

11th June, 2015

Migrant Intake into Australia
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Inquiry into Migrant Intake into Australia

In my opinion the migrant intake should be significantly and largely reduced, if not stopped all together.

This opinion is based on :

WATER!! – inadequate natural supplies to meet our current demands

We have insufficient water to meet our current demands. A larger population will make this most basic of human requirements even more fragile. There are already 9 water desalination plants either in use or in planning. (Gold Coast, Perth, Kurnell, Wonthaggi, Southern, Port Stanvace, Point Paterson and Onslow.)

Environment – habitat destruction, deforestation, soil loss, plant and animal extinction

As Australia's population expands we exert a larger ecological footprint on our country. Water quality in even remote streams is reduced, soil erosion worsens from agriculture on more questionable land. Creatures of world importance such as the dugong, cassowary, hairy nosed wombat, platypus etc will inevitably become victims of an expanded population and pass into the annals of extinction.

Skills Shortage – every skilled migrant brings with them a requirement for other workers and services making it an endless cycle that never catches up.

There has been a skills shortage in Australia since 1777, all the skilled migration since then has still not solved the problem. The reason is that each new arrival brings with them a small requirement for another nurse, another engineer, another doctor etc so as more skilled migrants come in so the requirement for even more skilled workers goes up. It is far better and more sustainable to invest in our local population.

Humanitarian – world wide the humanitarian crisis is huge, any migrant intake is just a drop in the ocean. The money spent in bringing these few migrants into the country would be better spent to help the many at the source.

If the goal is truly humanitarian then we as a nation should be spending money at the root cause of the problem. Plucking the few lucky ones to migrate to Australia leaves many more in desperate situations elsewhere. Cutting our aid budget while maintaining a drop-in-the-ocean humanitarian migration program is the worst possible humanitarian approach. Migration should be halted and the money spent off-shore to help countries in need as this will reach and impact far more people. We can better and more efficiently meet our humanitarian obligations by greater offshore assistance

Global Warming/ Greenhouse Gas – taking migrants from low emission countries and bringing them to Australia turns them into high emission people. This is not good for Australia's greenhouse gas targets, or the planet.

When migrants come to Australia, they adopt an Australian lifestyle which is high in Greenhouse gas emissions. Increasing our population while at the same time trying to reduce our overall greenhouse gas emissions is an impossible task.

Infrastructure Failure – at current levels of migration we should be building a city bigger than Cairns with the associated public infrastructure every year.

Most migrants arrive and stay in the large cities of Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth. At current levels of yearly population growth we should be spending public money on infrastructure consistent with a city bigger than Cairns every single year i.e. more than one new major public hospital, every year, dozens of new high schools, road, etc etc every year. The public purse cannot afford this infrastructure spending and falls behind hence our hospitals, roads, schools etc become increasingly stretched all to accommodate a larger population.

Vested Interests – most pro-growth advocates have vested interests in population growth. The countries of the world with the highest standards of living e.g. the Scandinavian countries have virtually zero population growth.

In my lifetime the population of Australia has doubled. At current population growth rates if I live to meet my life expectancy the population will double again. What has this growth brought? Milk is cheaper? Roads are clogged, parking inaccessible, hospitals stuffed full, and there is nowhere left to go. My grandchildren will never experience the joy of a completely deserted beach. Population growth has brought some economic and commercial benefits but the overall lifestyle effects have gone beyond optimal and we are now in lifestyle decline.

The Ageing Myth – it is normal in most animal populations to have a preponderance of older animals, the post-war baby boom is abnormal.

Consider a herd of elephants. How many babies are there? Maybe one, possibly two but most animals are mature. This is the normal state. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures suggest that even if migration were to stop tomorrow the Australian population would continue to grow until 2046.

Growth to where? – how many people is enough?

How many people should Australia have? Research suggests that as a continent we are already over our sustainable carrying capacity. How many people is enough, and what do we do when we reach that maximum? Why not halt growth now and use the money otherwise devoted to migration to culturally adapting to a sustainable population.

Undoubtedly migration has brought many benefits to Australia but now the marginal benefits of continuing migration are less than the marginal cost. The era of the 1950's is over and extended migration into the next decade will result in an environmentally degraded, economically challenged, socially stagnant Australia which for the average citizen will have a diminished lifestyle. It is for these reasons that in my view the migration program should be significantly and largely reduced.

Yours truly,

Dr Robert Grace M.B.B.S., F.A.N.Z.C.A., F.R.A.C.P.,M.Med.