

POPULATION GROWTH

Statement

HON CHARLES SMITH (East Metropolitan) [6.27 pm]: This evening I was going to make an incendiary statement about energy production and the earth's climate, but unfortunately that will have to wait for another day as this morning I noticed a sickening propaganda piece that was spewed forth in *The West Australian* by some Big Australia mass immigration spruiker who goes by the name of Deidre Willmott. I have the article here. It is headed "More people key to a bright WA future".

Hon Sue Ellery interjected.

Hon CHARLES SMITH: It is not funny. Let us examine a few sentences from this article. It states —

Western Australia needs more people.

Why does it need more people? Here is another —

Growing any industry requires a skilled workforce.

We have the old skills shortage myth put in front of us again. There is no skills shortage. There is only a shortage of labour at the price an empire is willing to pay. Train locals, pay them properly and, as if by magic, there are no skills shortages. It is amazing. Here is another one —

Just having more people in the State will increase economic activity ...

That is absolute rubbish. Economic activity, as measured by GDP per capita, is in recession right now. Adding more people reduces each individual's wealth and the slice of the pie gets smaller. This article is a shameless piece of Big Australia propaganda. Ms Willmott is clearly delusional, as the majority of Australian voters favour a lower immigration intake. Let us examine the recent polls. Newspoll found that 56 per cent of Australian voters want lower immigration. An Essential poll states that 54 per cent believe the Australian population is growing too fast, and 64 per cent believe immigration is too high. Lowy found that 54 per cent of people think the total number of migrants coming to Australia is too high. Newspoll found that 74 per cent of voters support the coalition government's cut of more than 10 per cent to the annual permanent migrant intake. There is more! The Centre for Independent Studies found that 65 per cent of people in the highest income decile and 77 per cent in the lowest income decile believe that immigration should be cut or paused until critical infrastructure has caught up. The Australian National University states that only three out of 10 Australians believe that the nation needs more people. But apparently, Ms Willmott knows what is best for us. Never mind the associated negative impacts on economic and social infrastructure; never mind traffic congestion and access to jobs, jam-packed schools, hospital waiting lists, people dying in wards waiting for beds, or ambulance ramping. Like so many others before her, Deidre Willmott is clueless and appears to have zero interest in maintaining individual living standards—just as long as a few multimillionaires and their assorted minions are making a shedload of money at the expense of the greater population.

Former public servant and consultant Stephen Saunders has been quoted as saying —

The groupthink begins with the three main political parties. With varying emphases, all celebrate Big Australia for its "jobs and growth" and "multiculturalism" or rejection of racism.

...

By default, the Treasury is our key population agency. To help perpetuate the 27-year "miracle" in GDP growth, it limns each federal budget with high net overseas migration and high population growth.

The Reserve Bank, unlike the Productivity Commission, pushes the supposed demographic rejuvenation from high migration ...

Most thinktanks side with big Australia. Industry and property groups also welcome more migrants. They dampen training and wage demands, and deliver more consumers and profits.

...

The growth lobby patronises the lived experiences of ordinary Australians ... stretched infrastructure and services, stalled wages and severe housing unaffordability, heightened inequality and urban congestion ...

The vibrant city plans! Never mind if these "plans" cram 8 million people into Sydney and Melbourne, and nearly 4 million into Perth, by the middle of this century ...

The growth lobby has buried Australia's deliberations on carrying capacity. It discounts scientific warnings in Australia's five-yearly *State of the Environment* reports ...

Under big Australia, future gains to the few (or older) —

That is, older generations —

look more assured than gains for the many (or younger).

The sad reality is that incumbent Australians are being forced to sacrifice their quality of life in order to make room for an endless influx of migrants, brought in purely to feed the growth lobby; namely, property industry, banks, retailers and other big businesses. We are continually sold on the benefits to headline growth, while the huge environmental and social costs are ignored.