
■ D A V I D ■ B ■ A L L A N ■

My ref: DBA01FE

01 February 2010

The Hon. Kevin Rudd, MP
Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

SENDER TO KEEP
CV6441065

SENDER TO KEEP
CV6441066

Dear Prime Minister,

SENDER TO KEEP
CV6441067

Re: National Plan of Action

It is submitted that a fully integrated, co-ordinated and published plan of action is required to lead Australia forward into the foreseeable future. Indeed, every country needs such a plan.

After reading a great deal of relevant material and giving the matter considerable thought, it is this writer's view that there is no reasonable argument against the proposition that there is only so much that can be done on or with a given piece of land, stretch of river, surrounding sea or airspace in Australia, or anywhere for that matter. Every such aspect has a definite limit.

Take an average suburban block for example. One can only build a structure of limited size and capacity (having regard to a particular location, underlying soil and sub-strata and the environment).

Size and capacity are also limited by the need for roads to access the property, the necessary infrastructure to provide modern services to and from the property and in order to maintain a sustainable and liveable community environment.

Every city, town and hamlet in Australia also requires open spaces, healthy river systems, water catchment areas, fertile and sustainably productive agricultural and farming zones, shopping precincts, recreational spaces, industrial areas, waste processing and disposal locations, and there is an equal, pressing need to retain and maintain the natural environment for other species.

There is also clearly a finite limit to what may be extracted from the land or sea or put in the air.

The same limitations apply equally to inner city commercial areas and high-density developments.

Given the above, it is patently obvious that there is and always will be a maximum population carrying capacity in Australia and in the world.

Indeed, we seem perfectly able to determine when there is a need to cull other species due to their "excess" numbers or when to protect endangered species from extinction. How is it that we seem totally unable to sensibly and rationally determine the maximum number of humans that can sustainably live in Australia?

To simply allow population growth to continue unabated until we reach 36 million persons by 2050 is in this writer's view pure madness. To argue that we have the ability to do whatever is

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necessary to support and harmoniously integrate such a population is nonsense without a formal, quantifiable, measurable plan being put in place, published and successfully actioned.

There is a definite relationship between residential and commercial zones and necessary supporting zones and the natural environment that, given available technology and techniques, is also fixed at any given time if sustainability is to be achieved. Ascertaining the respective "numbers" is the challenge.

Clearly, the present degradation of agricultural lands and rivers, rising salinity, deforestation, stressed fisheries, rising pollution, diminishing arable land and natural resources all require urgent attention and major effort to halt further pressures and indeed to reverse the trends in the shortest time possible. All these and other related challenges will require the allocation of significant funding and consistent, careful management.

It is submitted that all laws, government policies and strategies must be related to the maximum population carrying capacity of the country at a given time and that the carefully determined carrying capacity must not be increased unless and until it can unequivocally be shown that the degradations referred to above have been measurably reversed. Carrying capacity must not be increased simply on the basis that given sufficient time present problems can be ameliorated or reversed at some future time.

Of course, commercial and vested interests will rail against establishing any such maximum population carrying capacity or natural resource extraction limitation. They want an ever expanding market, despite simple logic showing that such a market is an unsustainable and ultimately a self-defeating objective. It is akin to a pyramid selling scheme. A totally free market has always been unsustainable; there have been and must always be government imposed limitations.

An overall plan for leading Australia into the future must be established by "zoning" the entire country - cities and towns, the built and unbuilt environment and adjacent areas, surrounding seas and airspace. Those zones must be established with particularity and proportionality, having regard to sustainable carrying capacities, sustainable uses, the systematic recovery of degraded zones and proper, clearly enumerated relationships between those uses and zones, so as not to further degrade the environment and liveability of the country from a human point of view and importantly, for the survival of all species in or on our lands and seas.

Given the establishment of such a plan, the multiplicity of requirements (and a time-line) for hospitals, schools, transport, migration and etcetera can be firmly established and funded.

Everything is "connected" and unless we recognise these connections now and establish a plan with priorities, laws, policies and strategies and manage the economy and environment in harmony we will be doing a great disservice to and endangering the future inhabitants of Australia. Everything flows from such a plan.

The expenditure of scarce taxpayer resources on seemingly endless reports and self-serving advertising etcetera, unrelated to the direct implementation of any plan must be curbed. Regional expenditures such as the proposal by the Victorian Government to decoratively light the Westgate Bridge at a cost of some \$33 million should be met with an equal reduction in Commonwealth funding advances.

Were I in a position to do so, I would charge an appropriate group of University academics with the task of establishing such a plan for publication and implementation without delay. I urge you to take such action as a matter of urgency. Then we might have a really useful debate on where Australia is headed. It is "doable". We need to do it.

Indeed, the lack of this foresight in earlier generations and governments could well be the reason we face such significant challenges today.

Yours faithfully,

David B Allan
