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## **Human health: bottom-line integrator of impacts of the population, resources and climate change**

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How Australia responds to the conjoint pressures from population, resource depletion and degradation and climate change bears greatly on our environmental and social future. Much of this ancient continent is arid, with vulnerable soils, extensive coastline and coastal ecosystems, frequent weather extremes, restless regional neighbours, and skewed distributions of freshwater flows and human population settlement. Yet public discussion of the management of population numbers and flows and of resource stocks has been consistently superficial and fragmented; likewise, discussion of whether and how to constrain carbon emissions has focused on protecting economic growth, jobs and commercial competitiveness, *not* on protecting the planet and future generations.

Unabated, climate change threatens the ecological and social foundations of *population* health and survival. In addition to the well-recognised risks from increases in extreme weather events, climate change will damage population health by disrupting eco-social systems and thereby influencing food yields, freshwater