

## **Ted Baillieu, AO**

While talking to the subject, *The Biggest Issue Of Them All*, our special guest and former Victorian Premier and Glenferrie Rotarian, Ted Baillieu AO gave us a sobering challenge and global perspective about population pressures over the next three decades.

By 2050, according to UN predictions, India will be the most populous country at 1.7 billion, China at 1.4 billion, with Nigeria overtaking the US in third spot. Asia and Africa are the two largest growing continents in the world.

With a huge band of countries to our north/north west, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Philippines, adding another 645 million people by 2050, there will be huge pressure on them to relocate. Australia with its large land mass (much of it uninhabited), will become increasingly inviting. The world is changing and if we continue to close our doors, Ted surmised, other countries won't accept it and the UN may pressure us to open our borders.

While the median age in Australia is 37, Japan is confronted with a 50 plus figure. In Africa, there are countries with a median age less than 20. This will create a different age landscape and dynamic by 2050.

Within Victoria, Ted observed, the three most important factors in our development are population, infrastructure and services. Trouble is, we are population driven at the moment with infrastructure and productivity falling behind and our standards are being lowered.

We have the highest building construction costs in the world and we are turning a blind eye to huge planning disasters. While planners are advocating high rise, high density, cramped dwellings built around central travel hubs, families are being forced to go further away from the city if they wish to raise their children with room to move and grow. Infrastructure is not keeping pace with the population growth.

Ted also mentioned that our grandchildren will likely face a huge national debt and added that the cladding issue is a worldwide one. In the UK, Boris Johnson is having to deal with three challenges, Brexit, COVID and Cladding.

To lighten things at the end, Ted said that all will be well as long as we still have the footy.

*It was a thoughtful night at RCNB*

*GR*