

David Allen
GPO 1865, Sydney, NSW 2001
23 Feb, 2006
Tel: 0419 268-583
Email: straal19@hotmail.com

Dear Senate Inquiry into Oil Supplies,

Australia's oil supplies, along with those of the rest of the world, are running out. Most oil supplies that have been discovered have been exploited.

1. Introduction

The disappointing thing is that the benefits from these magnificent gifts from the past have been, generally speaking, squandered on trinkets and on short-term political goals. They have produced little of substance. Indeed, the human species may have a longer projected existence-expectancy if oil had never been commercialised.

Oil has been used primarily for transport, industry and war. Much of today's transport could be simply terminated – the nation gains little from it. Much of the output from industry has little real value. A need for a brand new widget is generated artificially and people buy these widgets, use them a few times and look for something new.

Wars cost Australia people and resources as well as diminishing our humanity. The proposition that we have ever won a war requires a very convoluted definition of the verb 'to win' as we watch our relative financial position sink below that of nations that have absolutely no natural resources.

2. Financial Aspects

Australia's external deficit has doubled over the past decade. Much of our money has been squandered on oil and on trinkets that are produced from oil-based industry.

Australia is a very resource-rich country. Nevertheless, our capacity to continue to rip our resources out of the ground to pay for useless trinkets at our current rate is measured in years rather than in decades.

It is virtually certain that the days of the two party system of administration that we currently enjoy are numbered.

3. Alternative Approaches for Australia

Australia has a small population. The genuine energy needs of modern Australians needs to be evaluated and rationalised.

Transport certainly needs to be rationalised. We do not need half empty planes flying around the nation. The price that is paid for our transport should reflect the value of the resource (mainly oil) that is being used, rather than the cost of drilling, pumping, refining, transporting and selling oil which are very cheap by comparison.

Alternative definitions of wealth are required. These definitions would need to take our needs into account as well as those of the next generations.

We could then evaluate each macro-activity to see if it is creating wealth in the long term, proposing alternatives as necessary.

We need to have people with sufficient mathematical skills to manage our industry and governments in a world of diminishing resources. Improved education is essential to Australia's commercial survival.

Certainly a more rational approach will be forced upon us as the fount of available resources runs dry.

4. Alternative Energy Sources for Australia

Alternative renewable energy sources exist and can be exploited. Energy from wind, water and solar power is readily available.

Research into renewable energy resources is an activity for which future generations will thank us. Research into techniques for getting the energy from renewable sources to the more densely populated areas of Australia is also required.

Uranium has little value to Australia as an energy source. Our population concentrations are too small for us to be able to afford the enormous overheads that are associated with the generation of energy from uranium.

5. Alternative Energy Sources for the Rest of the World

Europe, Africa, Asia and America are appalled at the consequences of global warming. Studies show that thousands of millions of people may die as sea levels rise over the next two hundred years. Many people from these lands will want to come to Australia, targeting our plateaus.

Europe, Africa, Asia and America are very worried by the rate in which the world's oil supplies are being consumed.

Europe, Africa, Asia and America see a cheap and clean alternative – Australia's uranium. Their proposal is that Australia would mine uranium for a small price and clean up the environmentally damaged land and water.

Europe, Africa, Asia and America then propose to use Australia's uranium for their own comfort and then to return the radio-active by-products to Australia to be stored in nuclear slag-heaps. Propaganda articles, declaring nuclear energy to safe, clean and beneficial for our Indigenous Communities are frequently available in Australia's media.

Europe, Africa, Asia and America advocate that Australia will benefit, as we will be able to pay for some of the useless trinkets that we have bought over recent years. Our external deficit was enormous 10 years ago and it has doubled since then.

Given Australia's approach to energy and appetite for trinket consumption, we will be forced to say "Yes!" when Europe, Africa, Asia and America make us an offer that we cannot refuse.

The sad thing is that, even if we were to rip uranium out of the ground at a greatly accelerated rate, we would still have difficulties in paying for the trinkets that foreign marketing organisations think we should have.

It gets even sadder. Once Australia has a reputation as a nuclear slag-heap, many of our customers would think twice before buying our wheat, beef and other food supplies. The whole exercise could have a massively negative impact on our fragile economy.

Even the assumption that Europe, Africa, Asia and America make that consuming more uranium rather than more fossil fuel would make the human species survive a little longer is contentious. The next nuclear war may destroy humanity more quickly than rising temperatures and sea levels would.

An enormous increase in the amount of nuclear fuel that is available to make even more nuclear weapons would probably reduce the time before our next nuclear war. Such a war would probably destroy more than two Japanese cities and may well destroy the human species.

6. A Viable Future for our Children

Australia, together with Europe, Africa, Asia and America, needs to work towards a viable and sustainable future.

Australia needs to learn more from the spiritual, post-material ethics of our golden past. Aboriginal society was the thriftiest and the most stable the world has ever witnessed. Aboriginal civilisation lasted for tens of thousands of years. We will be lucky if ours lasts another few decades.

We need to reduce our dependency on fossil and nuclear fuel. We need to become creative in defining our realistic requirements for energy consumption and we need a touch of genius in order to make the amounts of energy that are required available to our populations in a sustainable way.

The Laws of History are set in concrete. We can choose to ignore them, but, if we act wisely, we can provide a sustainable future for many more generations of Australians.

The choice is ours.

