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Migrant Intake into Australia

Productivity Commission

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Submission to Productivity Commission

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the migrant intake to Australia. As a concerned conservationist, I have made several submissions over the past 20+ years on the sustainable population level for Australia.

In 1992, all levels of Australian Government signed the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment, pledging to implement policies in keeping with ecologically sustainable development principles. We have also signed the International Agreement to protect Australia's biodiversity, the only developed country in the top 12 biodiverse countries in the world. We were also party to the 1994 U.N. Conference on Population and Development where nearly 200 countries agreed that we must stop population growth through a program consisting of increased overseas aid to family planning, education for women and girls and health care for mothers and babies.

Since that time, we have not honoured our commitments, continued to destroy Australia's biodiversity and ignored the principles of ESD in favour of unlimited growth in human population and consumption.

Our immigration numbers continue to soar despite the fact that Australians themselves have decided to stabilise our population with a relatively low birth rate. (There is however still growth in population due to natural increase because we are living longer and we have a large number of citizens of child-bearing age.)

Australia is one of only three immigration-seeking countries in the world and I believe that it is a mistake to continue to grow our population at the expense of our environment, our economy and our social fabric. It makes sense to stabilise our population, become sustainable and help other countries to do the same.

Environment

Australia is a country of very low human carrying capacity - mostly desert with little arable land, thin, nutrient-deficient soils, and low, erratic rainfall - and has very high and unique biodiversity, which we've promised the world we would protect. Further, our communities, both human and otherwise, are very likely to be impacted by climate change with coastal flooding and inland drought forcing major migrations to whatever land is currently uninhabited and liveable - that is, land currently inhabited by other species.

It should not be our goal to increase our population beyond the human carrying capacity of this ancient continent, which the Australian Academy of Sciences estimated to be a maximum of 23 million. For more about the fragility of the Australian landscape, please see CSIRO documents,

statements by the Australian Academy of Sciences and the following books by Mark O'Connor, *This Tired Brown Land* (1998) and, more recently, *Overloading Australia* (2008, co-written by William J. Lines).

Economy

Continued growth in a finite world is both undesirable and impossible. Continuing to grow our population at the expense of the environment and without regard for the increased costs to our economy (such as: extra infrastructure, including affordable housing, schools, hospitals, roads, etc., to accommodate this growth; increased joblessness and the associated welfare system; and, the health impacts of a degraded environment) is just false economics.

Importing more people to counter an aging population does not make sense – firstly, the immigrants themselves will age; and secondly, the cost of supporting the increased number of children of the immigrants will outweigh the costs of an ageing society.

A higher GDP spread amongst more people results in a lower quality of life. Australia needs to adopt an economic system based on a steady state. See <http://steadystate.org/>

Society

While I have mostly supported zero net immigration in the past, which would mean approximately 70,000 immigrants per year to counter that number of emigrants, I favoured the majority of these being genuine refugees, that is, people fleeing countries where they are threatened. However, I now feel that Australia can do much more to help more refugees by settling them temporarily near their country of origin where they can return to their home country when normalcy returns.

I am particularly concerned about immigration of people who have already overpopulated their own countries to the point of chaos and conflict demanding open access to our already overpopulated country. Further, it is my understanding that a basic tenet of Islam, the faith of many of these war-torn countries, is the establishment of an Islamic caliphate - whether that be done by violence and terrorism or by emigration or invasion. Under this philosophy, there appears to be no respect for freedom of religion, the rights of women or 'unbelievers', separation of church and state, or secular laws.

I object to the immigration of people who do not share our values and ideals and who will not submit to secular laws and I support the vetting of all immigrants, whether they be business, family reunion, skilled workers or refugees, for their commitment to upholding the values of our free society and integrating fully.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I recommend that in a grossly overpopulated world of nearly 7.5 billion people, heading to 9 billion or more by 2040, Australia sets an example to the rest of the world and stabilises its own population size, contributes to the stabilisation of other countries, and seeks to lower our impacts on our natural environment and life support systems by adopting a new earth-centric model of economic activity, which is not dependent upon growth of population or consumption.