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Nor lose the name of Action!

Roger Short

How Frank Fenner would have loved this Sustainable Population Australia conference on Population, Resources and Climate Change! Frank was far ahead of his time, since way back in 1969 he was convinced that the biggest problem the world faced was too many people. Realising that we might even bring about our own extinction as a result of our activities, he bemoaned the fact that our politicians are woefully ignorant of the findings of the Life Sciences (Boyden *et al.* 2013). Amen to all that.

Since 1969, the situation has become far worse, as evidenced by all the speakers at this conference. When I was born in 1930, there were only two billion people on Earth; today, there are over seven billion, and we are growing by one million every five days. The latest projections suggest that we will have reached 10 billion by the end of this century (Emmott 2013). On a per capita basis, little Australia is probably the most affluent and the most effluent nation on Earth – a mixed blessing if ever there was one! But we are wise enough to make a difference that could change the world. On 27 December 2013, the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated that Australia's resident population was 23 330 682, with an annual growth rate of 1.8 per cent, 40 per cent due to natural increase and 60 per cent to immigration (ABS 2013). Is it not time that one of the world's fastest growing, wealthiest and most polluting developed countries took some action?