

Individual Submission to the Productivity Commission's Migrant Intake into Australia – in a nutshell.

The principal settlement elements under consideration for the people import business include those people who are to be permanently settled, whether through the skilled migration program or family connectivity, those passing through the temporary migration program, and refugee intake quotas.

For a number of reasons, real or imagined, it is my opinion that the Productivity Commission (henceforth “the Commission”) has already determined the crude levels of immigration it intends to recommend to the minister. These will merely be tweaked, by a few percentage points here or there from the status quo, possibly somewhat influenced by this exercise in public consultation inviting concerned citizens, groups and organisations to present a submission to its enquiry.

I also consider that these already predetermined levels are broadly on par with current government immigration policy. And that after due diligence and examination of the public's submissions, the conclusions will unsurprisingly be as they have already been determined!

The reason I contend the Commission's recommendations will align with Government policy is because Government policy has very nearly a perfect tripartite agreement (alignment of Coalition, Labour and Green party policies), and therefore it could be considered inappropriate and largely futile to recommend anything different. Currently there is no population policy for Australia other than to ‘bring ‘em in’ as fast as acceptably possible, for which there is consensus between the troika of the political parties already mentioned.

Furthermore approx. 25% of the Commission's Draft Report is dedicated to a Price-Based system which implies the development and inclusion of this concept into our immigration strategy is likely to be already well advanced, and likely to be developed beyond the existent system of the small number of wealthy immigrants who pay their way into the country. In time such a system may be seen as quite a legitimate means for the government to raise revenue. I do not wish to delve into the morality of such a system because it detracts and distracts from my main concern which relates to immigration numbers being currently unsustainable.

The call for public submissions is an exercise, as so many of these public inquiries are, at presenting to the media and the public, the correct process of due diligence in order to feign a semblance of democracy; but with predetermined outcomes, this is merely a costly facade.

So what does an individual outlier like me expect the Commission's end-point recommendations will look like?

I'll tell you:

- Refugee intake increased from until quite recently, 12-13000 pa, to perhaps 25-30,000 pa.
We need to show the global community we're doing our bit for displaced Syrians etc.
- Skilled and family reunion numbers to stay broadly unchanged at say 200,000 pa or so.
- Temporary immigration visas to stay broadly unchanged to maintain tourism, international student education income and fill the hole for seasonal workers as needed. A number of these subsequently achieve permanent status both legally and illegally.
- The trial introduction of a price-based system.
- No significant change to the free interchange of citizenry between Australia and New Zealand.

Overall, after this brain-storming exercise, I anticipate not much change in the immigration program will be recommended because the conclusion will be that we need to maintain, or slightly increase our immigration, and therefore population, in order to mitigate the burden of an ageing population, and to keep the economy growing for the benefit of all.

What **should** be happening?

I'll tell you:

The global community is currently living unsustainably on this planet that supports and nourishes us. This statement is irrefutable and doesn't need further substantiation because there is a very large body of scientific evidence supporting the statement, and besides, almost everyone who thinks about these things intuitively knows it's true. We have breached some planetary boundaries already, and are rapidly approaching the limits of others. (That we have breached even one boundary tells us how unsustainably we humans are living, and indicates we're in dire trouble already).

Resources are becoming degraded and depleted, whether they are forests (timber, soil and oxygen), water, oceans (fish, oxygen, carbon dioxide sink, acid buffering), phosphates, oil, etc. **Climate change is actually upon us** because of rising carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas pollutants. **Climate change is upon us**, and is destined to make most aspects of living comfortably in this country more difficult. Do we really want to add to this burden, by importing more and more people?

We in Australia are now living unsustainably, and on such a large continent with a comparatively extremely low population density, a phrase such as this might seem ludicrous. But it's not. This statement is harder to substantiate than the global scale statement but it can be, and I refer you to AOTY, Tim Flannery's writings for a start.

We are living unsustainably because we over-consume **and** there are too many of us. Some people would say the first factor (overconsumption) is true, and is the only relevant factor, and the overpopulation factor is balderdash, poppycock and rubbish!

I'm not now going to try to substantiate the overpopulation contention, because eyes glaze and attention fades. The dreaming as to how the economy can be supported by bringing evermore people into the country as fast as is politically and socially acceptable, as the panacea to a flailing GDP, dominates all immigration policy decision-making.

But in truth it is likely that our growth rate is actually the cause of increasing social unrest, economic degradation, environmental decay and the massive species extinction rate that naturalists (who ever listens to them!) keep telling us about.

So the Commission's recommendations in my opinion should be as follows:

- Increase our refugee intake as is likely to be recommended.
- Reduce our permanent immigrant intake over the next 5 years incrementally but in planned and fair-sized aliquots, to a level in which the people flux is neutral i.e., the combined birth rate and immigration balance our emigration and death rate (Such a neutral flux currently would require an intake of about 70,000 pa).
- Maintain a steady state national population of approx. 25 million for at least 10 years, and observe the outcome, before tinkering again.
- Regulate the free-exchange of New Zealanders to perhaps 2nd or subsequent generation New Zealanders, such that New Zealand is not merely used as a conduit for immigrants to that country to get into this country.
- I have no opinion on the status of the issuance of temporary visas, other than to ensure they are just that, and that the returning of visa holders to their own country is enforced.

This strategy would allow time for the economy and infrastructure requirements to stabilise. More importantly I believe it would allow current "new Australians" to settle into the country and assimilate more completely than if ever-larger cultural ghettos are created whose occupants then fail or are slow to assimilate into the broader Australian multicultural society. It would also enable stabilisation and possibly some rehabilitation of our degraded environment.

Furthermore, we have a moral obligation to consider and care for our own indigenous people, and expanding the population of this country at the current rate of 1 million every 3 and a bit years only further alienates them and possibly exacerbates their 3rd world living standards. We have shamefully disrupted, corrupted and degraded their lifestyle to barely a shell of their once proud culture. We owe them the respect of not disrupting their culture further.

But alas, my and similar opinions won't make an iota of difference, because the die is cast, and the economy and our "defence" capability seemingly well and truly trump inevitable collapse of the environment as we continue with our current growth strategy. I sense future liveability for our children, yes, CHILDREN (! It's that close) and grandchildren, is certainly not the primary concern here, when of course it should be paramount.

In conclusion, there is no such thing as "sustainable growth" (even if one considers decelerating growth and negative growth as sustainable, which they're not), because that term implies endless growth which is mathematically impossible within the confines of the earth's finite resources. Perpetual growth, as implied by the statement "sustainable growth", is unsustainable.

So growth caps, immigration caps and population caps need to be made, and those caps need to incorporate the idea of decelerated growth and ideally even negative growth for a while, with recommended maximum limits on the population of this country, along with projections as to by when that needs to occur. We have already surpassed the Australian Academy of Science's considered cap of 23 million. Why is their opinion unheeded? What erudite school of learning invalidated the best scientific opinion in the country?

Immigration to this country needs to be dramatically slowed for the benefit of most of the community. We will never be able to accommodate all those people who wish to come here. And if we try, or indeed just continue down the trajectory we're currently on, we'll soon end up with the same disastrous conditions as exist in most of the countries from which they came.

That's it in a nutshell.

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(References available)