

Barcom Glen
Rydal Road
Hampton NSW 2790

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ESD Inquiry
Productivity Commission
LB 2 Collins Street East
Melbourne Vic 8003

FAX 03 9653 2305

Dear Dr. Byron,

Congratulations on your ESD Inquiry and together many government initiatives aimed at environmental protection and will be a valuable reference point for many years.

It is gratifying to note that many Federal Departments have given much thought to the relevance of ESD, but there is an outstanding exception -- the Department of Immigration (DIMA). Page 11 of the Draft Report quotes submission 39 as saying that while population increase may have implications for ESD, this does not matter because other factors are also important.

DIMA's position is outrageous. Every individual and every organisation in Australia could evade their responsibilities by noting that others are also responsible. DIMA has long used dubious arguments to avoid acknowledging the environmental impact of their activities, and pointing the finger elsewhere is one of those arguments.

Australia is a wealthy country and each of her citizens has an "ecological footprint" of five to ten hectares of productive land. Various means can be used to reduce this footprint but eventually standard of living will suffer and further reduction will not be achieved voluntarily. For future generations to live as well as we do now it is necessary that the size of our population does not exceed sustainable limits. Your Draft Report notes some of the many publications which describe the environmental degradation this continent already suffers and any organisation, such as DIMA which seeks deliberately to increase our population, is acting in direct opposition to ESD. It is hardly surprising that DIMA avoided returning your original Questionnaire.

Perhaps the Report can be slightly modified to draw attention to those agencies which are evading their responsibilities regarding ESD.

Thank you again for an excellent Report.

Yours sincerely,

Jill Curnow