



We The People

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We the People The Population Time Bomb

Good day to you. I think you would all agree that one of the most outstanding human beings on the planet is naturalist Sir David Attenborough. Recently he said "**we people are a plague on the earth**" and "**until humanity manages to sort itself out and get a coordinated view about the planet, it's going to get worse and worse.**"

The truth is that for all the words of concern Wall Street doesn't care and personal monetary wealth, greed and ignorance push the planet's population to ever higher levels. At the moment the issue of population control appears taboo and even in Australia, the driest continent on earth, both major political parties want to drive our population higher. It appears the inept Queensland Government along with slipshod Gold Coast City Council think more people means more prosperity and they are factually and convincingly wrong. The legacy this kind of thinking will leave will be disastrous. We simply have to live within our means and recognise Australia and the Gold Coast are at maximum sustainable population economically and environmentally. In fact some notable CSIRO scientists argue we have exceeded our sustainable population.

As it stands now the world's population is over 7.4 billion. According to United Nations predictions it could reach 9.7 billion people by 2050, and over 11 billion by 2100. On the small parcel of beachside land we call the Gold Coast the population is around 560,000 with the Council pushing for a doubling of that to 1 million plus in the next few years. The question is why and the answer is because they, like many, are locked into the belief that never-ending growth is sustainable. The awful truth is that it's not sustainable by any measure. It's apparently about jobs but at what cost and for how long. The reality is it's about those twin evils of money and power. Even the federal budget failed to budget for a stable sustainable population and sadly focuses on money alone.

More people means more greenhouse gasses and now even the drover's dog recognises the planet is warming alarmingly. Oxygen levels in prehistoric times were up to 35% compared to today at barely 21%. In densely populated polluted areas the oxygen levels are as low as 15% and the phytoplankton which produces half the world's oxygen has declined by 40%. Add to this the deforestation of land and CO2 levels rising at an alarming rate driving the greenhouse effect. The oceans are absorbing the CO2 and turning acidic to the detriment of marine life and the rising water temperature is bleaching coral and damaging the marine eco-system. Even the oxygen in sea water is declining too with unknown side effects down the track while science measure some large dead zones of little or no oxygen. As aquifers are drained of water for agriculture, and as glaciers shrink due to climate change we will see agricultural productivity decline just as more people move to meat-based diets, yet Australia is warming up and drying out. Expanding populations will force food prices beyond the reach of the poorest, leading to more hunger and conflict. Finite fossil fuels are being used at an unprecedented rate while nuclear waste and accidents have very long-term effects on the planet including the upper atmosphere. The canaries are dropping dead in the mine and we are ignoring it as never before.

Now after hearing all that do you honestly think increasing the population of the Gold Coast, Australia or the planet is wise. Do you think there is a corner we can hide in? No there's not. While so many species approach extinction including the koala and the cassowary, do we care? Are more high rise, more trams and more cars going to help, no they're not. The future of our children and grandchildren is in peril and Sir David Attenborough knows it and is warning us along with many eminent others. Maybe today I'm the bearer of bad news but it's the unambiguous scientific truth and it's getting worse. However, **we can all do something** and in particular demand that Australia's population be stabilised now as well as the Gold Coast's for the sake of the generations to come. That mayoral catch cry of 'keep the Gold Coast working' is a faint and futile call, up against the facts so don't expect wisdom there. 'We the people' must demand action and why not start with dramatically reducing Australia's immigration numbers, preserving and replanting forests and recognising that we have lost sight of how miraculous and precious this beautiful blue planet is. **We have nowhere else to live!**

Until next time this is Kent Bayley

The program "We The People" is broadcast on radio 4CRB 89.3 weekly and on line and posted at www.goldcoastsentinel.com.au