

DRAFT.

FACT SHEET 9. POPULATION GROWTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

At what stage should a population stop growing because it is making life worse, not better?

A CITY OF 250,000 PEOPLE can have almost everything needed for quality of life – variety of industries and jobs, nice homes, schools, health care, shops, public transport, tradesmen, professions, variety of culture, sports and cultural events, to suit everyone, local government, newspapers, law and order, community spirit and neighborliness, low crime rates, gardens and backyards, parks, scope for innovation and progress, and nearness to food sources and recreational amenities in the countryside.

WHEN DO TOO MANY PEOPLE SPOIL QUALITY OF LIFE?

When there is not enough water, traffic is too congested, people are crowded everywhere, pollution affects health, infrastructure is creaking, not enough comfortable housing, too many people are disaffected and crime is aided by anonymity, only a few can get out to nearby 'unspoiled' uncrowded countryside or the beach, food has to come long-distance, too much good farmland and bushland is lost for ever under housing.

Even the quality of life for animals suffers, with factory-farming that becomes more inhumane in order to feed so many people. Wild-life loses their habitats and more species are driven to extinction.

'TOO MANY PEOPLE' depends upon where. A city like Melbourne in Victoria with under 4 million people in a State of five million, may still be overcrowded by the government's goal to add another million by 2030. Melbourne had the purest, best-tasting drinking water to be found anywhere. As quality of life and freedom is further reduced, governments legislate about drinking recycled sewage, abandoning Melbourne's famous home gardens, and vast sums on water projects requiring more waste of resources. Housing is beyond the reach of most young people, and mortgages can be lifelong. Timber is supplied by logging in catchments - to reduce water quality of water and silt up storages.

FURTHER GROWTH HAS DOWNSIDES FOR QUALITY OF LIFE.

Water is the most serious problem. Restrictions already reduce quality of life. The sprawling outer areas of cities lack public transport. To reduce sprawl and costs of new infrastructure, pressures are to redevelop existing suburbs for denser housing, destroying liveable homes, and crowding families with insufficient outdoor play-space and recreation. The 'Australian dream' of the quarter-acre block has to be ridiculed as impractical.

With greater population size comes the crime and social problems common to big cities. More anonymity, more alienation and loneliness. More noise, now documented as a serious stress problem. Local councils of excessive size administer their business like small states. Overlarge schools in small grounds prepare children for crowded lives without community.

THE IDEAL SIZE OF CITIES varies according to their available resources. Size does not ensure innovative cities with the richest cultures and contributions to

civilisation. Sure, London, New York, Paris, but the worlds' mega slums now as big as countries are not good to live in. Classical Athens, Renaissance Florence and 18th century Edinburgh show how wonderful small cities can be.

See Mike Davis' *'Planet of the Slums'*

So who wants population growth? See FACT SHEET 7.

