

Humanity threatening the survival of civilisation

September 23 2014, by Hayley Mayne

Australia is overpopulated and too many Australians are preoccupied with gaining material wealth to the detriment of others according to a Murdoch University Adjunct Professor.

Impacts caused by humans to global ecosystems are threatening civilisation and solutions that can address [environmental problems](#) will challenge, offend and be difficult to implement, Professor Harry F Recher says.

At the Keith Roby Lecture at Murdoch University on October 21, Professor Recher will outline how Australians have lost contact with nature and do not appear to understand the dependence of humanity and civilisation on the life support systems provided by global and regional ecosystems.

"Nature is seen as a threat; to be exploited for its resources and subdued," Professor Recher said.

"The world accepts economic and social systems that encourage the accumulation of obscene wealth by a few while sacrificing the rights of others, including other species, to the basic necessities of life."

Professor Recher says the issues of the world boil down to two problems, first we consume too much and second there are too many people.

"It's a finite world. We need to stop consuming so much and use resources (food, energy) more efficiently," Professor Recher said.

"We are too preoccupied with wanting material wealth. The world is overpopulated, Australia is overpopulated.

"Humans are destroying the Australian continent and driving its plants and animals to extinction. Ecologically the impact we are having on the world is unsustainable.

"This is why we have climate change, fish populations crashing and the like. We need to reduce our population by reducing the reproduction rate."

Professor Recher says that even if a one child policy was to be introduced worldwide it would not be enough to reduce the problem of overpopulation and stress on the world's resources.

"Any Government that says technology is the answer is wrong, technology can't solve all the problems," he said.

Professor Recher says we are cheating, keeping the world going through the burning of fossil fuels, thereby driving [climate change](#).

"Unfortunately we no longer have the luxury of choice; sustainable development is not an option for the long-term survival of civilisation," he said.

"We can't keep growing continually and we can't build a second planet."

He believes that the scientific community needs to become more involved in giving advice to everyone, not just politicians.

"We need to teach science students how to communicate and tell them that they have a responsibility to get involved," Professor Recher said.

"We need to teach them how politics work also so they can advise government."

Provided by Murdoch University

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