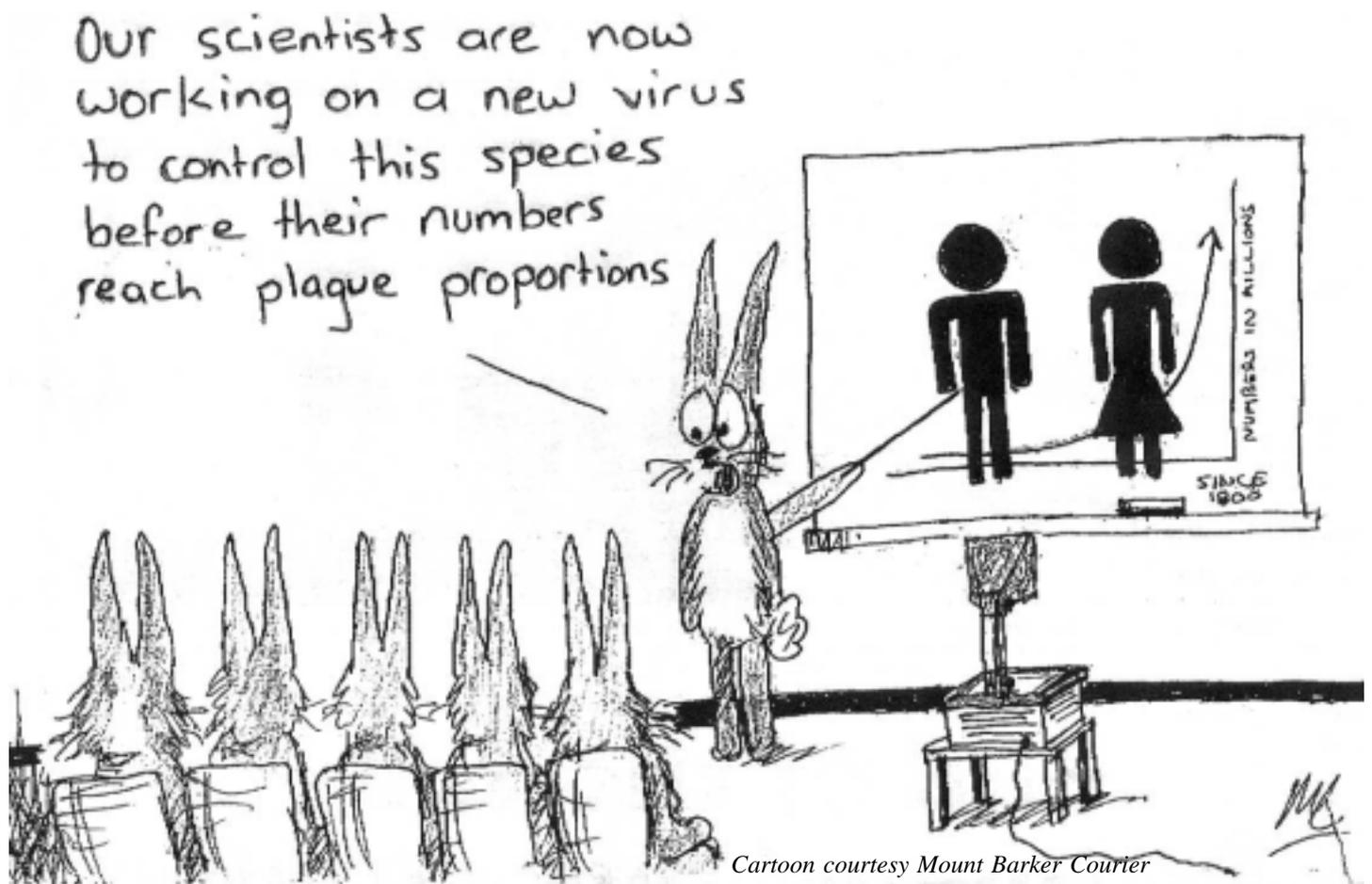
Australians note the environmental damage caused by loss of native species and deplore any further clearing of natural vegetation in order to establish crops or infrastructure. Regions rich in native biodiversity provide us with aesthetic satisfaction, recreational opportunity, clean air, water catchment, habitat for other species and a storehouse of genes. Many of these

Australians now live wealthy, comfortable lives because earlier generations, here and overseas, cleared land to build infrastructure and produce goods. The loss of habitat for other species has provided habitat for us.

In most cases land cannot serve both biodiversity and us at the same time. A mine site may be rehabilitated after the mine has closed but while it is operating it provides habitat for almost nothing. Cities provide for a few species — ornamental trees, cockroaches, rats, pigeons, but this is hardly biodiversity. A

opinion has swung towards conservation. Those who propose further clearing, whether farmers, developers or loggers, are regarded as villains, and there are powerful reasons to resist their proposals.

However there is a danger that we appear hypocritical and cruel if we seek to impose the cost of our (relatively new) conservation ethic on a small proportion of the population, and we often do. If a farmer seeks compensation or financial assistance to meet new conservation restrictions he may meet an angry



functions can be provided by areas of introduced vegetation but exotic biodiversity is less prized.

However, while we deplore 'clearing', we all live, work and travel on cleared land. Almost everything we consume has been grown, harvested, transported, processed, quarried, mined, smelted, manufactured, transported, sold or consumed on areas where native species have been partly or wholly eliminated.

wheat field can tolerate beneficial soil organisms and insects but not species such as kangaroos or parrots that will consume the crop. Suburban gardens can be home to native plants, birds and lizards but higher density in Australian cities is eliminating gardens.

Over the last two hundred years clearing and development were regarded as highly desirable, but now the cumulative damage has become apparent and public

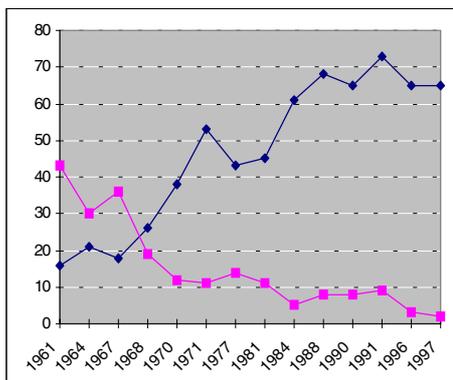
response from the city. I have heard a furious AESP member, commenting on proposed farming restrictions in Queensland, complain 'the farmers expect us to pay for it'. The member appeared unaware that he spends almost all his time on cleared land, that he consumes the products of cleared land, and that if conservation is necessary for the benefit of all Australians now and in the future, there is an argument that all Australians should share the cost.

The habitat of modern Australians is mostly cleared land, including places such as quarries and factories many of us never visit. They form part of our habitat because we consume their products. If we wish to retain and enhance native biodiversity we must restrict our impact — our habitat. The number and/or per capita consumption of humans dependent on this continent must be restricted or it will be impossible to provide space for other species and the environmental benefits they bring. We may be more likely to achieve conservation goals if we approach the problem equitably so that all Australians share the costs of conservation as well as the benefits.

ABS Stats 31/3/2002

For the year June 1999 - June 2000

Natural increase	120,800
Net Overseas Migration	99,100
Total Growth	219,900 (1.16%)
(Doubling Time	60 years)
Population	19,157,000
City Growth:	
Sydney	53,600
Melbourne	52,100
All other areas combined	114,200



The ALP has been openly and consistently undemocratic in its pursuit of higher immigration intakes. Since the mid 60s successive polls have shown an increasing proportion of Australians want a smaller intake and a decreasing proportion a larger one.

Dear Editor

I wish to congratulate Professor Cliff Ollier for his letter in the march 2001 Newsletter where he provides a timely reminder for our organisation to concentrate on population issues and not be sidetracked with other environmental issues such as Australia's greenhouse emissions. The greenhouse issue seems to be quite trendy among environmentalists and unfortunately this shifts the focus from the far more pressing problem of population. Dr Clive Hamilton summarised the issue most succinctly by demonstrating that by 2020, our greenhouse emissions will be much higher (60% instead of 35%) under a high population growth scenario, so surely we as a group must focus on population and population alone.

I also enjoyed reading the article by the CSIRO's Dr Graham Harris. However Dr Harris seems to be perpetuating the notion that much of the damage to our environment occurred in rural areas when our population was much lower. While significant damage did occur last century and our national population was much lower, less than 4 million, the distribution resulted in large numbers of people across much of what is now a depopulated rural Australia. The fact remains that many rural areas had much higher populations last century (even though our national population was much lower) and this only changed when either the natural resources underpinning these communities was removed, ie, gold or native pastures supporting sheep, or technology removed the need for such a large rural workforce. Last century for example, Wilcannia on the Darling river in western NSW had a population of over 30,000 people and was dubbed the "Queen city of the west" while Hill End in central NSW boasted a dozen hotels to support its

many tens of thousands of gold miners. Today, they are virtual ghost towns.

It would be ecological disaster to require Australian rural environments to support such large numbers of people again, but similarly, our cities are at their own bursting points. Perhaps listing population growth as a 'key threatening process' under the Federal Government's recent Environmental Planning and Biodiversity Conservation Act will lead to a more sustainable future. The impact of population growth through new housing developments on endangered or vulnerable species in remnant native grassland ecosystems in Sydney's Cumberland basin, is certainly one compelling reason to have population growth listed!

Yours sincerely
Alex Wells

**Gaylord Nelson
Founder of Earth Day
Identifies Population as
No1 Environmental Problem**

When asked what is the number one environmental problem facing the earth today, Gaylord Nelson, now 84 and founder of Earth Day, replied: "If you had to choose just one, it would have to be population. . . . The bigger the population gets, the more serious the problems become. . . . We have to address the population issue. The United Nations, with the U.S. supporting it, took the position in Cairo in 1994 that every country was responsible for stabilizing its own population. It can be done. But in this country, it's phoney to say 'I'm for the environment but not for limiting immigration.' It's just a fact that we can't take all the people who want to come here. And you don't have to be a racist to realise that. However, the subject has been driven out of public discussion because everybody is afraid of being called racist if they say they want any limits on immigration."

Cont from P1

and *Running Down* form a four part saga, a background to understanding why much of our current land and water use is unsustainable. Another book — on the Biosphere; bacterial origins for life; symbiosis; the microbiology of soils; and how Australian ecosystems function — is in preparation.

Macquarie University granted Mary White a Doctor of Science degree in recognition of her contributions to science through her books in 1995. The Queensland University of Technology granted her the degree of Doctor of the University on the 20th September 1999. She received the Riversleigh medal 'for excellence in promoting understanding of Australian prehistory' in December 1999. *Running Down* is short-listed for the Eureka Prize in 2001.

World population reached 6.1 billion in mid-2000 and is currently growing at an annual rate of 1.3 per cent, or 77 million people per year. The report predicts that population could climb as high as 10.9 billion by 2050.

Half of the annual growth is occurring in just six countries - India, China, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh and Indonesia "World Population Prospects: the 2000 Revision," prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations.

Editorial Cont from Page 2

long term strategies in 1994 made this point eloquently:

'For Aboriginal people today, as in 1788, the land is not merely a resource to be exploited, a commodity to be traded; it is life itself... The Standing Committee's reference scenario for the year 2045 has only worse yet to come - a population almost doubled in size, taking over more and more of

the best land for housing, suffering greater pollution and congestion, and natural resources under increased threat of depletion and degradation. Such a prospect must be alarming for all Australians. For indigenous Australians it is doubly so, because the damage that will inevitably be caused to the land threatens the heart of our culture and our way of being.'

Aboriginal people have never been consulted on immigration. Until the advent of multiculturalism Aboriginal people were an identified group of Australians even though their rights and opinions were largely ignored. The introduction of multiculturalism by Labor saw Aboriginal Australians relegated to a subset of a subset. Many SPA members would see Aboriginal Australians as having a unique and preeminent role in deciding how an environmentally sustainable future is to be secured.

Mr Beazley has never addressed himself to the issue of population size and environmental damage. Like so many others who seek a larger population he merely asserts that the environmental consequences can be managed. He never quantifies the damage, the cost of prevention or repair or the precise management mechanisms he would put in place. As well as the obvious loss of good arable land around urban areas, a resource of which Australia has very little, there are the more intractable environmental impacts.

Clive Hamilton of the Australia Institute has shown that immigration increases Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. Per capita increase in greenhouse gas emissions is accounting for only half Australia's increase, the other half is contributed by population growth. Growth of greenhouse emissions already exceeds the 8 percent increase allowed under the Kyoto deal. Again, the satisfaction of the greed of real estate and building/construction interests by a

beholden Labor Party takes Australia further away from sustainability.

Urban sprawl contributes just as much to global warming as land clearing does according to Jim Sullivan, a farmer from Mataranka in the Northern Territory (ABC

The building of more houses not only means more land clearing, more greenhouse gas emissions as a direct consequence, but also more greenhouse gas emissions from the making of housing materials and the process of building. A rough calculation shows that the energy capital invested in each average house equates with the addition of another hundred cars to our roads for one year.

The diversion of scarce capital into real estate speculation and an expanding housing stock means less money available for tackling the serious environmental problems which demand urgent attention. A Labor Party intent on appeasing the greed of powerful vested interests which offer it electoral support will be acting against the welfare of the majority of Australians and its traditional values.

SPA members are urged to do whatever they can in the leadup to the election to change the direction in which, it appears, a Labor Government would take Australia's future population. Now is the time to influence the party that is very likely to form our next National government.

Giff Jones, ACT branch president, writing in his personal capacity, received a letter very recently from Kim Beazley which contained the following:

"...Australia needs a higher population than will occur at present rates. We can lift the rate through immigration and by creating social and economic conditions that are conducive to an increased fertility rate in Australia.

"...Labor believes that long-term economic growth depends on the ability to conserve, repair and maintain our natural resource base."

Going for Broke

by Tom Morrow

Economic policy is driven by politics and big business - with the wider community increasingly disenfranchised. *Growing for Broke* is a no-nonsense book written in lively layman's language by a one-time lecturer in economics and technology. The book disparages economic rationalism, corporate excess, self-serving politicians and environmental degradation. The book proposes that at the root of society's future problems lies in the pursuit of endless "growth" as the principal economic objective. Though the global economy is larger than can be sustained by the resources available, little sense exists of any limits to growth. Big business, the government and the media pursue economic growth before all other policies. As portrayed to the public, the idea that the economy must grow a bit more each year seems as natural and essential as breathing.

Since 1900 gross global product has risen by about 20 times - an average annual growth rate over the period of 3%. By the end of the century the annual growth rate was around 4%. In the unlikely event that the economy succeeds in growing by 4% pa for the next 100 years, the economy in the year 2100 will be 50 times its present size. In the year 2082 the economy will be so large that 4% growth in that year will be the entire output of the existing global economy in the year 2000. The planet is not big enough to accommodate the unwanted by-products of the future growth economy - increased pollution, resource depletion and environmental destruction. Even at present levels the world is under stress. Alternative economic systems would provide a better quality life for most of the community. But changing the economic culture into something more sensible and more sustainable will not be easy. Vested interests have a big stake in the growth economy.

In his 384 page book *Growing for Broke*, Tom Morrow develops the case that the economic growth/economic rationalist

model is failing to deliver benefits to most of the community. Some of the issues and consequences of economic growth examined in the book are:

- * Population policy
- * Globalisation
- * The logging industry
- * Land clearing
- * Corporate excess and executive salaries
- * Emasculation of agriculture
- * Pollution
- * Global warming
- * Resource depletion

A book that both informs and entertains, *Growing for Broke* criticises Australia's power brokers - economists, politicians, corporate leaders and the media for their refusal to tackle the longer-term problems of the growth economy.

The price of Growing for Broke is a very reasonable \$24.95 plus \$5 handling and postage. (for a total of \$29.95 - including GST). Payment can be made by cheque or postal order made out to "Tomorrow Press". To obtain a copy send request and payment to Tomorrow Press, PO Box 31, Holmesglen, Victoria, 3148. Email: alpha.au@bigpond.com. The book will then be mailed to you by return. If these delivery arrangements are inconvenient ring (03) 9813 8114.

Martin Ferguson, Shadow Minister for Immigration Sydney Population Future Conference, 3/3/2001

'Kim and I have argued previously for a moderate increase in our population, including through higher immigration, over the next 50 years. On the basis of the evidence that we have seen, and the views of the experts in the debate, that is both environmentally sustainable and to our economic benefit.

To those who argue for a lower population, I suggest that you examine that approach in the context of a few global realities. First, the size of our population does affect our economic opportunities in a global economy, hence the interests of the business community in arguing for a higher population.

That is why Labor will establish, as a matter of priority, a new Office of Population to research and advise on the range of population options and ways of getting there. The first step will be to undertake a wide-ranging inquiry to ascertain the levels of population that can be sustained into the long-term in order to pursue more favourable economic, social, and environmental outcomes.'

The Bureau of Immigration Research revisited? Ed

The source of Labor's Population/Immigration Policy?

The chief executive of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr Mark Patterson, said the Federal Government should conduct aggressive international marketing to attract skilled people to Australia. "I think we should be actively promoting Australia offshore and be a consistently welcoming nation," Mr Patterson said. "And we would still like to see an increase in annual numbers."

He said ACCI had suggested annual skilled migrant numbers be locked in at 0.67 per cent of the population, which would amount to about 130,000 people a year. Australia presently takes in between 35,000 and 40,000 skilled migrants annually.

The chief executive of the Business Council of Australia, Mr David Buckingham, said the benefits of skilled migration programs to Silicon Valley had boosted the IT sector's economic benefits for the United States. "We as a country need to address the question of population policy as a matter of urgent national priority," Mr Buckingham said.

Paul Collins: SPA Patron

The SPA Executive, some time ago decided that up to five persons from various backgrounds and experience should be invited to become patrons. We are delighted that Dr Paul Collins has agreed to join our other four eminent patrons. He returned from overseas just as this Newsletter was going to press. I hope to publish his photograph in the next issue.

Born in Melbourne, Australia, in March 1940, Paul Collins is an historian, broadcaster, and writer. In March 2001 he resigned from the active priestly ministry of the Catholic Church due to a dispute with the Vatican over his book *Papal Power*.

For many years he has worked in varying capacities in TV and radio with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. He also writes regularly for many of Australia's leading newspapers and magazines, as well as for the *London Tablet*, the *National Catholic Reporter* in the US and for several Catholic magazines in Germany. At present he presents the ABC TV program, *Sunday Spectrum*. It examines ethical, spiritual and philosophical/theological issues in the contemporary world.

He has a Master's degree in theology (Th.M.) from Harvard University and a Ph.D. in history from the Australian National University. He has taught church history and theology in Australia, the US and Pacific countries and worked as a parish priest in Sydney and Hobart. In 1998 he was a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at the ANU, and Ethel Hayton Visiting Fellow in Religion and Society at the University of Wollongong. He also has wide experience in tertiary and adult education.

Between 1988 and 1996 he was a producer-presenter in the ABC in radio and TV, and for three years he was Specialist Editor-Religion for the ABC.

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He is the author of *Mixed Blessings* [Penguin, 1986], *No Set Agenda: Australia's Catholic Church Faces an Uncertain Future* [David Lovell, 1991], *God's Earth: Religion as if matter really mattered* [Harper Collins 1995], *Papal Power* [Harper Collins, 1997], *Upon This Rock: The development of the papal office from Saint Peter to John Paul II* [Melbourne University Press, 2000], and *From Inquisition to Freedom* [Simon and Schuster, 2001]. He is at present working on a book on the ethics of population.

While he is well known as a commentator on the papacy, he also has a strong interest in environmental and population issues, and the ABC has made his book *God's Earth* into a major TV documentary. He is a member of the Australian National Committee for the Earth Charter and he was also one of a thousand world religious leaders invited to attend the United Nations Millennium Peace Summit in August 2000.

Nowadays he works as a freelance writer, speaker and broadcaster on environmental issues, social ethics, theology, history and communication.

Lifelong Renters

A looming shortfall of land on Sydney's urban fringes will push house prices even higher and help create the first generation of "lifelong renters", according to a report in the Sydney Morning Herald (April 9, 2001). Sydney's population is expected to grow by 900,000 in the next 25 years. With the trend towards smaller households, about half a million new homes will be needed for the city's new residents.

Population pressure is rapidly changing the character of Sydney's suburbs, but not its richest waterfront suburbs, according to a report in the Sydney Morning Herald (17 April). Almost 96,000 homes will be crammed into existing suburbs over the next five years and 29,000 on the city's fringes. Eighty

four per cent of the new homes will be "multi-units" and all but a fraction will cost more than \$150,000. The march of apartments has already spread to traditional working class suburbs of Parramatta and Bankstown.

Dr Peter Whetton, head of the CSIRO's Climate Impact Group, referring to the Kyoto Protocol, says:

"...factors such as the rates of population and economic growth would be significant determinants of the rate of growth in emissions. This accounts for at least half of the range of temperature projections."

In a study on the 100 largest urbanised areas in the United States, Roy Beck and Leon Kalankiewicz concluded that half the sprawl was related to land use decisions and the other half to population growth. Charlie Reese, writing in the Orlando Sentinel, said: "...if we do not stabilise growth, our country will eventually be ruined by sheer numbers. It should give folks a clue that most of the immigrants, legal or illegal, are trying to get away from countries that are overpopulated. Over population is not only destructive of the environment, it guarantees the great majority will live in poverty."



Visit
SPA Website at
<http://www.population.org.au>
and join other members
in email discussion

The Australian Water Resources Assessment Audit released in April has found that water needs to be used more efficiently if Australia is to develop sustainably. Australians use 65 per cent more water than they did in the 1980s. They now use enough water to fill Sydney harbour 48 times. 26 per cent of surface water and 34 per cent of groundwater management areas are approaching or beyond sustainable extraction limits.

Members

Please take this page which has a membership form on the reverse and give it to a potential new member. We do need to double our membership if we are to become independent of donations and to work more effectively to stabilise Australia's population and bring it into balance with our resource base. Nothing is more important to achieving an ecologically sustainable future.

Population Stabilisation

There is no place on planet Earth which would benefit by having more humans.

At any given level of production, consumption and waste generation, the more people there are, the greater is the impact on the environment.

Australia's population, now 18.3 million, is growing by 1.2 per annum. If this rate of growth continues our population will double within 58 years.

Australia's population would stabilise at about 21 million, by 2030 except for Government intervention. Australia's fertility rate, 1.87, is high by European standards. Spain has achieved a fertility rate of 1.23 and Italy 1.27. Australia could reasonably be expected to have a fertility rate of 1.6.

It would not be either reasonable or logical to ask our people to exercise restraint in their family size, while at the same time pursuing a policy of artificially increasing our numbers via a pro-growth immigration program.

It would not be either reasonable or logical to ask our people to exercise restraint in their purchase of consumer goods, while at the same time pursuing a policy of artificially increasing the numbers of consumers in Australia via a pro-growth immigration program.

There is a strong humanitarian argument for preserving the environment for the many millions of future generations rather than risking damage to it through over-exploitation by a swollen present-day population.

Biological diversity cannot be preserved in any ecosystem where any species continually increases its numbers.

Australia's population is not living sustainably within its environment - as demonstrated by forest depletion, soil degradation/erosion/salinisation, plant and animal extinctions, excessive greenhouse emissions, and declining fresh and marine water quality.

The report of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Australia's Population 'Carrying Capacity' urges the Australian Government to develop and implement an integrated population policy, and is critical of the 'existing situation where a de facto population policy emerges as a consequence of year by year decisions on immigration taken in an ad hoc fashion.

Let's work to make Australia a global model of sustainability!

