

MIGRANT INTAKE SUBMISSION from SHEILA NEWMAN, POPULATION SOCIOLOGIST.

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I am an evolutionary sociologist, who specialises in population and land-use planning politics. I did my research thesis comparing different environment and population policy systems. (See endnote 1). I am also the editor of <http://candobetter.net>, which is a multi-author Australian website for reform in democracy, environment, population, land use planning and energy policy. I am also the policy advisor for the Australian Wildlife Protection Council and I am active in an anti-war movement called Australians for Reconciliation in Syria. I am the author of several books including scientific ones reviewing energy resources and population prospects for different world regions; and two books on a new population theory and a new theory of the origins of capitalism. For more detail see <http://candobetter.net/node/1882>.

Opportunity to communicate

I appreciate the opportunity to reach out to my fellow citizens to discuss this matter via this medium of submissions. We have in this country a huge problem in that our mainstream media have stolen the ‘public messaging system’ or ‘talking stick’ and talk up growth as if it were representing public opinion when it is not. State and Federal governments also do this,

but at least at the level of submissions, citizens can try to communicate with each other. This submission covers many subjects related to the key criteria in your draft report.

Rights of citizens and rights of immigrants

Before we talk about “Rights and obligations of immigrants” and the “differences across residency status,” **Australia needs to establish and clearly define the rights of citizens.** (As noted in the section below, Does Australia’s population have to keep growing, the erosion of public institutions through privatisation has reduced indirect Australian civil rights that did exist.) ‘Human rights’ are too vague and unenforceable. Australia needs a civil code, like the European civil codes, which support at law the obligations of the state and the rights of citizens. Most importantly, Australians should have a civil right to housing, a standard of living sufficient to guarantee their health, their well-being and that of their family, especially as regards food, clothing and housing, medical care and necessary social services.” In the French constitution these are fundamental rights of citizens (and of legal immigrants) and an obligation of the state. It is for this reason that France (and, with the exception of Britain, all of Europe that has adopted Roman law based on the French civil code) does not have programmed legal mass migration and resulting constant inflation of housing costs and, furthermore, is able to restrain energy use. In fact Europe uses housing as a way of limiting legal immigration. ¹[1]

“ Le droit au logement : un droit sans cesse réaffirmé

Le droit au logement est reconnu comme un droit social depuis 1946. Au niveau international, la Déclaration universelle des Droits de l’Homme de 1948 reconnaît dans son article 25-1 que le droit au logement fait partie des droits sociaux : “Toute personne a droit à un niveau de vie suffisant pour assurer sa santé, son bien-être et ceux de sa famille, notamment pour l’alimentation, l’habillement, le logement, les soins médicaux ainsi que pour les services sociaux nécessaires”.

En France, le droit au logement est un droit constitutionnel, qui découle des 10e et 11e alinéas du préambule de la Constitution du 27 octobre 1946.

Translation : *The right to housing : a right constantly reaffirmed*

The right to housing has been recognised as a social right since 1946. At international level, the Universal declaration of the Rights of Man of 1948 recognises in article 25-1 that the right to housing is part of social rights. ‘Every person has the right to a standard of living sufficient to guarantee their health, their well-being and that of their family, especially as regards food, clothing and housing, medical care and necessary social services.’ Source: <http://www.vie-publique.fr/politiques-publiques/logement-social/droit-logement/> Accessed 17 December 2015.)

Housing is recognised as a cost to the state and the taxpayer in France/Europe. In Australia, although population growth costs the taxpayer plenty, it is conceived as a privately profitable industry. In reality the state heavily subsidises the property development industry financially and it also costs Australians very heavily legally, socially and environmentally.

Mass immigration places pressure on society in a myriad of ways and currently Australian citizens have diminishing power to prevent the deleterious impacts that accompany rapid population growth as well as total population numbers.

Australians should not be fobbed off with 'human rights' charters and the like. These provide almost no enforceable rights and they only attempt to defend the most basic of needs.

Protection of workers' rights:

"Australia's current immigration system works well by international standards. However, there is scope for improvement, including by removing unnecessary barriers to immigrants' labour market integration" (Overview, Draft Report, Key Points, p. 2.)

Similarly to the need for decent and affordable accommodation, Australians need protection of their right to work, to decent wages, conditions of employment, and to leisure. This should then apply to any immigrant workers, as it once did.

A right-wing revolution in Victorian industrial law under Kennett in 1993ⁱⁱ [2] set the scene for Workchoices under the John Howard government, (11 March 1996 to 3 December 2007). The Howard Government, entering this weakened industrial law and industrial relations situation, went on to widen the use of the corporations clause in the Australian constitution, which exempted corporations from many employer obligations. ⁱⁱⁱ [3]

Up until now Australian employers had not had much to gain by importing immigrant workers because they had been required to employ them under the same industrial awards as native born workers. That meant that there was not the same opportunity to import cheap labour as there was, notoriously, in the United States.

Today we are in a situation where the Australian labour market has been greatly deregulated and it is now possible to employ overseas immigrants according to individually tailored employment contracts where they have little or no bargaining power or recourse for legal protection.

Coupled with the deregulation of immigration, this has created local pull factors which the Australian growth lobby has been keen both to lobby for and to exploit.

Despite the mainstream media's obfuscation of the difference between asylum seeker/refugee intake and all other immigration, the public has become concerned about the rise in slave and underpaid labour and the fact that local occupations (like nursing) are being awarded to immigrants over citizens.

In your Draft Report you also use economic modeling to assert that Australia's workforce is not adversely affected by high immigration, but your report lacks information about experience on the ground. Even though, under your heading "Immigrants work in higher skilled occupations", you note the high number of immigrants in the hospital/medical field, you don't record how this impacts on the local populations. Many Australian nurses, recent graduates and older people, see themselves as being displaced by imported nurses and they and their families, who depend on them, impoverished. Even the unions, which tend to be pro-migrant, have been forced to represent their members on this matter. See <https://candobetter.net/node/3105>, "Government must make Australian hospitals employ Australian grads – Nursing." An online discussion site called "[Nurse Uncut](http://www.nurseuncut.com.au)" (<http://www.nurseuncut.com.au/return-to-nursing-not-at-10000>) contains revealing accounts on these matters. I have also gained the impression that hospitals are teaming up with universities to import nurses on the understanding that they will enrol for higher degrees at

local universities, whilst employed. Does the public benefit, or is this really a credentialing bonanza for hospitals and universities. Local nurses must then compete by paying for more training at inflated prices, but with deflated employment opportunities.

Housing and Employment Deregulation and the Internet

Two further processes have helped to expand these trends:

- Deregulation of the Australian housing market to permit overseas purchase and investment
- The rise of the internet, which was exploited by state governments, private migration agents in conjunction with employers; universities seeking students; and property financiers, conveyancers, developers and real-estate agencies, to globalise Australian employment, public institutions, universities, and property.

We can see the symptoms of how this is impacting on communities rights to self-determination in changes to the way that the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal operates. Conceived as an affordable and simple way for citizens to represent themselves on issues of environment and planning, it has become more and more convoluted, expensive and dominated by professionals with increasing barriers to citizen participation in planning. This has been driven by legislation to enable the government program of mass immigration and the accompanying development expansion in Melbourne and Victorian towns.

“I would be disturbed if it were true that we had become a default state planning tribunal; if, for example, the power of amendment we have is being abused by developers such that they are not presenting their true case to council and are saving it for VCAT.” (Justice Kevin Bell August 2009.)

Here are some examples of complaints about VCAT’s increasing inaccessibility for ordinary people and bias towards developers, worsening in 2013: <https://candobetter.net/node/3394>, <https://candobetter.net/node/3169>, <https://candobetter.net/?q=node/3396>, <https://candobetter.net/node/3395>.

We are bringing enormous numbers of immigrants at a rapid rate into a country where the rights of citizens and residents are extremely poorly defined. This is a recipe for exploitation of native born and immigrant across the system.

Does Australia’s population have to keep growing?

The general excuse for Australia’s huge mass immigration program is that ‘we have to keep growing.’ Although we would grow without it for many years, the question needs addressing: Does Australia have to keep growing?

My response is that it is not a natural inbuilt requirement that populations constantly increase in size. Many developed and undeveloped countries and regions are not growing like Australia. Pacific islanders had stable populations for about 60,000 years. Although most industrialised countries ballooned with industrialization and access to cheap fossil fuel, many reset their population growth downwards after the game-changing 1973 oil shock. But

countries that inherited the British land-tenure and political system – the United States, Australia, Canada – did not reset; they borrowed to continue population growth and expansion. Secondly, there is no economic imperative to keep population growing, as is being done, via high immigration. Plenty of countries survive well with small stable populations.

So why is Australia's population projected to skyrocket? Unfortunately, the problem is that population increase is being engineered by sociological forces that are responding to focused benefits from the very things that cause suffering to the rest of us and damage the natural world. By this I mean that, via high immigration policies, powerful people in various business groups are successfully enacting pro-growth ideologies. All that the counter-growth movement is really asking is for the growth lobby to desist and allow our population to evolve naturally and democratically. We are not the population controllers; they are.

These pro-growth forces are highly organized, very determined, and very wealthy. They own and control most of the assets and resources, including the mass media and, arguably, large parts of Australia's parliaments. The rest of us are relatively disorganised and poor because of this political system which concentrates land, resources and power in fewer and fewer hands.

Some traditional avenues of resistance exist, although all are compromised in this system. One new one is present – **the Internet**. The traditional options are:

- power in public institutions and utilities;
- power of employment connections;
- power of family communication;
- power of local government;

Power in public institutions and utilities: Historically, even though our system placed much power in private hands, in the 19th and 20th centuries we built up public institutions that safeguarded citizens' rights to affordable water and food, electricity, housing, education, reliable employment, regulated banking.

Most of these public institutions that protected our rights have since been privatised and taken beyond our influence.

Power of employment connections: Unions once brought together workers with common cause to preserve financial and other easily identifiable benefits, but the supportive industrial relations and law institutions have largely been dismantled and Australian workforces are now dispersed and temporary.

Power of family communication: One of the problems of population growth and infrastructure expansion is that it means that planners constantly insert new people and groups and buildings and roads and activities among us, interfering with established human networks. Family communication is also an uphill battle with TV, Facebook, school, commuting to work, and if you are one of many isolated Australians going from one rental to the next, couch surfing or sleeping rough. Ironically, wealthy families and clans that stick together, like the Dennis Family Corporation, the Murdochs, the Packers and the Winsors, rule the world. As more Australians become unemployed and cannot afford housing, the upside is that they will default back to family, clan and locality and communicate with neighbours on issues of mutual convenience and grow food and trade at the same level.

Direct power at local level, accessed by well-networked families and clans together with neighbours is probably the most effective way to counteract the growth lobby on the ground and decisions by unrepresentative distant central governments. **Women** seem to lead most of the coordinated actions against overdevelopment and overpopulation in Melbourne, heading democratic planning groups, public land defence groups, ecological and wildlife protection groups, contributing to alternative media, attending parliament and organising demonstrations. They are our great strength. Their political engagement is under-reported in the mainstream media as you would expect.

Power of local government: Most people believe that immigration is entirely managed by the Federal Government, but it is at the level of local government that population control actually starts. Local Government traditionally controls building permits to control population numbers by limiting subdivisions and land clearing. This mechanism gave Australians direct control over the size of their communities. State governments in Australia have been removing this very important local government power over decades, with local government amalgamations, administrative control and laws reducing local power. Local power is the most direct and potentially useful form of democracy, more likely to unite people with a stake in the same bit of the real world.

State Government: In Australia the states have the power over land-use and water sources and the ability and responsibility to signal when infrastructure is close to capacity. They have largely taken over immigration policy decisions from the Federal government by calling themselves regions in need of migration and setting up websites and industries to market housing, business investment, and citizenship to prospective economic immigrants all over the world. All the states do this, but in Victoria the website is www.liveinvictoria.vic.gov.au. Obviously this website needs to come down.

The National Government makes decisions to support wars and sets policies for humanitarian and economic immigration. The public messaging system has erroneously convinced many people that most immigrants are 'refugees', using the issue as a wedge tactic to prevent people speaking out on numbers. At the same time, the media fails to critically examine the fact that many of our refugees and asylum seekers come from the places where we are engaged with NATO in what are arguably illegal resource wars. The Australian public is given no say in whether we support such wars.

The pro-growth forces control the mass media – that is, the public messaging system, which seems largely to control election choices and politicians' policies. The effect is that, although the majority of Australians do not want population growth or its impacts, their opinion is not clearly reported and they are not aware of each other. Most of the Australian media and much overseas media are owned by Packer, Fairfax and particularly the Murdoch corporations which have vested interests in massive population growth, most obviously in their property dot coms (realestate.com.au and domain.com.au), which sell Australian land and housing all over the world in a market that is enhanced by the promise of continuous population growth. CNN, the BBC, Al Jazeera, the ABC and SBS and generally all mainstream Anglophone press share biases and syndicate reports.

The Internet: So, how do we overcome a commercially compromised and unresponsive public messaging system that repetitively purveys this propaganda, making us believe it is both irresistible and true? By going around it and creating media that is far more relevant to most people, on the principle that real news is of real interest and that people, although

schooled to passively absorb anointed opinion, if they wake up, don't want to go to sleep again.

The **traditional media** relies a lot on distant authorities and events, which we cannot verify or affect. The **alternative media** can convey news from people on the ground, almost anywhere in the world.

The **traditional media** creates 'stars' and elevates as 'authorities' people who continually tell us that we must have growth. It is hard to get the attention of family, neighbours, colleagues and friends to our divergent point of view because they are conditioned to give more respect to mass media stars and opinions than to direct communication and experience.

The **alternative media** can identify our own real heroes and authorities – like the many women in Melbourne who head up groups to fight overpopulation and its impacts us. We can use the internet to do this, as many grass-roots organisations and BRICS countries now do.

The traditional media syndicates news and feature articles. We should do the same by republishing each other's work on our various websites, by reciprocal interviewing and by inviting each other to speak at events, thus raising our mutual profiles and amplifying our impact collectively. Whilst it is often helpful to get a 'mainstream' celebrity to speak at an event, try to put some of your own on the stage as well, so that they will become known in their own right. Present them as 'experts'. This is what the Property Council of Australia and APop do.

The *Candobetter.net* website, where I write and edit, promotes population activists and their activities where the mainstream press ignores them, preferring paid spokespeople from big business who tout growth. Our articles get thousands and tens of thousands of reads over time. One recent article got 12,000 reads in 3 weeks. We are actually a website for reform in democracy, environment, population, land use planning and energy policy.

Publishing on Candobetter.net is a lot surer than writing letters to the Editor at the Age, or the *Herald Sun*, or the *Australian* or the *Fin Review*. Try it some time.

Ideally *Candobetter.net* would like to be one of the alternative sites that together will replace the mainstream media middleman with more direct and diverse analysis and reports from the field.

Direct and Reliable sources of information

Instead of just reacting to mainstream disinformation, population writers and activists can access direct sources of information. Hansard is a superb direct source of politics, laws and news providing great speeches, hilarious examples and insights into our parties and politicians. Scientific sources include the CSIRO Futures program which produced the *Australian Resources Atlas project* and the report, *Future Dilemmas*. *The State of the Environment Report Australia 2011* is still a good guide, and is pessimistic about population impacts even though its population projections of 100,000 net migration vastly underestimate our current population trajectory. The *State of the environment reports [for]Victoria* are increasingly politicized, so that the conclusions of the 2010 one did not make sense in the light of its content. The most recent one, for 2014, lacks comparability with the 2010 one, which defeats an important objective of these reports. ABS projections are a very necessary

source of important information and part of public education. They rely, however, on past trends and on getting good information. They do not or cannot predict or allow for changes of policy or influence of lobby groups, except in general terms of higher or lower projections. [You Tube](#) is another direct source of information, and of course there are independent blogs and videos all over the web. As well as this, instead of just hearing the NATO line, try getting the other side from [RT \(Russia Today\)](#) which has great [interviews, documentaries, and news and war coverage](#). Some other well-known alternatives are [Press TV](#), [Global Research](#), [Voltaire](#) [Net](#), [PaulCraigRoberts.org](#), the [Land Destroyer Report](#) and the [Syrian Arab Newsagency \(SANA\)](#). If you speak another language you can search foreign *amazon* sites for books with different perspectives then order them without the usual publisher restrictions via [eBay](#).

Resource Depletion: Sustaining growth depends on fuel. For a while there it looked like people were beginning to wake up to the finitude of petroleum and the difficulty in replacing it, but recently there has been a desperate con-job called US shale oil independence. This petroleum energy renaissance can be shown to be a wild exaggeration and has been reported as such by Bloomberg in "Dream of US Oil independence slams against shale costs." <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-02-27/dream-of-u-s-oil-independence-slams-against-shale-costs.html>, which costs shale oil production at \$1.50 for every \$1.00 produced.[2]

It is really important for activists to get their heads around this because, if people believe that – first gas, now coal seam gas and shale oil – will keep business as usual, they will not resist unsustainable population growth as hard as they must.

Inadequate protection for wildlife and nature

Many of the first voluntary immigrants (as opposed to convicts and soldiers) to Australia were natural scientists, who came in awe to see Australia's fauna and flora and to understand the indigenous people. This scientifically based sense of wonder was later reinforced by Darwin's thesis, which caught the imagination of many in the population, especially during a lull in immigration that lasted from the 1890s depression until the mass immigration program following the Second World War. Unfortunately the gold rush brought masses of gold-seekers who cared little for these values and carried out immense destruction on the landscape, which we can see to this day in the impoverishment of certain soils and forests and regional climate change. Accompanying the gold rush was a rush of foreign investment and land speculation. Melbourne became the seat of a financial community of bankers and property speculators which spilled over into parliament and persists to this day.

Ordinary Australians have been fighting to preserve green spaces and our beautiful biodiverse natural environment ever since. Our major political parties and our media are highly penetrated (<https://candobetter.net/node/1781>;) by the land-speculation and financial lobby which seeks massive population and infrastructure expansion for its own narrow benefits, at great cost to the human community and to the other creatures we share our land with.

Victoria has no fauna management framework

Currently with land clearing for development, councils require 'offsets'. But offsets very rarely consider what happens to displaced wildlife, except for 'managing' it, which is a euphemism for conducting 'cull' or 'fertility' programs.

In a press release dated 7 December 2015, Maryland Wilson, Australian Wildlife Protection Council (AWPC) President, was shocked at the crudity and cynicism of a recent call to cull kangaroos ahead of development as the only option for roos displaced by Melbourne's expansion. ("Call for kangaroos to be culled along Melbourne's urban fringe," by Simon Lauder, ABC, 30 Nov 2015).

"There is another non-violent solution," she said. "It is a scandal that we have suffered through a succession of planning documents for Melbourne, without any allocating land for habitat with interconnecting continuous wildlife corridors that would enable safe passage for native animals. They have also failed to provide more than a tiny handful of animal bridges and underpasses at significant points on roads where wildlife often cross. Kangaroos, koalas, and other wildlife are increasingly road accident victims. As Melbourne expands to accommodate its human population growth program, suburban development pushes them out onto roads. This is planning negligence. "

AWPC says it has repeatedly engaged with councils in devising detailed plans for wildlife corridors. To date, however, no state government has cooperated with these plans, despite obligations to protect wildlife under the Fauna and Flora Guarantee Act.

"Instead, we have been repeatedly stone-walled. The result is the carnage Mr Temby suggests can only be avoided through culls. AWPC will be seeking a meeting with the Andrews State Government to negotiate for wildlife corridors instead of culling," said President Maryland Wilson.

Wildlife management consultant to the AWPC, Mr Thomson spoke of an imminent campaign to buy land on the Mornington Peninsula through crowd-funding. The aim is to create a private land reserve system for a wildlife corridor between national parks to sustain wildlife in the future. He says the matter is urgent as suburban development and a recent spate of farm-fencing are blocking the kangaroos' natural behaviour on the Peninsula. (<https://candobetter.net/node/4694>)

Victorian Auditor's reports have found the Victorian Government highly deficient over years and years in fulfilling its obligations under the Victorian Fauna and Flora Guarantee Act.

A condemnatory report by the Auditor General on the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 said "the government's lack of baseline data or output performance measures means that it is not possible to conclude whether or not the Act has achieved its primary objectives. The available data, which is patchy, indicates that it has not," and notes failure to use the conservation and control measures in the Act, inadequate listing of threatened species, failure to develop action statements, to monitor implementation of these, or to assess their effectiveness, and that penalties for offences under the Act have not been

reviewed or updated and therefore are not an effective deterrent." (Source: <https://candobetter.net/node/1748>)

Victoria does not have any reliable methods for estimating wildlife populations, but issues cull permits and development permits, without even asking about rabbit populations. This is particularly concerning in the case of kangaroos :

"The only formal kangaroo monitoring done in Victoria is that undertaken in certain parks by Parks Victoria.

DEPI does not have any figures on the numbers or distribution, other than in a broad sense, for kangaroo populations in Victoria and no surveys are undertaken.

One of the main reasons for kangaroo surveys being undertaken in other states is that such surveys are a requirement when participating in the commercial harvesting of kangaroos.

While Victoria has a trial currently running investigating the use of kangaroos carcasses resulting from authorised wildlife control activities, Victoria does not permit large-scale commercial use of kangaroos and therefore does not undertake population monitoring." (Statement from Mr Causon, Customer Service Centre, Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning.)

Furthermore, the department concerned with wildlife protection subscribes to exiguous definitions of 'endangered species', which fail to account for local disappearances until rarity is so extensive that rehabilitation is moot.

Ideological approach to fire management diminishes our capacity to accommodate humans or other species.

Victoria's inadequate and arguably fire-exacerbating bushfire management practices threaten to wipe out the capacity of reserves and forests to provide any habitat for wildlife or to provide buffers to climate change and the heat sinks. There is currently an ill-informed ideology that says that Victorian aboriginals regularly burned the landscape to a crisp. Traditional owners dispute this. See these relevant discussions: <https://candobetter.net/taxonomy/term/6718>

Why most opinion polls on immigration and population numbers are unreliable

Recent polls have given the public and politicians are given an extremely false impression that most people are in favour of high immigration and a bigger Australian population. These polls have been heavily and uncritically promoted by the mass media.

[Evaluating Surveys that find Australians want higher immigration and a bigger population](http://candobetter.net/node/4680)
<http://candobetter.net/node/4680>

What gives with surveys that tell us that most of us want more immigrants and a bigger population when, all around us, we suffer the effects of faster and faster population growth

in groaning infrastructure, costly housing, road congestion, and rising costs for power and water? If we examine such studies, we will find that they pose their questions in the abstract and do not prompt people to make concrete associations about the effects of immigration and population growth. This is a bit like asking people how they feel about war compared to asking how they feel about war in their suburb. These polls also focus on ethnicity of immigrants rather than environment and planning impacts of mass migration. This article looks at recent polls by the [Australian Institute of Progress](#), [Roy Morgan Research](#), the Australian Election Study and Queensland Growth Management Summit 2010, Social Research on Population Growth and Liveability in South East Queensland". The Queensland survey is the most detailed and valid and has been discussed in its own article, ["Poll shows most hate population growth: Lessons from Queensland in polling reliability and interpretation."](#)

This Queensland Survey demonstrates how superficial questioning about population growth as an abstract good or ill gives a completely different response from deeper, prompted questioning on the matter of experienced impact of population growth. Deeper questioning elicits a profound rejection of population growth and the colourful graphs reflect the real trends. We publish this analysis because of the counterintuitive results of two much publicised recent Victorian polls, by Roy Morgan and by the Australian Institute of Progress. Those poll results and methods are analysed in another article, ["Evaluating Surveys that find Australians want higher immigration and a bigger population."](#) (<http://candobetter.net/node/4678>)

Poll shows most hate population growth: Lessons from Queensland in polling reliability and interpretation

This Queensland Survey demonstrates how superficial questioning about population growth as an abstract good or ill gives a completely different response from deeper, prompted questioning on the matter of experienced impact of population growth. Deeper questioning elicits a profound rejection of population growth and the colourful graphs reflect the real trends. We publish this analysis because of the counterintuitive results of two much publicised recent Victorian polls, by Roy Morgan and by the Australian Institute of Progress. Those poll results and methods are analysed in another article, ["Evaluating Surveys that find Australians want higher immigration and a bigger population."](#). The author would like to thank M.R. for drawing her attention to the subject of this article and for some valuable discussions.

Effect of Long-Term Population Growth (Prompted) – 2
Liveability Statements



Prompted perception of impacts of population growth in South East Queensland, 2010 survey by Queensland Government

(For a larger image of the graphs, [click here](#).)

QUEENSLAND SURVEY ON POPULATION.

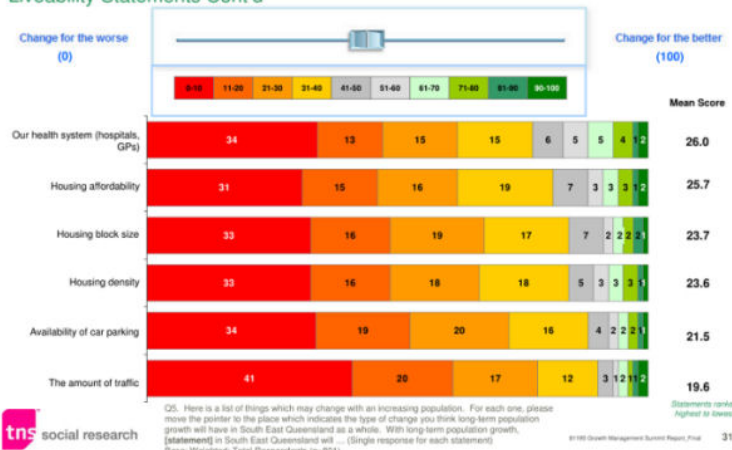
For the purposes of comparison, this Queensland Survey demonstrates how superficial questioning about population growth as an abstract good or ill gives a completely different response from deeper, prompted questioning on the matter of experienced impact of population growth. Deeper questioning elicits a profound rejection of population growth.

Effect of Long-Term Population Growth (Prompted) – 3
Liveability Statements Cont'd



The name of the survey was "Queensland Growth Management Summit 2010, Social Research on Population Growth and Liveability in South East Queensland", published March 2010^{iv}[4]. This survey had 801 respondents.

Effect of Long-Term Population Growth (Prompted) – 4
Liveability Statements Cont'd



The report did not make it clear to respondents that 50 per cent of Queensland's population growth was due to overseas immigrants and thus relatively discretionary. (See graph in endnotes).^v[5] Although immigration (overseas and interstate) were acknowledged as components of population growth, most respondents were probably not aware of how large this discretionary component was, especially the overseas part.^{vi}[6]

Effect of Long-Term Population Growth (Prompted) – 5
Prosperity Statements



This report never assessed the respondents for whether they had a job or position that benefited directly from population growth – such as in development, housing finance, conveyancing, real-estate, construction, building materials supply etc. It did, however, sub-categorise people according to whether they were inner-city or retired, for instance, providing some useful nuances to the opinions elicited.

What is the difference between abstract and personally relevant (prompted) questions?

An abstract question is one that has no context or direct relationship to the person, such as, ‘Is cheesecake delicious?’ A probed question about the impact of cheese cake on respondent such as, ‘Do you benefit from eating cheesecake?’ might elicit a quite different and more relevant response.

Population growth in the abstract

At the beginning the report presented responses to abstract questions on population growth and evaluated the total responses as only slightly more against population growth than for it, but close to 50:50. ^{vii}[7] This was misleading. On page 24 of the report there is a presentation of how people perceive benefits to population growth. The first lines are about ‘economic benefits’. This was one of few questions that permitted the surveyors to present the responses as fairly evenly divided, ^{viii}[5] although they exaggerated this division on page 24 as “Opinion about population growth in South East Queensland is polarised.” Although 27% said that there was nothing positive about population growth and didn’t want a higher population in SEQ, the report led with the less well represented idea that 25% of residents cited economic benefits, “particularly in terms of increased work opportunities/ a wider skills base and stimulation of the local economy as a result of competitive businesses and property prices (23%). In fact, of retirees who responded, there was a higher negative response of 37%.

(How to read the graphs: The information presented below is pictured as a levered graphic representing a bar graph on its side. Each ‘box’ is like the top of a bar graph and indicates one group of response.)

Prompted questions reveal most people actually hate population growth

The next series of graphs (2- 5) gives a dramatically different picture because it asks people to actually think about the effect that population growth would have on specific parts of their lives. It calls for thinking based on experience, rather than a guess at whether population growth [which the media promote as a natural and inevitable thing) might represent some abstract good or bad out there in government policy and economics-land.

The graphs are coloured with red as a profound protest or “No”. We can see that as the respondents consider the effects of population growth on their own ‘livability’ they are gripped by horror.

The first in the series of “prompted” responses to “liveability statements” is the least dramatic, but as the questions get ‘closer to home’ the reds and yellows predominate. By adding up all the red-orange-yellow boxes and the first grey one, which are all ‘negative’, the responses indicate that 84% of people actually realise that population growth is bad for

housing availability. When you go through this in detail, just adding things up, you get a more forcefully telling result of what peoples' attitudes to population growth are. You have 100% answering the question of which 84% realise it's bad for housing. The 2010 Queensland government wanted to find out how much population growth it could cram in, and, in its presentation of the report, failed to adequately acknowledge the very strong, actually overwhelming rejection of population growth on specific issues. By reporting a mean score the report obfuscated the extent of rejection, which any professional could not possibly have failed to notice. This choice not to give due weight in presenting the obvious and important cannot be accidental from professional pollsters and would fail a first year statistics report.

We are making the difference that when this report started off, 43% of responses suggested that population growth was good for the economy (a very abstract notion and a response typically preached in the mass media). But prompted questions later on revealed that 90% of respondents were against population growth and contradicted their initial superficial responses in rating population growth as an abstract value. When people were asked about effects on themselves you obtained more thoughtful responses, which concluded negative impact.

Some highlights of the Queensland report

Graph 4: In graph 4, 'housing affordability' runs at 90% 'change for the worse'. Traffic congestion runs even higher!

Graph 5: In graph 5, 'availability of jobs': 60% think that pop growth is bad for job availability. 'My own personal standard of living' gets a 64% negative response. When asked about 'cost of living', 78%, when prompted, say that population growth is bad for cost of living.

Graph 6: For this graph, the total negatives are:

Our electricity	supply	78%
Waste management		80%
Native plants and wildlife		76%
Our water supply		85%
Air quality		91%
Marine & waterway health		89%

Suitability for high density living graph: The NIMBY principle may be reflected here, giving an initial appearance of consent to high density. (See the green responses to high density in Brisbane inner city and around transport hubs.) People are less concerned if others have to suffer high density, but it that density is to happen in 'My suburb or area', 42% of people are saying 'absolutely not!' in bold red, and a total of 78% are negative to high density. The response is similarly negative towards high density for "Other Suburban areas".

This initial misleading appearance of consent has been exploited elsewhere, where a survey might use forced choice questions to provoke most people to choose densification in other suburbs rather than their own. You could either present this as most people approve of densification in all suburbs or as most people don't approve of densification in their own suburb. To decide the truth of the matter you would need to see whether people were given a choice of selecting no new densification anywhere vs densification anywhere or everywhere. Has this Queensland Survey been similarly abused? We don't know.

Population-inflated cost of land, power & resources drives up wages and business costs



INFLATION: The growth lobby involves big business, which benefits from the high land prices because it owns much of the land, the finance, the power and other resources. Population growth can be good for big corporations; not so good for small to medium-size business and individuals.

The current economic ideology that population growth creates wealth is very flawed. Although some focused beneficiaries of growth exist (owners of land and vital resources), most people pay a diffuse but heavy cost. (See Chapter 5 of *The Growth Lobby and its Absence* <http://researchbank.swinburne.edu.au/vital/access/manager/Repository/swin:7395>.)

Population growth causes inflation (rise in prices due to demand) in land costs (housing, offices, warehouses, factories), power and other resources, notably water and food.

These rising costs diminish profit margins and international competitiveness.

They make it ever less possible for Australia to recuperate the thriving manufacturing and agricultural economy that once underpinned it.

They lead to political conflict between wage earners and employers as the only part of the equation that can be squeezed is the human element (to paraphrase Marx). That is, the income of the employee, or the small to medium business owner.

Wage competition through cheap imported labour and business migrants in a deregulated environment is used to further squeeze incomes of employees and small business, with only corporations invested in land and resources winning in the short term.

The carnage among small business in Australia is legendary. The unemployment that results is horrendous. The collapse of social networks is shocking. A substantial proportion of our citizens and immigrants have to resort to the criminal economy of prostitution, drugs, and theft in order to survive. We see the signs of this in the growth of amphetamines abuse, the hallmark of failed states. We are becoming like a failed state without the war.

Some other population-growth related substantial costs to doing business in Australia include the impact of road congestion on commuting and deliveries. The RACV runs questionnaires on this matter.

For instance, it found that in Perth, businesses listed **increased fuel consumption** (95%), increased time spent on roads (97%), **loss of productivity** (78%) and **reduction in staff punctuality** (68%) as the key impacts on their **bottom line**, including increased vehicle running costs (maintenance etc) and breakdowns.

There were also **delays getting to and from customers, more frustration and stress on drivers.**

Almost 70% of businesses reported that **staff punctuality** had suffered, **stress levels** increased, resulting in **more sick leave**, staff fatigue and lower motivation. Increase in **traffic crashes**, potentially flowing from fatigue and stress. Increased reports of **road rage.**

Over one third of respondents believed existing work contracts lost through problems of traffic congestion. Clients don't understand that times can't be given accurately. 53% had to turn down new work.

There was a tendency to avoid delivering to certain areas because traffic is too slow. "Toll roads and user charging ... increase the cost of transport thus increasing the price of goods in the most expensive city in Australia."

Increased traffic and economic activity bring about increased regulation in order to manage it. People now face huge fines for illegal parking and speed infringements that were not a feature of our society when our population was smaller.

Australia's population trajectories much worse than acknowledge

Much of our population growth takes place in cities and large towns. On the current trajectory Melbourne would be 8+ million by 2050- just 34 years away. And it is irresponsible to represent the issue as having any chance of stopping there. But that is what governments, planners and the growth lobby do all the time. Community groups in Melbourne represented this problem by coming together to create a *Sustainable Population Charter*. We could be looking at about 20 million for Melbourne by end of century. (See the *Sustainable Population Charter* below) On any terms this is a shocking objective. It is disgraceful that any government would deliberately

engineer this. It means ongoing vandalism of the city, the environment, social capital and democracy. The fact that this growthist policy is bipartisan simply raises the problems we have with democracy in this government and the overtaking of political parties and the media by elites with vested interests in population growth. And the only way we can mitigate this misspent power is by strengthening the rights of Australian citizens.

I attach the Sustainable Population Charter, which is one of many ongoing attempts by citizens to reign in successive Victorian governments' population growth engineering programs.

Sustainable Population Charter 2013

October 2013

We, the undersigned, agree with the majority of Australians who do not want a 'Big Australia'.

Environmental degradation and loss of amenity in our urban and regional areas affects us all. Our cities and suburbs are being transformed from low to medium to high density living. Regional towns, green wedges, productive farmland and wildlife habitats are all under threat from the relentless expansion of residential development into once rural surroundings, threatening food security, increasing our dependence on imported foodstuffs and consequently increasing food miles and greenhouse gas emissions.

The Victorian State of the Environment Report (2008)¹ reveals that population growth and human activity have had ongoing detrimental effects on soils, coastal areas, marine and river systems, climate and biodiversity. The report demonstrates that Victoria has reached the limit of its capacity to support human populations without irreversible environmental destruction.

The most liveable cities in the world generally have smaller and relatively stable populations (eg: Zurich, 390,000, Copenhagen, 559,440 San Francisco, 815,000) whilst some of the least liveable have high population numbers and densities (eg: Jakarta 26 million, Karachi 21.2 million, Tehran 12.22 million).

Australia's population growth is comparable to many third world nations and is growing faster than most other developed nations. Our large cities are choking with traffic gridlock, our suburbs and parks are being blighted by toll roads and freeways.

Melbourne's population has increased from 1.8 million in 1960 to over 4.2 million in 2013. Based on ABS data released in September 2013, and the present growth rate of 1.8% per annum; by 2030, Melbourne's population would be nearly 5.8 million; by 2040, 6.9 million; by 2050, 8.2 million; and by 2100 just over 20 million. Maintaining the same growth rate, the millions are added at ever shorter intervals. What a bleak legacy we are leaving for future generations!

Already, spending on essential services is failing to keep pace with the additional 100,000 persons per annum in Victoria; 80,000 of whom are in greater Melbourne.

¹ <http://www.ces.vic.gov.au/victorias-environment/state-of-environment-victoria-2008>

Across the state, the additional infrastructure costs of services – hospitals, schools, rail, roads, water and power are estimated at around \$200,000 per additional person².

It is clear that ever expanding population degrades our environment and our quality of life. Poverty and homelessness in Australia are rising, especially in areas where population growth is most rapid.³ Academic evidence confirms that population growth does not mean greater prosperity⁴ and is no panacea for an ageing population, as migrants also age.

Renowned scientists such as Sir David Attenborough, Dr. David Suzuki, Professor Tim Flannery and Professor Ian Lowe warn that population growth is threatening our existence on Earth. Perpetual growth on a finite planet defies the laws of physics and nature, but in the face of such evidence, myopic governments and developers still mistakenly claim that to prosper, Australia must have continual economic and population growth. They say population growth is inevitable, but we, who want to stabilise population know that it can and should be done.

To address growing social inequality and preserve our environmental assets, we must adopt an economic model which does not rely on population growth as a major driver and we must stabilise our population. We can do this whilst maintaining a compassionate policy towards refugees and meeting our other international obligations.

We support the following population policy points broadly based on Federal MP Kelvin Thomson's 14 point plan.⁵

- Hold the overseas net migration program at 70,000 per annum, including family reunion.
- Require New Zealanders to apply to migrate to Australia or to apply under a temporary migration category.
- Maintain the refugee intake at 20,000 per annum and alter the criteria to include genuine climate refugees.
- Reduce temporary migration to Australia by restricting sub-class 457 temporary entry visas to jobs where no local qualified worker is available and applicants are not needed in their own country.
- Require overseas students to return to their country of origin to complete a two-year cooling off period before being eligible to apply for permanent residency.
- Dedicate the savings from the former Baby Bonus and reduced expenditure on Family Payments for third and subsequent children towards increased investment in vocational education and training through Universities and TAFEs.

Acknowledging the need for consensus on this critically important issue, we call on government, at the earliest possible opportunity, to conduct a referendum to

² Dr. Jane O' Sullivan UQ <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=10137&page=0>

³ 'Affluence and homelessness go hand in hand: Rapid population growth brings with it rise in Homelessness' ABC Regional News 8th July 2013

⁴ Economic Impacts of Migration and Population Growth. Productivity Commission Research Report 24 April 2006 http://www.pc.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/9438/migrationandpopulation.pdf

⁵ See: Federal member for Wills Kelvin Thomson's 14 point plan to stabilise Australia's population at 26 million without diminishing our humanitarian and other international obligations at <http://www.kelvinthomson.com.au/page/population-debate/default.asp>

gauge Australians' support for development of a population policy aimed at stabilising our population.

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Hon. Kelvin Thomson M.P.
President
Victoria First Inc.

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As well as the *Sustainable Population Charter*, there are many other examples of how Victorians are trying to push back against undemocratic and state engineered population growth.

My documentation of this activism is too voluminous to include here but much of it is to be found at this URL: <https://candobetter.net/taxonomy/term/5439>

Mass immigration ages Australia's population

The Draft Migrant Intake Report incorrectly states:

***“By attracting people of working age, the current system delivers a demographic dividend to Australia. By increasing the proportion of people in the workforce, immigration reduces the impacts of population ageing, but does not offer a panacea.”
(Overview, Draft Report, Key Points, p. 2.)***

No, mass migration ages the population. This is because migrants are always older than newborns, and usually considerably older. Refer to FECCA Report. “Immigration speeds up Australia's rate of aging - FECCA” <https://candobetter.net/?q=node/3295>

Improving settlement services

Improving the effectiveness of settlement services, especially for humanitarian immigrants. (Overview, Draft Report, Key Points, p. 2.)

Whitlam introduced a superb suite of settlement services for immigrants, including English classes, at the same time as he reduced our economic dependency on immigration and sought to safeguard public housing, promote adult education and free universities. Unfortunately we have gone a long way in the opposite direction and immigrants are frequently left without any support. The privatisation of universities with their gross dependence on fees from immigrant students and investment for profit in student housing, in our savage economic and social environment is a cynical example of exploiting young people for profit. This is a recipe for disaster and it is another example of how private lobbies seem to have influenced the government to exploit and neglect newcomers.

Acquiring a better understanding of the labour market impacts of temporary migration programs, and improving the targeting of 457 visas to areas of genuine skill shortages; investing in cost-effective measures to mitigate the risks of exploitation faced by migrant workers and to better enforce regulation. (Overview, Draft Report, Key Points, p. 2.))

In the Draft report key points, it is suggested that we should allow huge flows of temporary migration and 457 visas to continue while we dither about understanding the impact they are having. The precautionary approach would suggest we stop those flows or greatly reduce them.

Emphasis on cost-effective measures sounds like band-aid treatment to me. Mass immigration, as in any population-engineering on a grand scale, entails huge costs in its management. And mismanagement costs the people of Australia and the incoming new Australians and temporary immigrants. These are costs that can only be mitigated effectively by drastically slowing down the stream of immigration. If there is any question – and there is – of poor enforcement of regulation, that means the program is out of control. We are shooting well beyond our capacity.

Abolishing the investor visa streams (Overview, Draft Report, Key Points, p. 2.)

Unfortunately I have not had the time to read this part but I do know that there have been terrible abuses by big shopping complexes in bringing business migrants out at huge charges to those migrants by the complexes, then raising their shop rents and forcing them out so that more 'cash cows' can be imported. This is appalling. (My source is a small business organisation plus an interview I filmed with an immigrant dress-shop owner who had, over the years, been gauged as well as annually moved into worse and worse premises in a big shopping complex in Dandenong. It seemed that this business family had no rights and suffered when it protested.)

Investing in data collection, integration and dissemination to support evidence-based policy.” (Overview, Draft Report, Key Points, p. 2.)

On the face of this, this seems like good policy, but as long as you have a huge program, it is unlikely to be possible. Furthermore, we risk perpetuating the costly industry both public and private that has grown up around this cash-cow of mass migration, so that it will continue to be beyond any effective management. The only way to reduce the cost and toll of this human capital trafficking is to reduce the size of the flow.

People trafficking – Cash for immigrants

Despite the spin our governments like to put on mass immigration, this industry is a very murky one. The White Australia policy was an attempt to stop the importation of slaves to Australia because Australians did not want to see the same problems that the slave trade had caused America or to compete with immigrants from poor colonies who might be exploited for lower wages. So they obtained a cessation of ‘blackbirding’ in exchange for input into industrial rights and protection for local industry. Whilst it should not matter where our immigrants come from today, let alone their colour or creed, without the protection of local industry and industrial rights and conditions, there is a renewed opportunity for gross exploitation of immigrants and citizens, with slavery among these abuses.

There have been many other more recent abuses than the ones the Colonial Sugar Company carried out on Kanaks. These have included the importation of child migrants over many years with the participation and connivance of the Catholic Church and governments in several countries including Australia. (See Margaret Humphreys, *Oranges and Sunshine: Empty Cradles*, 2011.

Apparently we also have a serious problem of the importation of slaves to the sex industry in Australia.

Only by keeping the volume of immigration manageable and a good suite of citizens’ and immigrants’ rights do we have a hope of keeping these inherent problems of mass migration to a minimum. But if we continue to have the massive volume of immigrants – planned invited economic ones and temporary flow amounting to many more – in a harsh economic and social environment where profit trumps everything – then the future of our society is dim.

Refugees and Asylum seekers:

Many of our refugees come from countries where we are either supporting or engaged in illegal or questionable resource wars. If we stopped engaging in these heinous wars for someone’s profit, the flow of refugees and people whose economic options have been destroyed by bombs and foreign intervention would greatly reduce.

I do not approve of inflicting asylum-seeker populations on poor countries which have themselves been disorganised by war, colonisation and industrial exploitation – Cambodia, Papua New Guinea and Nauru.

We should be able to manage the number of refugees we are currently taking, but the utter lack of careful settlement process, English lessons, cultural orientation, and the shortage of housing, the huge cost of living for everyone in this country means that we are not managing this well either.

As a country that participates in the destabilisation of other states, does our stance signal to applicants that we prefer refugees who work against those political states?

.....

I apologise for any errors of presentation in this submission; it has been done in haste, which is all that a very busy schedule allowed me.

I hope Australia benefits from your findings.

SHEILA NEWMAN

<http://candobetter.net/node/1882>

NOTES

ⁱ <http://researchbank.swinburne.edu.au/vital/access/manager/Repository/swin:7395>
2002 Research thesis in environmental sociology: *The growth lobby and its absence : the relationship between the property development and housing industries and immigration policy in Australia and France : 1945-2000 with projections to 2050*

Author(s)

[Newman, Sheila](#)

Abstract

This thesis compares population policy and demographic outcomes in France and Australia from 1945 taking into consideration projections to 2050. These features are analysed using a theoretical approach derived from James Q. Wilson and Gary Freeman, flagging focused benefits/costs and diffuse benefits/costs of population growth, including growth fueled by immigration. This analysis is framed by the New Ecological Paradigm developed by Dunlap and Catton. The oil shock of 1973 is identified as a major turning point where French and Australian policy directions and demographic trends diverge, notably on immigration. It is established that in both countries there was a will for population stabilisation and energy conservation, which succeeded in France. In Australia, however, a strong, organised growth lobby overrode this Malthusian tendency. A major force for growth lay in the speculative

property development and housing industries. The specific qualities of the Australian land development planning and housing system facilitated land speculation. Speculative opportunity and profits were increased by population growth and, with decreasing fertility rates, the industries concerned relied increasingly on high immigration rates. In France, to the contrary, the land development planning and housing industries had no similar dependency on immigration and, since the oil shock, have adapted to a declining population growth rate. The author concludes that France has a relatively Malthusian economy and that Australia has a relatively Cornucopian one. These observations may be extrapolated respectively to non-English speaking Western European States and to English Speaking Settler States. Speculative benefits from population growth/immigration are illustrated by demonstrating a relationship between ratcheting property price inflation in high overseas immigration cities in Australia and the near absence of this inflation in low growth areas. In contrast this ratcheting effect is absent in France and French cities where population growth and immigration have little influence on the property market. The research suggests that speculative benefits of high population growth have been magnified by globalisation of the property market and that these rising stakes are likely to increase the difficulty of population stabilisation and energy conservation under the Australian land development and planning system. The thesis contains a substantial appendix analysing and comparing French and Australian demographic and energy use statistics.

ⁱⁱ <https://candobetter.net/node/4612>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WorkChoices>: "Relying on the corporations power of Section 51(xx) of the Constitution, the Howard Government extended the coverage of the federal industrial relations system to an estimated 85% of Australian employees. All employees of "constitutional corporations" (i.e. trading, financial, and foreign corporations) became covered by the WorkChoices system. Other constitutional powers used by the Federal Government to extend the scope of the legislation included the territories power to cover the Australian territories, including the external territories of the Christmas and Cocos Islands, the external affairs power, the interstate and overseas trade and commerce power, and the powers of the Commonwealth to legislate for its own employees. Victoria voluntarily had referred its industrial relations powers to the Commonwealth in 1996, under Section 51(xxxvii) of the Constitution."

^{iv} [4] Accessible at

<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Documents/TableOffice/TabledPapers/2010/5310T1926.pdf>

^v [5] Queensland Population Growth Components Graph:

^{vi} [6] This is how the matter was put to the respondents: "Queensland has the second fastest growing population in Australia and around 2000 people move to Queensland every week. Current forecasts predict Queensland's population of 4 million could double to 8 million in less than 50 years. Much of this growth is projected to occur in South East Queensland. Growth in the population comes through overseas and interstate migration as well as natural increase." (p.22.)

^{vii} [7] The report described the total responses to abstract questions on population growth as "slightly more against population growth than for it, but close to 50:50." There was an attempt to put a decent gloss on things: "Overall, the weight of opinion about population growth effect on SEQ (South East Queensland) is slightly unfavourable." (Mean rating of 47.4 out of 100, where zero is 'terrible for SEQ' and 100 is 'great for SEQ'.") (p.21) However subsequent questioning showed most people strongly disliked population growth

^{viii} [8] Responses to unprompted questions on negative and positive aspects of population growth: