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Nations Population

## *Population Debate*

Australia has not yet developed a population policy. The issue of an Australian population policy has evolved into a contentious debate amongst different sections of the community. Some environmentalists have suggested that Australia should aim for a population size of 6 - 12 million people. Others (many with an economic interest) have suggested that Australia should aim to increase its population by at least 25 million, both sides would like to see this achieved in the next 50 years.

## *Sexual and Reproductive Health in Australia*

The majority of Australians enjoy good sexual and reproductive health. However the disparities among the sexual and reproductive health status of different groups of the population in Australia is alarming. The current health needs of indigenous Australian's are greater than those in some developing countries.

- There is a higher rate of stillbirths for babies born to indigenous women than for babies born to non-indigenous women
- Infant mortality rates for indigenous infants are three times the number than for non-Indigenous Australians.
- In 1996 (the last year for which there is comprehensive information) the maternal mortality rate for indigenous women was three times higher than non-indigenous women
- There continues to be an increase in the notification of STI's in all sectors of the Australian community
- Australia's teen birth rate has reduced considerably over the past three decades

## *Australia as a donor nation*

The ICPD PoA was a costed program and called on countries to make a financial commitment to development and sexual and reproductive health activities. Donor countries were to provide 30% of the funds needed and developing countries to provide the other 70%. As a donor nation, Australia is a key provider of aid in the Asia Pacific region. Since making its commitment to the ICPD PoA in 1994 the Australian government has failed every year to meet the commitments it made. As a signatory to the ICPD PoA Australia agreed to provide 0.7% of its GNI to overseas development assistance. Since 1994 Australia's ODA has not exceeded 0.32%, this was in 1995-96, since this allocation the amount given to ODA has declined and this year Australia's ODA was just 0.26%! Since becoming a signatory to the ICPD PoA the allocation of Australian funds to ICPD activities has been inconsistent, the graph below shows only an increase in HIV spending since 1994, with some minor increases given to Reproductive Health Care throughout the same period.

## Australia's ODA expenses

