



NEWSLETTER

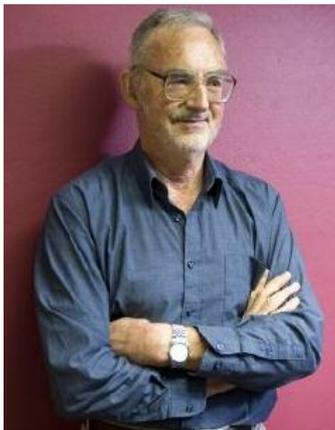
Sustainable Population Australia Inc

No. 99
August, 2011

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Half intake enough to service resource boom



Dr Bob Birrell

arguments for continued high levels of immigration.

Industry has been claiming that, unless net overseas migration is kept at 180,000 or higher, there will be not be enough skilled workers to meet employer requirements and to sustain aggregate economic growth.

The report has found, however, that with net overseas migration at 90,000 a year, and labour force participation rates unchanged, the workforce will expand by 1.0 million over the 11 years to 2021. And according to CPUR research, if participation rates continue to increase as they have over the past decade, workforce growth will be nearer to 1.7 million over this period.

Lead author the report, Dr Bob Birrell, says this is more than enough to service the mining boom.

“But the bulk of current migration has little to do with providing scarce skills to the resource industries,” he says. “Rather, it is delivering two major streams. One is a predominantly professional flow to the big cities where the immigrants are being employed in people-servicing industries such as health and welfare. The other, is a mass of people on temporary visas such as students and working holiday makers who also go to the cities and work on a casual basis.”

The report, like the Federal Government, believes the solution to industry’s need for workers during the start-

up construction phase of the resources boom lies with temporary workers. Unlike the government, however, it does not support temporary workers on 457 visas being encouraged to seek permanent residency. About half of those issued with 457 visas in recent years have obtained permanent residence visas after a few years temporary residence.

Dr Birrell says, as is now widely recognised, the resources boom Mark 2 will lead to the contraction of some metropolitan-based industries, such as manufacturing, mainly because of the appreciation of the Australian dollar.

“In this context, it makes little sense to pursue a high immigration policy which promotes rapid metropolitan population growth. If the current high-population-growth pathway to promoting economic growth continues, the fiscal dividend that the Commonwealth will reap from the resources boom will be squandered on city-building. This dividend would be far better spent on training the domestic workforce and investing in knowledge-intensive industries.”

Dr Birrell says Australia’s circumstances demand an immigration program which addresses problems of sustainability, particularly as they affect the quality of urban life in the big cities.

“The Labor Government’s current immigration target of net 180,000 per year, however, means that Australia’s population will grow from around 22 million to 36 million or more by 2050. This is not compatible with resolving sustainability problems,” he says.

“The government’s immigration decisions show that the Prime Minister has walked away from her implied promise to stop Australia ‘hurtling down a track to a 36 million or a 40 million population’”.

Bob Birrell, Ernest Healy, Katharine Betts, Fed T Smith: CPUR Research report, Monash University Arts, “Immigration and the Resources Boom Mark 2” July 2011. <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/cpur/publications/documents/immigration-policy-13-july-2011.pdf>

Collapseology: why this should be shaping Australian public policy



Fiona Heinrichs

Fiona Heinrichs

Posted on On-Line Opinion, 21 June 2011

In recent times there has been an emergence of a genre of research theory that could be called collapseology. Jared Diamond's *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive* (2005), Thomas Homer-Dixon's *The Upside and Down:*

Catastrophe, Creativity, and the Renewal of Civilisation (2006) and Graeme Taylor's *Evolution's Edge: The Coming Collapse and Transformation of Our World* (2008) are three of many books seeing the likelihood of a collapse of modern civilisation based upon a business-as-usual use of resources and continuous economic growth.

The cover story edition of *New Scientist* (5 April, 2008), 'The Collapse of Civilisation: It's more precarious than we realised', discussed the work of a number of leading thinkers who believe that a breakdown of modern civilisation could occur because of technological systems becoming so complex that they reach 'critical dimensions of instability' and then collapse or slowly disintegrate. Joseph Tainter, an archaeologist at the University of Utah, and the author of *The Collapse of Complex Societies* (1988) believes that complex societies – including our own – can collapse in a matter of decades because of diminishing returns from increased complexity.

Human societies are problem-solving organisations, which require energy to be maintained. As complexity increases, so too does the costs per capita. Hence, further social investment in complexity may reach a point of declining marginal returns. Over time, returns fall and costs rise and social resilience decreases. Threats and challenges may therefore overwhelm society. Environmental threats and challenges are one such force.

The Global Footprint Network has calculated that humanity's demand on the ecological services of the Earth is now such that it would take 1.4 Earth's to 'generate all the resources humanity consumes and absorb all our CO₂ emissions'. An ecological overshoot

has occurred, such that it now takes 17-18 months for the Earth to regenerate what is used in 12 months: 'The urgent threats we are facing today – most notably climate change, but also biodiversity loss, shrinking forests, declining fisheries and freshwater stress – are symptoms of this trend.' The Global Footprint Network rejects the idea that this is merely a consumption problem and that population growth does not have an environmental impact.

The idea that the world has reached critical limits is also seen in many scientifically respectable reports including the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, *Ecosystems and Human Well-Being* (2005), the United Nation's Environment Programme, *Global Environment Outlook 4 (GEO4)* (2007) and the Fifth Report from the Working Group on Climate Change and Development, *Up in Smoke? Asia and the Pacific* (2007). According to this last report, an increase of only 1°C during the rice growing season would reduce Asia's rice yields by 10 per cent: 'In a region whose population is still rising, if the ability to grow food is weakened by climate change, the health and livelihoods of millions of people will be at risk.' The CSIRO Report, *Climate Change in the Asia Pacific Region* (2006) also predicts that if a 2-4°C rise in the average global temperature occurs in the 21st century there will be 'devastating' environmental and economic impacts upon Asia, especially with respect to water stress and food security.

There is now a considerable body of research voicing concern about water stress and coming 'water wars' ('peak water'); the possibility of all of the world's top soil vanishing in as little as 60 years ('peak soil') and 'peak food', with the prospects of food prices increasing by 40 per cent in the next decade and fishless oceans by 2050 on a business-as-usual scenario. This environmental decline is occurring while human populations continue to surge. In this context, and in light of threats posed from 'peak oil' and global climate change, the remarks made by prominent Australian businessman and environmentalist, Dick Smith that 'in 100 years time people in Australia will be starving to death' is not implausible.

The prospect of collapse of the wider global framework puts the Australian immigration and population debate in a new perspective and challenges unquestioned assumptions. The idea that Australia is part of a global environmental crisis slipped through the cracks of the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities Tony Burke's *Sustainable Australia – Sustainable Communities: A Sustainable Population Strategy for Australia*. Instead of setting immigration targets, we are treated to 'motherhood (continued on page 11)

More bills than skills from this migration

William Bourke

July 19, 2011 *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*

Population-boosters have focused on two key arguments to convince us that we need a big Australia: ageing and skills.

Australia has an "ageing crisis", they say, and importing younger migrants is the way to deal with it. But the Productivity Commission dismissed this last year in *Population and Migration: Understanding the Numbers*, concluding that "realistic changes in migration levels ... make little difference to the age structure of the population in the future, with any effect being temporary". Now attention has turned to the "skills shortage" and "demand for labour" arguments.

Apparently we need skilled migrants to fill all sorts of gaps - most notably to dig up and sell our finite, mineral assets. This is despite the fact mining is highly mechanised and, at a little more than 200,000 workers, makes up less than 2 per cent of Australia's workforce.

A report yesterday from the Centre for Population and Urban Research at Monash University confirms the mining boom does not justify large-scale immigration. It says, "the bulk of current migration has little to do with providing scarce skills to the resource industries" and concludes that "Australia needs a lower, but better-targeted, immigration program".

So why do the doors remain open? Because the lazy way for big business to make more profit is to increase its customer base. The Australia Institute recently found that bank profits are now running at \$1000 for every man, woman and child in Australia. Double the population and you effectively double those profits. No wonder their media-savvy "chief economists" spruik population growth.

It's not just the business lobby feeding us the lines. The Immigration Minister, Chris Bowen, says our migration program is focused on resolving skills shortages. But a review of his department's data clearly shows this is wrong. In 2009-10, Australia's quota of just more than 180,000 permanent migrants included about 108,000 in the skilled migrant category.

But a huge portion of that category - about 56 per cent of the so-called skilled stream - consists of the direct family dependants of skilled migrants, as "secondary" applicants. So only about 47,000 - or one in four - of Australia's permanent migrants are bringing designated skills.

The key to our skills predicament is that dependants,

family-reunion entrants and refugees dominate the permanent migration program and create a big annual net skills deficit because of the services they require. Most are not tested for the specific skills we need but still demand skills from doctors, teachers, engineers and accountants, to name a few. This fuels a vicious circle of skills shortages and inflationary pressure on wages.

As for the uncapped 457 visa scheme, which dominates the temporary skilled-migration program, the 2009-10 data shows about half of the 70,000 migrants under this "skilled" program were dependants too. Meanwhile we have an uncapped open-borders agreement with New Zealand and more than 30,000 Kiwis move here each year without skills testing.

But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. A recent Bureau of Statistics report found unemployment among skilled migrants and their families is 30 per cent higher than for the population as a whole. A Sydney University migration expert, Dimitria Groutsis, concluded: "This highlights the fact that the skilled migration program is not working."

The skills shortage in Australia really began in 1788. All the population growth since then, including recent record immigration, has failed to fix it. The dog will never catch its tail. Structural skills shortages are a part of every economy.

The only way to minimise them is to stabilise the population and invest in education and training, which are disincentivised by high immigration. Australia has more than two million people of working age that are unemployed, under-employed or not engaged in the workforce. Youth unemployment (15-24 years) alone is nearly 20 per cent. They must be our priority.

Just months after Julia Gillard promised to "stop, take a breath", Mr Bowen announced the biggest permanent migration program in Australian history. The 2011-12 program will bring 199,750 more people and again be dominated by dependants, family reunions and refugees. The government must explain why it runs an unsustainable migration program that exacerbates skills shortages and erodes quality of life.

William Bourke is national convener of the Stable Population Party.



William Bourke

Opinion

Migration myths have cost plenty

Letters, Sydney Morning Herald 21 July 2011

I wish to congratulate William Bourke for his article exposing the myths behind the need for skilled migration in Australia. ("More bills than skills from this migration", July 19). From 1981 to 1996 I worked as a manager in Sydney for the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) and then Centrelink to 2008. In both organisations, on a daily basis, I dealt with migrants, including issues, policies and welfare expenditures arising from these migrants. One of my many roles as a manager in the CES and in its professional employment service was to provide monthly labour market reports to senior management and to process Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS) applications - where employers applied to bring in people to Australia with skills that they said were not available here. I rejected many of the ENS applications on the basis that I thought there were suitable people already in the country - only to discover in many cases that some months later the then Department of Immigration had ignored my refusal of the employer's application and that the nominee had duly arrived and was now unemployed and on unemployment benefits. Civil engineers and accountants were regular standouts in this class. Once they arrived, Australian employers discovered their overseas-gained skills and qualifications weren't suitable after all. Out of sheer frustration I contacted the manager of the ENS section of the Department of Immigration to ask why applications I had refused based on labour market demand and supply had been ignored by Immigration. The response was very Yes Minister; employers had a right to bring these people in, I was told.

I have often wondered over the years what the real cost of immigration has been and will be to Australia. Just how much taxpayer money has been expended through all levels of government as a result of importing people we did not need, ranging from all welfare outlays, education outlays, health system overload, urban sprawl and related environmental destruction, to the legal system outlays of all types?

Stephen King Currumbin (Qld)

BOOK REVIEWS:

Because of shortage of space in this issue, we have held over book reviews until the October edition, including *'Dick Smith's Population Crisis'*.

Speech

Skilled migration has seven strikes on it.

Kelvin Thomson MP, Member for Wills

This is the edited speech delivered to the Victorian SPA AGM on 16 July 2011

The **first** problem with labour force migration is that it is the key driver of Australia's rising population.

The **second** problem is that there are people in Australia who want work and we should be getting them jobs. There are 500,000 people on Newstart allowance and 800,000 on disability support pension. These people should be our first priority. In the last decade the number of people receiving disability support pension grew around six per cent per annum in real terms.

The **third** problem with skilled migration is the treatment of, and outcomes for, many skilled migrants. Included among the people who are out of work and are deserving of our attention are quite a few skilled migrants already in Australia who are either not working at all or not employed in areas for which they are qualified. A local newspaper which circulates in my electorate, reported four out of five skilled migrants in Melbourne are unemployed or underemployed, according to a recent survey. The article outlined the case of Preston skilled migrant Natalia Garcia, who has applied for 17 engineering jobs in the past four months without getting an interview or feedback, despite speaking advanced English and holding an engineering degree and seven years industry experience in Colombia. Ms Garcia said "We were told Australia was desperate for engineers and that we would find a job in a maximum of two months." Ms Garcia is working as an office cleaner, and said most skilled migrants she knew were doing the same.

The **fourth** problem is that the skills shortage is overstated and is abused in ways which undermine the wages and conditions of Australian workers. National Secretary of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), Dave Oliver, believes the skills shortage issue is overstated and that successive federal governments have failed to deliver an adequate labour market testing system, which means employers can exploit the system. The AMWU has launched a skills register to give skilled workers and young people seeking apprenticeships the opportunities to register for work before employers are allowed to bring in workers on 457 visas. With apprenticeship completion rates below 50 per cent, the long term answer to our skills problems cannot be importing workers from other countries on a temporary basis. Employers can't complain about skills shortages while they are dropping

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their investment in training.

The **fifth** objection I have to increasing skilled migration is that we have become addicted to it. We need to do more to educate and train our own young people. Going back two or three decades, governments and employers dropped the ball on training.

Governments closed technical schools and cut back on technical education. Private employers lost interest in taking on apprentices. We started outsourcing our requirement for training. This has been an addictive, self-fulfilling circle and we need to break the habit. Those countries which do not run a big migration program put more effort into educating and training their young people, and they have better participation rates as a consequence.

The **sixth** objection I have to increasing skilled migration goes to the claim that this is necessary to avoid capacity constraints and bottlenecks in the resources industry. The truth is that running the resources boom as fast as possible has a number of economic consequences, not all of which are positive. I believe the relentless rise of the Australian dollar as a result of the resources boom presents a real challenge to the Australian economy. The current mining boom mark 2 represents the highest terms of trade in 140 years, so the pressure on manufacturing and other trade-exposed industries not directly benefiting from higher commodity prices is severe. Retail, manufacturing, building and tourism are labouring under the weight of subdued sales, weak profits and low orders. We need to ensure that we do not become a one-trick economy and that the structural changes that occur as a result of this boom do not leave ordinary people behind.

Furthermore, most of Australian's current migration intake has very little to do with the skills needed by the resource industries. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that when net overseas migration peaked at 315,000 in 2008, 203,000 or 65 per cent derived from temporary visa holders, subclass 457s, students etc. Most of these migrants work as casuals in metropolitan semi skilled jobs. Most 457s are employed in service industries in metropolitan areas. Between March 2009 and March 2011, 36 per cent of all job growth in Australia was in Victoria. But Victoria's share of Australia's population is 25%. Most of this job growth was in Melbourne, where it was largely driven by growth in the construction and people service industries. Links between this growth and the nation's resources industries were minimal. Australia risks wasting the dividend from the resources boom in this big city building exercise. If we slowed our population growth the dividend from the resources boom could be spent on investment in education and knowledge

intensive industries.

I doubt I am the only Australian who is looking askance at proposals from overseas companies to bring in their own workforce to mine Australia's resources. If the resources go overseas, and the profits go overseas, and the work is done by overseas labour, what benefit do Australia and Australians derive? It is certainly not from a higher dollar, with its adverse impacts on manufacturing and tourism. It is certainly not from the Reserve Bank, which keeps the trigger on interest rates due to the mining boom, with all the consequences of that for retailing and for small business and home borrowers. Skilled migration needs to be tight and targeted, meeting specific needs, not some general program to grow the labour force and keep downward pressure on workers income and conditions.

The **seventh** and final objection I have goes to the question of the morality of skilled migration. In May I participated in a debate on Sky News TV Channel on the program known as The Nation, with amongst others Geoff Gallop, the former Western Australian Premier. We were talking about migration, and Geoff said he thought it was a moral issue, that Australia had a moral obligation to take large numbers of migrants from poor countries. Now Geoff is a fine Australian who has made a very valuable contribution to this country. But skilled migration is not about Australia being unselfish. It is about us being utterly selfish, taking the best and brightest from poor countries and denuding them of the people most likely to lift them from conditions of poverty. When we take a poor country's doctors or nurses, we damage their health system. When we take a poor country's engineers, we damage their capacity to build infrastructure. It is a moral question alright, but there is nothing moral about what we are doing.

Population gain will offset emissions cuts

Cuts in greenhouse gas emissions achieved through the carbon tax and other measures will be negated by Australia's growing population, a sustainable population advocacy group says.

Sustainable Population Australia (SPA) says even if the federal government's emissions targets are met, the benefits will be wiped out before 2020 based on current population growth.

A larger population would have to reduce emissions by 20 per cent, instead of the five per cent required in 2011, to bring the nation's total emissions back to 2011 targets.

<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/national/8271479/population-gain-will-offset-emissions-cuts>

The World at 7 Billion: Can We Stop Growing Now?

by Robert Engelman, Executive Director, Worldwatch Institute

18 Jul 2011: Yale Environment360 OnLine edition

http://e360.yale.edu/feature/the_world_at_7_billion_can_we_stop_growing_now/2426/

With global population expected to surpass 7 billion people this year, the staggering impact on an overtaxed planet is becoming more and more evident. A two-pronged response is imperative: empower women to

make their own decisions on childbearing and rein in our excessive consumption of resources.



Robert Engelman

Demographers aren't known for their sense of humor, but the ones who work for the United Nations recently announced that the world's human population will hit 7 billion on

Halloween this year. Since censuses and other surveys can scarcely justify such a precise calculation, it's tempting to imagine that the UN Population Division, the data shop that pinpointed the Day of 7 Billion, is hinting that we should all be afraid, be very afraid.

We have reason to be. The 21st century is not yet a dozen years old, and there are already 1 billion more people than in October 1999 — with the outlook for future energy and food supplies looking bleaker than it has for decades. It took humanity until the early 19th century to gain its first billion people; then another 1.5 billion followed over the next century and a half. In just the last 60 years the world's population has gained yet another 4.5 billion. Never before have so many animals of one species anything like our size inhabited the planet.

And this species interacts with its surroundings far more intensely than any other ever has. Planet Earth has become Planet Humanity, as we co-opt its carbon, water, and nitrogen cycles so completely that no other force can compare. For the first time in life's 3-billion-plus-year history, one form of life — ours — condemns to extinction significant proportions of the plants and animals that are our only known companions in the universe.

Did someone just remark that these impacts don't stem from our population, but from our consumption? Probably, as this assertion emerges often from journals, books, and the blogosphere. It's as though a geometry text were to propound the axiom that it is not length that determines the area of a rectangle, but width. Would we worry about our individual consumption of energy and natural resources if humanity still had the stable population of roughly 300 million people — less than today's U.S. number — that the species maintained throughout the first millennium of the current era?

It is precisely because our population is so large and growing so fast that we must care, ever more with each generation, how much we as individuals are out of sync with environmental sustainability. Our diets, our modes of moving, and our urge to keep interior temperatures close to 70 degrees Fahrenheit no matter what is happening outside — none of these make us awful people. It's just that collectively, these behaviors are moving basic planetary systems into danger zones.

Yet another argument often advanced to wave off population is the assertion that all of us could fit into Los Angeles with room to wiggle our shoulders. The image may comfort some. But space, of course, has never been the issue. The impacts of our needs, greeds, and wants are. We should bemoan — and aggressively address — the gross inequity that characterizes individual consumption around the world. But we should also acknowledge that over the decades-long span of most human lifetimes, most of us are likely to consume a fair amount, regardless of where and how we live; no human being, no matter how poor, can escape interacting with the environment, which is one reason population matters so much. And given the global economic system and the development optimistically anticipated in all regions of the world, we each have a tendency to consume more as that lifetime proceeds. A parent of seven poor children may be the grandparent of 10 to 15 much more affluent ones climbing up the ladder of middle-class consumption.

This, in fact, is the story of China, often seen not as an example of population's impact on the environment but that of rapid industrialization alone. Yet this one country, having grown demographically for millennia, is home to 1.34 billion people. One reason the growth even of low-consuming populations is hazardous is that bursts of per-capita consumption have typically followed decades of rapid demographic growth that occurred while per-capita consumption rates were low. Examples include the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries, China at the turn of the 21st, and India possibly in the coming decade. More immediately worrisome from an environmental perspective, of

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course, is that the United States and the industrialized world as a whole still have growing populations, despite recent slowdowns in the growth rate, while already living high up on the per-capita consumption ladder.

Many of the impacts of this ubiquitous multiplication of per-capita resource consumption by the number of individuals are by now well documented. Humanity started to overwhelm the atmosphere with greenhouse gases not long after the Industrial Revolution began, a process that accelerated along with population and consumption growth in the 20th century. Fresh water is now shared so thinly that the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) projects that in just 14 years two thirds of the world's population will be living in countries facing water scarcity or stress. Half of the world's original forests have been cleared for human land use, and UNEP warns that the world's fisheries will be effectively depleted by mid-century. The world's area of cultivated land has expanded by about 13 percent since its measurement began in 1961, but the doubling of world population since then means that each of us can count on just half as much land as in 1961 to produce the food we eat.

For the rest of life on Earth, the implications of all this are obvious. Where we go, nature retreats. We are entering an epoch scientists have begun calling the Anthropocene, a break with the geologic past marked by humanity's long-term alteration of the natural world and its biota. We are inadvertently bringing on the sixth mass extinction not just because our appetites are vast and our technologies powerful, but because we occupy or manipulate most of the land in every continent except Antarctica. We appropriate anywhere from 24 percent to nearly 40 percent of the photosynthetic output of the planet for our food and other purposes, and more than half of its accessible renewable freshwater runoff.

Given these facts, it's hardly surprising that wildlife conservation faces an uphill battle globally and in every nation, while ambitious concepts like the creation of wildlife corridors to help species escape the ravages of development and climate change proliferate despite their impracticality in a world of growing human impacts.

So should we be afraid on the day we gain a 7 billionth living human being, especially considering UN demographers are now projecting anywhere between 6.2 billion and 15.8 billion people at the end of the century? Fear is not a particularly productive response — courage and a determination to act in the face of risk are the answer. And in this case, there is so much to be done to heal and make sustainable a world of 7 billion breathing human beings that cowering would be not just

fatalistic but stupid.

Action means doing a lot of different things right now. We can't stop the growth of our numbers in any acceptable way immediately. But we can put in place conditions that will support an early end to growth, possibly making this year's the last billion-population day we ever mark. We can elevate the autonomy of women to make life-changing decisions for themselves. We can lower birth rates by assuring that women become pregnant only when they themselves decide to bear a child.

Simultaneously, we need a swift transformation of energy, water, and materials consumption through conservation, efficiency, and green technologies. We shouldn't think of these as a sequence of efforts — dealing with consumption first, because population dynamics take time to turn around — but as simultaneous work on multiple fronts. It would be naïve to believe we will arrive at sustainability by wrestling shifting technologies and lifestyles while human population grows indefinitely and most people strive to live as comfortably as Americans do. Nor should we take comfort in the illusion that population growth is already on a path to end soon. Demographers can no more tell us when that will happen (or through what combination of lower birth rates or higher death rates) than economists can predict when robust global economic growth will resume. Both expert groups are mocked by the many surprises the future holds in store.

Rather than forecast the future, we should work to secure it. More than two in five pregnancies worldwide are unintended by the women who experience them, and half or more of these pregnancies result in births that spur continued population growth. Clearly there is vast potential to slow that growth through something women want and need: the capacity to decide for themselves when to become pregnant. If all women had this capacity, survey data affirm, average global childbearing would immediately fall below the "replacement fertility" value of slightly more than two children per woman. Population would immediately move onto a path leading to a peak followed by a gradual decline, possibly well before 2050.

Despite the obvious barriers to women's rights in today's world, such a vision rests on a set of straightforward and achievable conditions: Women must be able to make their own decisions free from fear of coercion or pressure from partners, family, and society. They must not depend on prolific motherhood for social approval and self-esteem. And they must have easy access to a range of safe, effective, and affordable contraceptive methods and the information and counseling needed to use them.

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For those who care about the environment, the future of human civilization, or both, the Day of 7 Billion should prod us to face and address the risks of continued population growth. By the sheer scale of our

presence and activity we are putting ourselves and all life at risk. No human being has the right to consume forever more than any other. Yet if we could somehow close the global consumption gap, the importance of our numbers would be even more obvious as the limits of natural systems were crossed. It scarcely lessens the importance of reducing both consumption and inequity to celebrate the fact that population growth can end without policies that restrict births, without coercion of any kind, without judgments on those who choose large families. We are not far from a world in which the number of births roughly balances the number of deaths, based on pregnancies universally welcomed by women and their partners.

The transition to this world may not be entirely painless. Nations will have to adjust to rising average ages as birth rates descend further. In China and India, smaller families may contribute to artificially high ratios of baby boys, with possible risks to future social stability. But these problems are the kind that societies and institutions are generally good at handling. Stopping climate change, reducing water scarcity, or keeping ecosystems intact, by contrast, don't yet seem to be in our skill set. Working now to bring population growth to an end through intentional childbearing won't solve such problems by itself, but it will help — a lot. And such an effort, based on human rights and the dignity and freedom of the world's childbearers, is in the interest of all who care about a truly sustainable environment and human future.

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Jane Goodall on population

World-renowned biologist Dr Jane Goodall visited Australia in June and gave a select number of public lectures. This is a transcript of part of her interview on 7.30 Report on 13 June.

LEIGH SALES: There are so many issues that worry people about the future of the planet. Is there any one particular thing that you think is the most pressing concern?

JANE GOODALL: I would say absolutely the increasing growth of the human population kind of underlies everything. And then building on that, you've got your huge numbers of people living in abject poverty, destroying the environment because they have



Jane Goodall on 7.30 Report. Photo ABC

to survive. And then, on the other hand, you've got the rest of us, who are living unsustainable lifestyles and many who have far more than they need.

LEIGH SALES: So what's your answer then on the population growth question, 'cause it's such a controversial area?

JANE GOODALL: Yes, it's one that people haven't liked to address. But it's logical. I mean, if you have an area of land and people living there who can't move out because of - there's people everywhere else, then there's got to be a balance. And all the African people I've talked to completely understand that if you have one family in a certain piece of land living a good life, two families will be a little bit harder. And then as time goes on, with more and more children, it will become impossible. They see it. So in our program in the villages, we do empower women because it's been shown all the way around the world that as women's education improves, family size tends to drop and we provide family planning information which they all welcome. In fact we had a completely unexpected development where one man started a whole trend in asking for vasectomies - which in an African man is extraordinary.

LEIGH SALES: And so that actually took off, did it? Wow. Whereabouts was that?

JANE GOODALL: That what is in around Gombe. One of the Tanzanians; he said: "I can't afford to feed more children. I mustn't have more children because I want to look after them."



WA faces bigger problems from higher immigration

Paddy Weaver

The 2012 immigration program outlined at a recent Perth mining conference by Immigration Minister, Chris Bowen, was clearly a response to lobbying from the resources sector and the WA government. WA received 'favoured treatment' in the immigration program and now faces both the direct effects of resource development and increased social and cost impacts of resulting from increased population growth.

The new migration initiatives

Australia's permanent Skilled Migration program will increase by 12,000 to 125,850 places with WA receiving large increases.

Declaring Perth a regional area relaxes English competency, skills and salary standards for permanent immigrants. A new Skill Select register will make it easier for employers to select the best migrant candidates but also provide an equivalent register to present the competency of local applicants. New Enterprise Migration Agreements, will facilitate immigration for large projects and their subcontractors with total capital expenditure over \$2 billion and a labour force of 1,500. Processing temporary 457 visas is to be hastened from the present 22 day average to within 5 days for the resources sector and 10 days for other employers. Regional Migration Agreements will have community involvement with Local Councils, regional development organisations, CCI branches and unions assessing the labour needs for their particular region.

Social and environmental impacts for Western Australia

In the past fringe benefit tax triggered resource companies into replacing mining towns with fly in/fly out workers. Now to relieve the population pressure on Perth, the WA government Pilbara Cities program is offering incentives for construction of regional homes that once the resource companies subsidised. Australia has suffered from the increased fuel consumption, greenhouse gas and social stress for the families involved in the fly in/fly out lifestyle.

Financial benefits from resource development have not filtered down through the WA community. The two-speed economy has split the community with many suffering increased costs and limited infrastructure and services as a result of population growth. Perth's cost of living now is 25% above New York's; the food prices are increasing at the fastest rate in Australia. Housing is unaffordable for the young: some suburbs have youth

unemployment of over 23%. Power disconnections and hardship grants have increased and social support services are unable to cope with the calls for assistance.

No part of WA seems immune from resource development. Esperance is already contaminated with 'export' lead: vineyards of Margaret River are facing coal seam gas proposals; the World Heritage listed Ningaloo Reef has five oil wells within 50 km. Barrow Island, once WA's most important conservation reserve, swarms with Chevron Consortium construction workers for the Gorgon gas field; Burrup Peninsular, with the world's largest and oldest rock art heritage is an industrial site for Woodside consortium and others. The dinosaur footprint trail and pristine environment of James Price Point is the site for yet another gas hub.

The recent purchaser of Collie coal mines proposes quadrupling and selling all output at a higher price in India. The Premier, Colin Barnett, reminded the new owner that existing contracts to supply coal to Perth's electricity generator could not be ignored and threatened to block export licenses if necessary. The latest report suggests the new owner believes the fines for breach of contract will be less than the profit from the higher price in India. Perth will face severe power cuts if this happens.

The timely report and thorough analysis from Bob Birrell's group at Monash University, "Immigration and the Resources Boom Mark 2", makes a strong case for halving the immigration from 180,000 to 90,000 net overseas migration (see page 1). With the changes proposed, the workforce would still increase by 1 million by 2021 to adequately meet projected employment needs for the resources sector. Restricting 457 visas to a truly temporary function, to specific locations and occupations needed in the construction phase of development together with removal of skills migrant sponsorship by Australian relatives would avoid the growth of population from the Minister's proposal.

Unless Australia's immigration is reduced, the population is on track to reach the 'large Australia' 36 million or even higher. For the people of Perth, already facing doubling of the population in 30 years the increased growth from the proposed 2012 program spells disaster. We should all contact our politicians and press for the Birrell proposals to be adopted.

To find your local member contact
<http://apps.aec.gov.au/esearch>

Bob Birrell, Ernest Healy, Katharine Betts, Fed T Smith: CPUR Research report, Monash University Arts, "Immigration and the Resources Boom Mark 2" July 2011.

Branch reports

SA: The SA branch held its AGM but unfortunately did not attract a quorum. Our president is now overseas for several months so a reconvened AGM has been put off until his return.

On June 7, the branch joined with Stop Population Growth Now in hosting the showing of the film 'State of Siege' made by Film Producer, Dennis Grosvenor of Sydney. The venue for the showing was a theatre in Mt Barker, the centre of considerable anger over government approved, but 'developer' instigated plans to cover a large area of this precious high quality and well watered agriculturally productive land with housing. The film deals with similar government corruption of the planning

process in NSW and identifies several of the main perpetrators of this process who have been in the sites of SPA members for some time. The function was very well attended and was followed by a discussion with many of those attending. The film was introduced by John Coulter who pointed to the similarities between what the film described in NSW and what was happening in SA and across all other states. The film is strongly recommended to other branches.

The Adelaide Advertiser has been running a few articles on population and these have occasioned a large number of letters supporting population limitation, many of them from SPA members.

VIC: Victoria is under ongoing pressure of development in Melbourne's established suburbs from Bayside to north of the river and from east to west and in regions such as near Geelong and the Surf Coast with a 2.1 per cent annual population growth rate, and Macedon Ranges where the stress on the community made the news when about 250 residents attended a council meeting demanding slower growth.

Members of the branch have had a creditable number of letters published in the main media in recent weeks as well as making use of sites like "candobetter" and SPA Face Book. We held a stall at a Sustainability Festival in the "growth corridor" town of Pakenham early in June. One member noted that it was amusing to mention this area and "sustainability" in the same sentence given its massive unrelenting growth in population.

Jill Quirk gave a talk at an ALP branch meeting in June. She was a guest in a one hour community radio show hosted by Sheila Newman on "Land prices, population growth and funding of care for the elderly" also in June. The branch issued a media release "The

Sky's the limit for water costs" - linking rising water costs and continued population growth. A submission was made to the State Government Parliamentary Inquiry Environmental Design and public health which leaves us the option of a personal appearance at the hearing to expand on ideas presented.

The branch AGM was held on Saturday 16 July with an excellent attendance, no doubt attracted by our guest speaker Hon. Kelvin Thomson. The following office bearers were elected on the day-President; Jill Quirk, Vice President: Jonathan Page, Secretary: Vivienne Ortega, Treasurer: Ilan Goldman, Committee: Rod Binnington, Jennie Epstein, Kit James, Gloria O'Connor and Jenny Warfe.

SEQ: The SEQ Branch has been busy preparing for the upcoming Population Film Festival in Brisbane on Sunday 28 August (see www.populationfilmfestival.com). This will be an event not to be missed. If any members can promote it in their workplace or community, please get in touch and flyers or posters will be provided. We are also working with Pachacuti on the launch of the GrowthBusters film "Hooked on Growth" in November. The SEQ Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 17th September from 4.30 pm in the Brisbane Square Library meeting room, with guest speaker Richard Cassels, anthropologist and director of the consultancy of Climate Leadership, who presents the big picture as no-one else can. Please mark it in your diary.

ACT: The Committee is grateful for the efforts of Tom Gosling, who stepped down from the role of President on 15 July due to work commitments. Vice President Christopher Dorman has taken over duties of immediate concern. These include support for Stable Population Party convenor William Bourke's Canberra visit, and the coming public address by Kelvin Thomson M.P., on 25 August, jointly sponsored with The Australia Institute.

Work continues with a committee convened by Michael Banyard to get together a U3A course, hopefully to be run in first semester 2011 (February), of duration eight weeks and length of sessions 2 hours. The other committee members are Vincent Patulny, Greg Cornwell, Sue Nancarrow, Nick Ware, and Christopher Dorman.

The recent death of Anne Edgeworth saddened us all. Chris and Judy Watson, Jan O'Connor, Tom Gosling and Jenny Goldie represented SPA at her funeral (see [tribute this page](#)).

Thanks to Jenny Goldie, who represented SPA at a

Community Alliance Party Conference on Governance in the ACT on 2 July.

Greg Delany continues to take the matter of overpopulation right up to the face of politicians with the energy that others of us envy.

At a Committee for the Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) conference in July, Christopher Dorman was the petunia in the onion patch, but nevertheless hopes that he made some account of himself against a couple of growthists who were invited speakers.

WA: The Annual General Meeting of the WA Branch of SPA will be held on Sunday 18 September at 2pm in the Meeting Room, Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street, West Perth. Steve Gates, Chair of Sustainable Energy Now will speak on "WA's renewable resources and energy scenarios".

Barry Walters and Harry Cohen had letters published in recent editions of the West Australian and John Massam in the Sunday Times. A number of others were published in community newspapers. Congratulations all.

Population was the title of a talk by Paddy Weaver to the Northern Suburbs Branch of the Australian Independent Retirees Association on Thursday 21st July.

(Collapseology continued from page 2)

policies' such as a national urban policy to create more liveable cities without an examination of whether under aggravated population growth this is possible at all. That was what the inquiry was supposed to do.

In my e-book, *Sleepwalking to Catastrophe* I argue that Australia, like the rest of the world, is failing to come to grips with the reality of the environmental crisis and instead continues with business-as-usual. As Clive Hamilton in *Requiem for a Species* (2010) observes, by default we are setting humanity on course to a type of future depicted in *The Road*, a Hobbesian world where those that survive are at war against all.

Fiona is an Arts (Hons.) graduate from Sydney who is very concerned about population growth and environmental sustainability. She has recently authored a book titled, Sleepwalking to Catastrophe: 'Big Australia', Immigration, Population Expansion and the Impossibility of Endless Economic Growth in a Finite World. It can be found at: <http://www.sleepwalking-to-catastrophe.com/>.

Vale Anne Edgeworth

On a cold but sunny afternoon in June, Anne Edgeworth, who had died aged 89, was buried in a cardboard coffin in Queanbeyan, east of Canberra. The coffin was decorated with Australian flora. That, and it being made of the less wasteful resource cardboard, illustrated Anne's life-long commitment to the environment.

Anne was a founding member of both Writers for and Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population (WESP and AESP). In the early days of the organisations, Anne with Mark O'Connor brought many of Australia's leading poets together for a public meeting in Canberra with poetry readings on population and environment. Anne was a scientist as well as a poet with a long commitment to Canberra's theatre. In 1994 she was Canberra Citizen of the Year. Unfortunately, she suffered badly from dementia in her later years so was no longer able to contribute to SPA.

At the burial, her grandchildren read some of her poems. The program contained the photo below of Anne with AESP/SPA's sole Patron, Australia's pre-eminent poet Judith Wright, surrounded by most of the other founding members.

As the *Canberra Times* noted in its obituary to Anne: "Perhaps the quintessential nature of her will remain, engaged and very present, through her poetry and the continuing work of the many students, writers and artists she mentored over so many years. That will be a large part of her legacy to her own much loved family and to the many Canberrans who considered her a splendid citizen and a very fine poet. Her words, love of nature and commitment to social justice, shall stay with us."



Photo by Tom Gosling. Pictured in October 1998 on the 10th anniversary of SPA's establishment are our then patron, poet Judith Wright McKinney (seated), with founding members (left-right) Hugh Oldham, Jenny Goldie, Anne Edgeworth, Mark O'Connor, Duncan Waddell, Eileen Dunstone & Chris Watson.

POPULATION CLOCKS

According to the US Census Bureau, at 3:03am UTC (Coordinated Universal Time) on July 27, 2011, the world population was

6,951,560,828

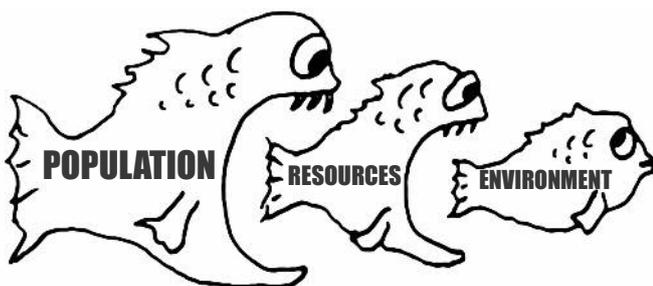
According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia's resident population on 27 July 2011 at 1:09 pm (Canberra time), was

22,662,383

The ABS also issues a quarterly report with population by state. The most recent is for December 2010.

	Population at end Dec qtr 2010 '000	Change over previous year '000	Change over previous year %
NSW	7 272.2	87.9	1.2
Vic	5 585.6	85.8	1.6
Qld	4 548.7	76.0	1.7
SA	1 650.4	15.6	1.0
WA	2 317.1	47.4	2.1
Tas	509.3	3.9	0.8
NT	229.9	1.9	0.8
ACT	361.9	6.9	2.0
Aust	22 477.4	325.5	1.5

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3101.0>



Without a sustainable population policy there is no true basis for a viable conservation policy.

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While every effort has been taken to ensure the reliability of the information contained in this newsletter, the opinions expressed are those of the various authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of either SPA or the editor.

ABOUT SPA

Formerly Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population.

The SPA Newsletter is mailed bi-monthly to members of Sustainable Population Australia Inc. For further information, please contact the SPA Office or your nearest branch. All membership applications and renewals should be sent to the National Office. Newsletter contributions should be sent there or directly to the editor.

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