

# THE BUSHLAND BULLETIN<sup>©</sup>

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*The Editorial Committee, PO Box 210 Panania NSW 2213 Telephone: 9785 2374*

## ONE PERSONS VIEW ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE SOLUTIONS

By Pat Bell

I have recently ceased attending Greenhouse rallies and donating to environment groups collecting for this specific issue.

You may ask "Have you become a climate change skeptic? My answer is a firm "no". However, I have lost all confidence in the direction that governments and green groups are taking on this most urgent matter.

Australia, on a per capita level, is one of the highest producing nations in the world of greenhouse emissions, but the Federal government seems more concerned that they don't disadvantage the 'big end of town', than looking at ALL genuine causes and solutions.

Three of the major sources of greenhouse gases haven't even been acknowledged, let alone addressed because they might not be popular.

These three main sources are:

(1) Over population

- (2) Meat based diets  
(3) Rampant consumerism, which is also tied into free trade agreements and the philosophy of "growth & expansion" (for every dollar spent on household goods, around half a kilogram of greenhouse gas is emitted).

I will only address issue (1) in this article and will continue with 2 & 3 at a later date.

### Over Population

I am no population expert—my opinions are my own from reading and observing. In my lifetime I have seen the population in Australia increase to over 21 million from 7 million. The latest prediction is 35 million by 2050

and our Prime Minister is not concerned!

If any reader is interested in obtaining additional information about over population, a very informative book is available called "Overloading Australia—How governments & media dither & deny on population". I read it last year and was impressed. It was written by Mark O'Connor & William J. Lines, and available for \$20 per copy (incl. postage) and can be bought from Mark O'Connor, A C T 2 6 0 2 . E m a i l [Mark@Australianpoet.com](mailto:Mark@Australianpoet.com)

The book is very well researched and written in an extremely easy to read format. It addresses important aspects of population, such as food, energy, water, costs, immigration and refugees, mainly pertaining to Australia. There is also a chapter that briefly discusses some other countries in regard to their population.

### Inside this issue...

- ◆ Population The Elephant in the Room
- ◆ Rare Vegetation at Bankstown Airport
- ◆ An Educational Experience

... Plus 2010 Bush Regeneration Dates

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I should add that I am a member of Sustainable Population Australia which is mentioned in the book. I joined this group some years ago when I realized that none of the environment groups I belonged to had a population policy or even mentioned it.

One does not need to be a genius to realize how severely human activities have impacted and are impacting on the health of the planet, including the millions of other species we share it with. We can't continue with this "business as usual" attitude.

Australia has one of, if not, the worst record of mammal extinctions in the world, one reason, of course, being that the more people there are, the less habitat and food there is for other species.

Some statistics:

**ABS FIGURES**—World population estimated on August 2009 by the US Bureau of Census: 6,775,085,199.

Australia's resident population on August 3, 2009 was projected to be 21,864,849. this projection is based on the estimated resident population Dec. 31, 2008 and assumes growth since then of: 1 birth every 1 min.47 secs 1 death every 3 min.47 secs.

Gain of 1 international migrant every 2 min.24 secs. Australia's overall population increase is one additional person every 1 min.24 secs.

These assumptions are consistent with those used for Series B in Population Projections, Australia 2006 to 2101 (cat. No., 3222.0)#

I find it curious that politicians (both Labor & Liberal) are encouraging people to have more children, e.g. the Baby Bonus, when they must realise that we are not living sustainably with

the population we have. If they want a habitable planet for their children and grandchildren in the future, they should be encouraging people to have smaller families.

There is an argument that behavior is more important than numbers. I don't think that this argument stands up as even though some people are now recycling, saving water, taking public transport, etc. the vast majority of Australians have not changed their behavior at all. I don't know anyone (do you?) who would be prepared to lower their standard of living to accommodate a larger population. In fact, Australians are consuming more, eating larger amounts of food, flying and motoring greater distances than in the recent past. This won't change until things get to crisis point.

Also, read the following article written by Prof. **Dexter Dunphy, U.T.S.**  
**Population: the elephant in the room**  
 If anyone has interesting sightings of birds, frogs, reptiles or mammals in the Bankstown district or needs identification assistance, I would be happy to hear from you.  
 Please call Darryl on 9708-5283  
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**Population:  
the elephant in the room**  
**Prof. Dexter Dunphy University of Technology  
Sydney, School of Management  
Monday, 27 July 2009**

Reproduced with Permission, Prof. Dexter Dunphy, UTS and Env Mgt News  
[#](http://www.environmentalmanagementnews.net/StoryView.asp?StoryID=1003634)

*"Discussions of how to achieve a sustainable future for this continent often ignore the importance of population size. In a weekend article on the future of the economy, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd opted for a political "recovery" program to achieve "sustainable growth" while managing to entirely avoid discussing population. Dexter Dunphy explores a thorny*

*issue."*#  
 The PM's contribution is typical of many debates in Australia which, if they veer close to mentioning population at all, do so only to advocate increasing or maintaining immigration to ensure an adequate supply of skilled workers or to offset the aging of the overall population.

There is hardly ever a frank discussion of the fundamental issue of what population Australia can support if our economy is to be sustainable in the future. Population growth is the elephant in the room that no one, not even the Prime Minister it seems, notices.

First, we need to be wary, very

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wary, of terms like “sustainable growth” and “economic recovery”. The notion that the world in general and Australia in particular can continue on an economic growth path is a form of insanity. We are already consuming resources at a rate well above the planet’s capacity to replace them; the world is being devastated now to meet the growing demands of its existing population.

Even if Australia’s population magically stabilised today, global warming (unavoidably increasing by at least 2C in the near future) will threaten our ability to provide the water and food we need to survive, let alone maintain the increasingly material intensive lifestyle we have adopted. If everyone ate like Australians, the world would need eight times its existing cropland. There is little chance that crop\land will be increased here; the CSIRO has predicted increasing desertification from widespread and prolonged droughts due to global warming.

However given current birth rates and immigration levels, Australia’s existing population of more than 21 million will grow to at least 30 million by 2050—an increase of 40%. This will put increasing strain on a fragile ecology that has been severely damaged already by inappropriate industrial farming technologies, often applied to land that is already marginal in terms of fertility and rainfall.

Such farming demands widespread application of fertilisers and of course depends on cheap oil. In addition, an increasing proportion of our “fresh food” is gathered up around the continent and trucked large distances to the warehouse distribution centres with their huge air-conditioned cool rooms and then trucked even further to distant markets. All this depends on plentiful supplies of cheap fossil fuels. Yet fossil fuel use is what the government is supposedly committed to reducing. How will even the minuscule targets adopted by the Rudd Government be achieved in the face of a 40% increase in population?

We urgently need an active debate in the media, in community organisations, in business and in parliaments around the issue of Australia’s optimum population. Despite popular beliefs, Australia’s population size has not stabilised and is, in fact, increasing at a rate closer to a third world country than a first world one.

Contrary to popular belief also, Australia is not a land of largely untapped and underutilised resources, Australia is one of the driest continents in the world with ancient soils leached of nutrients. Our native vegetation has grown a remarkable diversity to cope with these conditions but we ourselves have not yet learned how to live within the natural constraints of this continent and to develop a truly sustainable lifestyle.

Even at existing population levels, we face the necessity of making dramatic changes in how we live—to reduce material

consumption, not expand it. And we need to move swiftly to replace our carbon-based energy production systems. This is what President Obama is trying to achieve in America by moving to spend A\$100 billion on green, clean-tech investment incentives. Where is the comparable initiative here? Yet we still have a popular acceptance and multi-party support for encouraging population growth that will drive ever higher our per capita material consumption and energy use and defeat even ambitious efforts to achieve a sustainable lifestyle.

Massive population growth of the kind we face will create bigger cities with larger footprints. Our ability to supply the needs of their inhabitants rests on the shaky assumption that we will continue to have cheap fossil fuels to transport the goods needed for people to survive in the cities, to continue to turn on the lights in the offices and to drive the engines of industry. It also assumes that the sky will continue to deliver the water for people to drink, wash in and use in our factories.

It is time to question these assumptions and to work out what size population can survive and thrive in the Australia of the future. Prime Minister Rudd has designated this as “the building decade” - the key question is: Who are we building for and for how many?

*Vantage Point columnist Dexter Dunphy is visiting Professor in the Faculty of Business at the University of Technology, Sydney, specialising in corporate sustainability and organising change.*

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## RARE VEGETATION AT BANKSTOWN AIRPORT

By Col Gibson

In 2006 I was invited by Bankstown Airport Limited to fill a vacancy on the Bankstown Airport Community Consultation Forum, this vacancy having arisen as a result of the passing of the late Irene Jones who had, since 2004, ably represented the Bushland Society and SWEC as a community representative. BAL and the forum were at that time involved with the development of the Airport's five year Environment Strategy, new federal legislation having placed an emphasis on the preservation of cultural and environmental heritage items on the airport precinct, and the new Chief Executive Officer, Mr Kim Ellis, was of a mind to see that these new regulations would be followed and implemented accordingly.

The Bankstown Airport Environmental

tons of fill in 1988 that led to the formation of the Bankstown Bushland Society, the original members being myself, Robert Miller and George Adams. Although some remedial work was undertaken by the Society with Urban Bushland Management following the award of an Environmental Trust grant in 1991, the bushland itself was facing an uncertain future. This was emphasised in 1991 when a couple of hectares of nearby remnant grassland were cleared to make way for an industrial car park, and later as Bankstown City Council unfolded plans to turn the Deverall Park Bush into a dry land flood detention basin.

The Management Plan of 2005 has given Deverall Park the recognition it deserves, with BAL's commitment to the protection and enhancement of the

prodigious quantities of Bridal Veil Creeper. Subsequently, Greening Australia has been planting buffer zones along the eastern perimeter and BAL staff has removed prolific amounts of rubbish and debris accumulated over many years. Desiree is hoping to establish a bushcare group at Deverall some time in the near future. When I remember back to 1988 and the bulldozer parked menacingly next to the last stand of the exquisite *Epacris purpurascens* in Bankstown, and how anxiously I slept that night, the protection of the site seems something of a dream come true, and BAL management deserves much of the credit for making it a reality.

The first meeting of the Airport Community Consultation Forum which I attended was in November 2006.



*Hibbertia* sp. nov. 'Bankstown Airport

Management Plan of 2005 represented a major breakthrough for the Deverall Park Bushland, a rare Tertiary floodplain remnant located at the far eastern end of the airport precinct, adjacent to the Bankstown Showground. It was a community campaign to save this bushland from disappearing under

site providing the security that has been lacking for so long. BAL's Environmental Manager, Ms Desiree Lammerts, has put this commitment into action by successfully applying for funding for bush regeneration works, which put UBM back on the scene in 2007 engaged in the elimination of

Before the meeting I should do the right thing and reacquaint myself with the bushland on the airport precinct, particularly with another area of remnant vegetation which, despite our submission in 1999 had missed recognition in the 2000 Environment

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## An educational experience on botany and bushland conservation issues at the Royal Botanic Gardens 2009.

By Dan Clarke.

In the early stages of this year, I was lucky enough to be accepted into the Royal Botanic Gardens Plant Science Internship programme. This is a recently devised scheme coordinated by the botanists and ecologists working in the herbarium at the gardens. It aims to add to the professional education of people like myself who are looking to start a career in botany/plant systematics, ecology and natural area conservation. Along with myself there were eleven other successful applicants from a range of universities across New South Wales - all at varying levels of their university education (honours, masters, PhD etc.)

The internship ran for seven weeks full time where we had a range of lectures on issues ranging from bushfire management, keying out plants, promoting plant science, information technology, algae, lichen and bryophyte diversity as well as job interview skills and resume construction techniques.

The early days of the experience involved us meeting and greeting the botanists and ecologists who were going to be 'babysitting' us for the seven weeks. We became familiar with the herbarium and its method of organization. The New South Wales herbarium consists of approximately just over one million plant specimens, both native and exotic which are constantly being revised and reorganized at a taxonomic level. This collection dates back to the time of Sir Joseph Banks and plant specimens that he along with Daniel Solander collected in 1770 can be observed.

We received some great lectures such as the evolution of the Australian flora from the times of Gondwana from Peter Weston, as well as a session on the keying out of plants in the Myrtaceae with Peter Wilson. We also had what I describe as a three hour crash course in identifying *Acacia* spp with the entertaining Phil Kodela who excitingly tossed specimen after specimen at us with the hope that we would key them out. An extra insight was the use of the interactive computer software such as Euclid (for *Eucalyptus* spp.) and

WATTLE (for *Acacia* spp) which enable you to key out your specimen by a process of elimination of character states. Every attribute including leaves, fruits, and glands is described which is helpful if the specimen is not in flower, as is so often the case when we come across a species which is unfamiliar.

The third week was spent on a field trip where we stayed at the Crommelin Field Research station at scenic Pearl Beach. Here, we had a range of trips to various areas of the central coast. During this week, ecologist Doug Benson was responsible for our education and very enthusiastically inspired us to get 'hands on' with the flora. We visited areas such as Brisbane Waters and Bouddi National Parks where plant specimens were collected by the interns for possible incorporation into the herbarium. Some of the highlights included a day spent learning about the Coastal Sandplain Woodland in the Umina area which is now reduced to scattered remnants due to urban development. We observed some remnant *Banksia serrata* and *Xylomelum pyriforme* trees in a park along Trafalgar Avenue in Umina. The *B. serrata* specimens are believed to be over 200 years old and stand as tall and wide as an average fully grown *Angophora costata*. A drive down the streets of Umina will reveal the odd *Macrozamia communis* still persisting on the front lawns and nature strips of people's homes. These are the last 'hangers on' of what would have been a beautiful vegetation community.

A second highlight was a day spent with the regional National Parks and Wildlife officer Doug Beckers who gave us a tour of the various vegetation communities in Bouddi National Park. We observed a population of *Banksia aemula* (Wallum Banksia) which occurs on the pleistocene sand deposits in Bouddi, and a small stand of the rare *Prostanthera askania* which was recently found in Bouddi by a young boy and his grandmother whilst bushwalking. Everyday ended with a swim at the beach which was very welcome as it was mid January. Another great visit was to Bulgandry - a

site of special significance to indigenous Australians off the Woy Woy Road where you can see preserved rock carvings engraved by the original inhabitants of that land from years ago. Here, botanist Bob Makinson gave a very moving speech about the importance of recognizing and preserving Aboriginal heritage with impetus on dealing with these issues in an intelligent and delicate manner. The last visit of the trip involved a walk through Strickland State Forest where Dr. Murray Henwood from the University of Sydney gave us an introduction to the rainforest species of the area whilst we all battled the leeches. Here we observed a second small stand of *Prostanthera askania*. I also managed to photograph an uncommon orchid species: *Arthrochilus prolixus* which Murray had espied earlier.

The remaining weeks saw us sorting out herbarium specimens with the help of the technical officers, mounting plant specimens onto sheets and labelling, receiving more lectures and having the odd trip through the gardens itself where we collected species of algae out of the ponds for microscopic inspection with garden's director Tim Entwisle.

Two tasks were given to us during the course of the internship which involved applying for a 'mock' job with a subsequent interview in front of a panel of professionals as well as a five minute presentation on any native plant of our choosing and the habitat in which it occurs. I chose *Diuris sulphurea* from East Hills Park where I have spent some time hand weeding for Bankstown Bushland Society as well as photographing the various orchid species which are found there. My talk went relatively well but naturally the hands of the experts shot up at the end with the intention of clarifying a few things (gulp!!) Peter Weston questioned one of my 'old wives tale' points that *Diuris* orchids are attempting to mimic pea flowers from the Fabaceae subfam. Faboideae in order to trick pollinators. He politely pointed out that there is no real scientific evidence for this and that

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actually *D. sulphurea* does produce its own nectar. (Ahhh...but don't let the truth get in the way of a good yarn...). I also stated that in one specific season, Col Gibson and I had observed at least a couple of hundred flower heads of *D. sulphurea* at East Hills Park. Doug Benson pointed out (tongue in cheek I might add and to the groans of everyone else), that I should have done some frequency histograms on the appearance of the orchid over a few years and this would provide insights into the recruitment and growth processes of this orchid population and how it may change over time. Doug strongly pointed out that hardly any of these aspects about our flora are known and are yet to be scientifically tested.

All in all, the internship was a very valuable and worthwhile experience. I continue to keep in contact with my fellow interns as well as some of the staff in the herbarium and was delighted to see some of them on ABC's Catalyst programme earlier this year. Everyone who I had contact with was very interested in my own experiences in working in urban bushland and it was apparent that they hold our efforts in high esteem. Acknowledgements were made that several newly recognized species have arisen due to discovery by bushland regenerators as well as the ensured survival of many rare and threatened species. This gave me encouragement as our weed removal work is undoubtedly appreciated by the people who have made a career out of studying and classifying our flora.

I encourage anyone who wishes to further their education and career in bushland conservation and ecology issues to apply for the internship programme. It is a thorough and very enjoyable educational experience.

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Strategy, and also in the 2005 Strategy. This was the narrow strip of vegetation lining an old drainage line running under Tower Road down to the Riverwood (now Georges River) Golf Course (referred to as Airport Creek). I had last looked at this strip in 1999, and had found a few surprises there – stands of remnant *Angophora floribunda*, with *Leptospermum trinervium* and *Acacia suaveolens*, some *Dianellas* and *Hibbertias*.

When I went back in October 06 I thought I might be lucky and find a few sun orchids surviving in a favourable niche somewhere along the bank, or anything else I had not previously observed there. The drainage channel is about 500 metres long, and, having walked across from Tower Road, I followed the channel all the way up its southern length and back again, then crossed to follow the northern side, looking intently at the vegetation as I went. I found no orchids along the bank, but when I had completed my third lap of the channel I turned around to glance north westward over the grassy expanse directly under the flight path, expecting to see nothing but mown swathes of African Love Grass and weeds. These there were, but I was startled to see, interspersed among them, extensive swathes of regenerating kangaroo grass, and, as I walked into the swathes, I found not a few, but hundreds of onion orchids and sun orchids - at least three species of sun orchid - among an unusual assemblage of plants more typical of sandstone or sand mass habitats, the latter type all but obliterated from the Bankstown side of the old Georges River floodplain which, in ancient times, covered most of the site of present day Bankstown Airport.

Here also were, growing in full sun, Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*) never before seen outside sandstone habitats in Bankstown, patches of Sundew, seedlings of *Banksia integrifolia* and mats of *Hibbertia*: two species, *H. diffusa*, and another which, when I looked closely, I thought might turn out to be the long lost *H. puberula*, but which may yet prove to be an even rarer variety. I thought that in 30 years of roaming around I had seen all the flora types in Bankstown, but that this was so different and so long in the finding made it all the more

remarkable.

This is the knowledge I took to the meeting of the Consultation Forum a few weeks later, and you can well imagine it wasn't exactly music to management's ears; they had had a big enough task coming to terms with the requirements and measures needed to protect the Deverall Park site. This is an airport after all, not a nature reserve, and I was talking about plants they had never heard of in a location where it would seem so unlikely that any type of native vegetation could exist, let alone one so unusual. The site in question is situated in what BAL had referred to as Area 5, partly earmarked for public recreation and partly for a new perimeter road. They adopted a cautious approach, but another set of legal requirements kicked in when Robert Miller nominated the rare *Hibbertia* (*Hibbertia* sp. nov. 'Bankstown Airport') for listing under the federal Environmental Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act. The taxonomy of this species is yet to be determined, but its occurrence has to date only been confirmed from Area 5. Recently BAL invited botanists and ecologists from the Royal Botanic Gardens to investigate, and the significance of the vegetation at both Area 5 and at Deverall Park was apparent to them.

If anyone has interesting sightings of birds, frogs, reptiles or mammals in the Bankstown Bushland Society Committee would be happy to hear from you.

**ATTENTION**

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# WHY NOT JOIN THE SOCIETY ?



The Bankstown Bushland Society is an incorporated association under the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 1984.

We are Bankstown's only incorporated association dedicated to protecting our City's environment.

The Society's objects are:

- To protect the environment of Bankstown
- To assist other persons in the protection of the environment in Bankstown
- To foster better community awareness of environmental issues
- To lobby through Government, commercial and other persons for the maintenance of a high quality of life through the progressive improvement of the environment

If you are concerned about the local environment, then consider joining our Society. As a member, you receive one year's subscription to this newsletter, and can participate as a voting member in the direction and decisions of the Society.



Yes, I wish to join the  
***Bankstown Bushland Society Inc:***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Membership fees**  
 Family/Group - \$20  
 Ordinary - \$15  
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**ATTENTION**

If anyone has interesting sightings of birds, frogs, reptiles or mammals in the Bankstown district or needs identification assistance, I would be happy to hear from you.  
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