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What population growth will do to Australia's society and economy

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Growth is the problem to which it pretends to be the solution. (William Grey, University of Queensland)

Australians know their country has a growing population, yet the media rarely mention how extreme our growth rate is. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) says our annual population growth has lately averaged around 1.8 per cent. That's more than four times the average of industrialised countries, and high even by Third World standards. For example, Indonesia's population growth of 1.1 per cent per year is far lower – yet it sees its rate as too high and seeks to reduce it (Hitipeuw 2011). So we are out on a limb. Our growth is pushed along by what is close to the world's highest per capita immigration program¹ and until recently by 'baby bonuses'.

Why do we do it? Some people imagine that Australia could solve the rest of the world's environmental problems by taking more immigrants. This is not so. India and China together grow each year by about the total population of Australia.