

## Response to Editorial: Children, poverty and health promotion in Australia

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Your recent editorial 'Children, poverty and health promotion in Australia' highlighted opportunities for Australia to promote the health of future generations by ensuring the needs of children and families are prioritised.<sup>1</sup> Missing in the case studies, even when the case was a woman with four children under six and another *in utero*, was mention of the key preventive intervention to improve child-wellbeing: contraception.<sup>2</sup>

Unplanned, unexpected and unwanted pregnancies comprise up to 50% of pregnancies in Australia, and while many are not taken to term, unintended births are more likely amongst disadvantaged groups.<sup>3</sup> These contribute to increasing household costs, and poorer nutrition and educational outcomes for children. They also add to our burgeoning populations, fuelling the housing affordability crisis and overstretching our infrastructure and community services.<sup>4,5</sup> Increasing urban density, which is resulting from Australia's rapid and unplanned population growth, has been associated with increased risks of obesity, asthma, depression and schizophrenia.<sup>6</sup>

Australia has a relatively high fertility rate and even higher population growth rate for a developed country.<sup>7</sup> Our increasing population numbers multiply our high per person environmental impact, to produce our increasing detrimental environmental impact. Growing populations are important drivers of the deteriorating condition of many areas of Australia's environment.<sup>8</sup>

The health and wellbeing of both children alive today and future generations will be enhanced by ensuring that all women of childbearing age receive proactive contraceptive advice, a point missing from Binns *et al.*'s important editorial.

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