

# STOP POPULATION GROWTH NOW

**Stop Population Growth Now Newsletter  
November 2012**

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## Welcome

Welcome to those members that have joined since our last newsletter.

## Our Public Profile

A member has telephoned me (Convenor) concerned that we do not seem to get attention in the press or the media in general. I seem to remember his words were “despite your fantastic position on the population issue, a position which many, many Australians would very strongly support, no one knows about you”.

This is fair comment. Apart from several letters that I have sent to the Advertiser, that they have kindly published over my title and our party name, and a few radio interviews I have done, we have not managed to get much media attention.

Unfortunately, to get attention costs money. We would dearly like to do some billboard advertising, modernise our website, and greatly expand our recruitment flyer distribution. However, we simply do not have the funds to do so. Ordinary members fees and donations do not bring in much money (they are nevertheless much appreciated).

Therefore, please remember we can always productively use donations . I can assure you they will be well spent. Note that SPGN is run completely by volunteers, and no payments are made to members or committee.

## Annual General Meeting

This was held on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> July ., and was chaired by Dr John Coulter. Sixteen members attended.

The following items may be of interest to readers:-

1. J Tons, J Coulter, and R Couch were re elected to the Management Committee.

2. The Convenor reported that the main emphasis during the past year was member recruitment, and that this had now progressed to the stage where we have enough to register as a SA political party. However, in order to provide a working margin over the minimum number, we still need to recruit further members for SA registration. We need more members again for Commonwealth registration.
3. The Convenor further reported on the changes to the SA Electoral Act which make it necessary for us to obtain a declaration of current membership, from every member in order for us to obtain registration. He expressed the view that this had been done deliberately by the sitting parties to keep parties like ours out. **(NOTE – ALL MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE A DECLARATION FORM TO SIGN AND RETURN IN THE NEAR FUTURE . IT IS MOST IMPORTANT THAT YOU SIGN AND RETURN THIS TO ALLOW US TO APPLY FOR PARTY REGISTRATION).**
4. The bank balance of SPGN was \$2027.08. The Convenor pointed out our activities were quite constrained by the limited funds at our disposal, and invited more donations to be made.
5. The meeting resolved that a campaign would be mounted against the Mt Barker development, using part of the above funds (NOTE – THIS HAS BEEN DONE . A TOTAL OF 5910 SPECIALLY PREPARED FLYERS HAS BEEN MAILED TO EVERY HOUSEHOLD IN MOUNT BARKER. A NUMBER OF RESIDENTS HAVE JOINED OUR PARTY AS A RESULT).
6. Other items discussed included possible change of party name, use of FACEBOOK, and engagement with the ABC
7. The meeting concluded with a presentation by John Coulter on the subject of refugees, including suggestions on how the current inflow can be controlled.

#### Letters with relevance to our cause

I see, from time to time, articles and stories that support our views, and are written by persons with obvious writing talent. As I think our members would be interested in some of these, I have included 2 in this Newsletter.

This first is from Tim Murray, a Canadian, and very talented writer. Whilst it directly relates to Canada, readers will readily relate it to the events at Mt Barker, St Clair, Gawler, and many other localities both in SA and Australia generally. Tim writes:-

**“DEAR REGIONAL DISTRICT: HIRE MY DOG**

Having reviewed the carnage of Quadra's OCP revisions and seen the juggernaut of subdivisions advance inexorably up and around the Comox Valley, I would propose a more cost-effective and less rancorous method of ramming growth down our throats.

I would respectfully suggest that you fire the planning department, hire my Labrador Retriever and then disband.

This suggestion has several advantages.

By attaching a rubber stamp to each of my dog's feet and scattering appropriate paperwork on the floor, and then letting him run loose, development approvals can occur four times more quickly.

I have already trained my dog to roll over and play dead when a developer approaches.

My dog will work for peanuts---er, kibble.

My dog has keen hearing, so that unlike town councilors and district reps, if he falls asleep in chambers, he will still hear what is happening around him.

My dog has no interest in taking expensive junkets to other cities at taxpayers' expense; in fact, he avoids any mode of transportation where he can't stick his head out the window. I would be happy to lend my old car out to the RD for official purposes.

When the election approaches, my Lab won't have to waste time kissing the butts of business people and developers. A simple sniff on the way by is usually enough for him, and then he gets on with his business.

Finally, when the regional district needs to expropriate property, it usually involves considerable work and expense. In contrast, when my dog marks his territory, no lawyers are involved and his territory can still revert easily to the original owners. This would give us a leg up on legal bills.

I ask that you paws and give this suggestion serious consideration. Out of concern for taxpayers, it surely is the leash you can do.

Sincerely yours  
Tim Murray"

The second item is a letter to the Melbourne Age, consisting of an adaptation of that beautiful Dorothy Mackellar poem "My Country". Matthew Guy is the Victorian Minister for Planning. Again, readers may relate this to the continued destruction of Australia caused largely by an unnecessary population

growth.

### “Ode to Matthew Guy

HE LOVES a sunburnt country, a land of sweeping cranes, of haggard mountain ranges, of overcrowded trains. His love of far horizons, filled with concrete towers, he dreams of more of this, to exercise his powers. To achieve his main objective, he must always plan and try, to destroy all that's pleasing, to one's heart and soul and eye. As he gazes into the distance, at magnificent green wedges, he imagines how they could appear, without trees or even hedges. He must plan all this madness, to please developers bold, to have shoddy plans enacted, to maximise their gold. He has just announced his greatest plan, which does away with zones, just like a hapless vertebrate, deprived of all its bones. Though earth holds many wonders, wherever he may die, we know this urban wasteland, was due to Matthew Guy.

### Hilary Poad, Frankston”

#### Net Overseas Migration at highest point in two years

The following has recently been released to the press:-

“Australia's Net Overseas Migration has reached its highest point in two years, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

The net overseas migration estimate for the year ending 31 March 2012 was 197,200 people - 18 per cent higher than that for March 2011 (166,800 people), when net overseas migration reached a four year low.

Australia's population increased by 331,200 people to reach 22.6 million people with a growth rate of 1.5 per cent. Net overseas migration accounted for 57 per cent of growth, with the remaining 43 per cent due to natural increase (births minus deaths).

There were 295,400 births registered in the year ending March 2012, 1.2 per cent more than the previous year. The number of deaths registered over the same period was 145,800, 0.5 per cent less than the previous year.

Western Australia continues to have the fastest growing population in the country, increasing by 3.1 per cent (73,300 people)”.

**You may ask why we are still increasing our population like this. It does not benefit existing Australians at all. It costs \$200,000 approx to provide infrastructure (roads, hospitals, energy, water etc) for every additional resident of this country, money we could use in much better**

**ways. More people means we are just going backwards.**

### The End Of Growth

There are many writers and scientists at present predicting that our planet cannot keep on its present path of growth without major change. These writers all tend to point out such things as oil supplies running out fast, there is increasing uncertainty about food supplies, financial systems are under great strain, and our environment is under unprecedented pressure. In particular, they invariably warn of the absolute necessity to stop population growth.

One such person is Professor Richard Heinberg from California, who has written a number of books, including the latest “The End Of Growth”. Professor Heinberg has recently completed an Australian speaking tour, including Adelaide. A number of members of SPGN attended his lecture, and were much impressed by his well reasoned arguments.

### The Growth Delusion (Essay by John Tons – Management Committee member, SPGN)

For most of us of a certain age the Monty Python Sketch on poverty (HYPERLINK "<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xe1a1wHxTy0>" \t "\_blank" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xe1a1wHxTy0>) strikes a chord – we had all been subjected to our parents telling us that things were really tough in their day and we should be grateful that our lives were so much easier. However, for our own children the situation is radically different; it is we who had the good times and it is they who, in comparison, are doing it tough.

For example in 1974 I had just graduated with a BA Hons from Flinders University. Looking for work was easy. The Government employment service had a special office for graduates. I was ushered into a plush office, given a cup of tea and offered a choice of jobs. Within a short period of employment I had saved up enough for a deposit on a house. My income was enough so that my wife did not have to continue in the job that she hated. We could afford to buy the things we needed. However, I also recall that although by dint of promotions my income kept increasing it became harder and harder to make ends meet.

When I compare my life in the seventies to that of my children one thing stands out – they are doing it far harder than I had to. They work just as

hard but were it not for two incomes they would not have been able to afford to buy their house. Whereas in the seventies my university education had been free, they have left university with a debt.

Of course we can point to a range of gadgets that our kids have that we didn't but are they really better off because they have these gadgets? Well we can now use some hard data that demonstrates that 1974 was indeed a good year. So good in fact that it marks the high water mark as far as our quality of life is concerned.

Politicians throughout the world are doing their utmost to ensure that GDP( Gross Domestic Product)keeps growing. On the a daily basis we are confronted with the depressing news that our GDP has either stalled or grown by only a small percentage. But should we really take much notice of GDP?

By no means all economists are agreed that GDP is an effective tool for measuring our well being. The problem with GDP is, that as a tool for measuring well being, it a very blunt instrument indeed. Indeed in 1941 Simon Kuznets the inventor of GDP said: "The welfare of a nation can scarcely be inferred from a measure of national income." The problem with GDP as a measure of human welfare is that GDP only measures final transactions on goods and services. This leads to the rather odd situation that bushfires mean a rise in GDP yet people volunteering to care for disadvantaged people does not count. Surely we would rather have fewer bushfires and more volunteers?

So what happens if you start including things that do not involve a monetary transaction? If you do that you get what is sometimes called the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI). The key difference between the GDP and GPI is that the GPI counts any costs as a negative. So whereas a major bushfire will be a boost to the GDP as we spend more money in fixing the damage it will be shown as a cost in the GPI. The aim of the GPI is to reflect improvements in well being. What is emerging is that in Australia the seventies were the high watermark of GPI and since then it has been in decline – yet GDP has continued to go up.

The complete tables for Australia are included on the SPGN website as is the paper by Lawn and Clark showing the comparison between Australia and selected Asian countries. Two things stand out clearly from the Australian data. In 1974 our population stood at almost 14 million and our per capita

GPI was \$31,065 and our per capita GDP was \$24,912. Since 1974 our population has continued a steady upward trend as has the GDP but our GPI has shown a steady decline. Thus by 2007 we find that our population is just over 21 million, but our per capita GPI had declined to \$21,015 while our per capita GDP has almost doubled to \$45,309.

So what is happening here? Am I just being a grumpy old man in being upset that my kids are worse off than I was, am I clutching at straws by taking the GPI seriously? I think not for what the Genuine Progress Indicator does is to measure both the costs and benefits associated with all human activity. Thus the GPI includes as a benefit costs associated with unpaid household labour and voluntary labour. Effectively GPI measures both the benefits associated with economic activity and the costs. GPI will go up if we bring down the costs and increase the benefits. You can see that in your own household. Suppose you get a new, better paid job – clearly that is a good thing. Let us imagine that your weekly income goes up by \$50 clearly you would be happy with that. But how happy are you if you now are spending an extra \$25 a week on fuel then the benefit to you is only \$25. If you were to measure that event using the GPI then it would show a benefit of \$25. Using GDP it would show a benefit of \$75.

This is not a case of looking back with rose coloured glasses. It is merely acknowledging that as a society we are losing our way – we have been sold the dream that an increase in GDP is what our governments should strive for and this they have done with diligence. Successive Labor and Liberal governments have been wedded to the need to grow our GDP.

This is also why your help is needed in bring new members into the Party. We need an alternative voice in Canberra – one that spells out loudly and clearly that chasing growth in GDP will not improve our quality of life. More people coming in the country means a growth in GDP but as the data from Lawn and Clark shows that growth in GDP comes at the expense of our collective well being.

At its latest we can expect a Federal Election in 2013 – ideally we should aim for registration as a Federal Party by the end of 2012. Bob has put in a Herculean effort to get the party this far – he has donated funds towards flyer printing and distribution and then spent many hours putting leaflets in letter boxes. We are well on the way to the magic figure of 500 members but we need your help – if every existing member were to sign up just two

extra members we would not only have enough members for registration but we would have more members who can be mobilised when an election is called.

Population growth means a decline in our living standards, we owe it to the future to ensure that all Australians have the opportunity to register their concern about population growth at the next election.

*A copy of the Tables on which the article is based is available on the SPGN website. ( If you do not have access to the Internet, phone the Convenor on 0488 071 799, and a copy will be mailed to you..*

#### Administrative matters

In the computer age, it is easy to forget that some of our members do not have access to the Internet . Up to now, we have tended to rely on people being able to access our web site on the Internet to see full details of our philosophies, committee members, etc.

If you are a member, and you do not have access to the Internet, phone us on 0488 071 799 , and we will send you a printed copy of the material on our website

#### Profile of committee members

Newsletters in future will include a very brief profile of the SPGN Management Committee members. The following profile is that of the Convenor (Bob Couch).





Bob initiated the founding of SPGN in 2010(with the encouragement and assistance of John Coulter), in order that those who believe Australia has enough people already, would have someone to vote for, as no existing parties supported stopping population growth.

Bob commenced work in the SA Public Service in 1960. While there, he briefly worked in accounting (he has tertiary qualifications in that field), and then transferred to work on computers from the time they were first being introduced in SA in the mid 60's, eventually progressing to become an IT (computing ) manager.

After leaving the Public Service, he worked in a range of occupations, including farming, heavy construction, and manufacturing, and owned, and ran, a small business. He is now semi retired, working part time for an electrical contractor.

Bob is a keen sailor and rock and roll dancer (50's era). He is a Life Member of the Brighton and Seacliff Yacht Club, where he races his NS14(a small racing yacht) every weekend. He teaches rock and roll dancing on a voluntary basis in schools. Bob has a family, including grand children, and lives in Marino, South Australia.