

## Submission to the Productivity Commission

### Relating to Population Growth

By Rex Beer

13 Brown St, Whangaparaoa

1. My submission is about general considerations of population growth – of which *immigration* is a part.
2. It is evident that population growth is responsible for multiple problems – including, insufficient housing, insufficient roading, insufficient health facilities, insufficient education facilities, over-crowding, etc.
3. It could be said that it is not the population growth that causes these problems, but the inadequate response of government in failing to provide sufficient facilities. Clearly, it is an indictment of governments (both central and local) – but it is also apparent that government shows no sign of any *effective* attempt to address these shortcomings. Probably mainly because spending money on catering for future population growth requires taking it from the population now; which will never be politically attractive.
4. I believe that population growth is responsible for a major drop in NZ's standard of living. The biggest factor in this, is housing shortage. Over recent decades, because of population growth, housing has become increasingly expensive (in real terms). Society has become poorer, as people have been unable to earn enough to keep up with the cost of housing. An increasing proportion of people have to turn to renting accommodation; but they still can not avoid the huge drop in living standard, as rentals also naturally increase with the capital cost of housing. The net result is, lower average standard of housing, plus less money available for other necessary things such as food, clothing etc.
5. Further, population growth will cause major difficulty in meeting climate change objectives. Reducing harmful emissions will be hard enough, without adding more people to the equation every year. In fact, it would be reasonable to say, that climate change is being caused by uncontrolled population growth.
6. Population growth consists of broadly – births and deaths - New Zealand residents leaving and returning - immigration both short term (eg for work, education) – and long term for citizenship and permanent residence. It is extremely unfortunate that there has not been any significant planning for, or control over, population growth.
7. The citizens of New Zealand have not been asked what population they want. Surely, a population plan is long over-due – to make a start towards taking some control over it. I believe that a majority of New Zealanders, do not want to have significant population growth.
8. My belief is – that a static population would be acceptable to a majority of New Zealand citizens.
9. Therefore, I submit that, long term, this objective should be an over-riding “bottom line”.