

Fact Sheet: Underpopulation in Australia

What is Underpopulation?

If the number of people living in an area is less than needed to make full use of the resources available then the area can be described as underpopulated.

Australia has many resources but it is not using them fully. The country could support a higher population, which means that it is underpopulated.

Area and facts

Australia has a population of 20 million and is a similar size to the USA. However the USA has 300 million people living in it. Many areas of Australia are empty and it could support a higher population. Successive governments have tried to increase its population, to develop the country economically and to protect it from foreign influence.

What problems has underpopulation caused in Australia?

- Shortage of workers which has led to lower optimum productivity.
- Conflicts caused in major cities such as Sydney by need to attract foreign workers.
- Not possible to exploit all resources and large areas of outback undeveloped/underutilised.
- Less people paying tax. 43% of the labour force will be due to retire in next 20 years. Taxes will have to be raised to fund retirement.
- Schools and hospitals may close because there are not enough people to support them.
- Public transport links might close because of less customers. It is unlikely that new transport systems will develop as there is not enough people to support them. This increases peoples reliance on cars.
- There may be less innovation and development.
- Hard to defend country.

