

22 September 2005

Ms Carole Gardner
Migration and Population Study Locked Bag 2
Collins Street East Melbourne 8003

Dear Ms Gardner,

Thank you for your letter of 12 September. Having received the Issues Paper only a few days before the deadline, my submission is brief.

Submission on Term of Reference 5, "other impediments" to productivity gains; and Reference 6 "economic growth more broadly".

1. The Terms of Reference appear deliberately to avoid the most important issues facing productivity in this country
2. The only mention in the Terms of Reference of those issues that will have most impact on productivity, the economy and quality of life is Term 5, where "other impediments" are mentioned, and Term 6 "economic growth more broadly"..
3. "The environment" is not a place inhabited only by cute and cuddlies. It is the place where Australians live and our quality of life and economy ultimately depend on it. All Australian "State of the Environment" reports draw attention to continued environmental degradation. We protect ourselves for the moment because large quantities of fossil fuel allow us to avoid the impact of local degradation. This process has its limits (as has been seen in the southern states of the US recently).

Water shortages, soil loss, climate change and other environmental factors will affect productivity and the economy in ways we cannot control. The size of our pie will shrink, **and the more** of us there are the smaller will be the slice available.

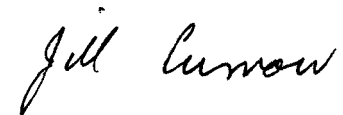
4. Australians live well, and our productivity is high, because we have one of the largest per capita energy consumptions in the world. We no longer dig, lift, or carry with our own energy, we have fossil fuel powered machines to do it for us. One man now does work that formerly required ten. The first signs of *fossil fuel* depletion are already with us and our productivity will decline as energy supplies become expensive and limited. There is a flood of electronic and hard copy publications on topics such as "Peak Oil".

5. Continued population increase can only make Australians more vulnerable as the inevitable productivity declines occur.

6. The "Issues Paper" on page 15 asks "*Is there evidence that a larger population promotes productivity and economic growth?*" I find it shameful that the Australian government should even ask *that* question. So many small countries with stable population size have excellent productivity *and* quality of life (eg Finland *and* Switzerland). Many large, growing nations are basket cases (eg in Africa).

Thank you for the opportunity to send a submission.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jill Curnow". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill Curnow