

# A SUBMISSION TO THE GARNAUT CLIMATE CHANGE REVIEW

FEBRUARY, 2008

## Foreword

This paper is submitted to The Review by a father/son consortium, both graduates in science. The elder is a 67 year old (semi-) retired teacher of High School and University science, having taught Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Geology for more than 45 years and also having published a number of science textbooks. The younger is a 34 year old agricultural scientist who is a director of an Australian Company which produces and markets biological agents for insect control and, through his work, has a close and thorough understanding of farming practices both in Australia and overseas.

Both father and son have, in the last 12 months, had a close look at political and scientific publications\* (including audio-visual productions) related to predictions of climate change /global warming and, in particular, the arguments which have been, and are being, put forward to support or dispute the role of human activities in contributing to whatever climate change might be occurring.

*From the outset, therefore, we express our disappointment that the Terms of Reference of the Garnaut Review did not include a thorough and unprejudiced assessment of the evidence for and against predictions of imminent and catastrophic climate change as well as the evidence related to the impact or otherwise of human production of 'greenhouse gases' on this phenomenon. Had such an assessment occurred, we are confident that The Review would have concluded that the science is certainly NOT 'settled' and that Governmental action in the immediate future to curb the production of carbon dioxide by Australian industries, electric power stations and transport systems would not only be premature but would also be economically and environmentally irresponsible.*

Having made this initial point, the remainder of this paper applies itself to the specifics of the Enquiry's stated Terms of Reference but in a way that reflects the authors' conviction that there can be no justification for attempting to solve a non-problem.

## **Term of Reference #1: The likely effect of human induced climate change on Australia's economy, environment and water resources in the absence of effective national and international efforts to substantially cut greenhouse emissions**

RESPONSE: Numerous empirical measurements (often ignored by climate alarmists) support the assertion that the current rate and direction of global climate change is no more drastic or dangerous than that which has occurred throughout millenia - both before and during the presence of humans on the planet. These same studies support the argument that the mild warming trend which we are currently experiencing, if it continues (and this is far from certain), would result in more benefits than risks to the human race and other lifeforms. Furthermore, the hypothesis that this mild warming trend

is largely due to human emission of greenhouse gases has emerged largely from computer modelling which fails to factor in the many other causes of climate change recognized by the majority of distinguished climatologists, oceanographers, and astonomers worldwide whose research funding is not dependent on promotion of the purely hypothetical link between climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. Also, the climate change alarmists also do not entertain the strong possibility that higher levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere would be beneficial through promoting growth of plants

*In view of the flimsy basis of the assumptions inherent in this term of reference we believe that it is highly unlikely that humans are having any significant impact on global warming whether it be through greenhouse gas emissions or other activities. Therefore, we believe that any efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions would be an unnecessary and futile drain on our economy, would have no effect on our water resources and would likely be environmentally damaging (e.g. by slowing the growth of crop plants, and by inappropriate land use to construct wind farms, solar collectors, nuclear power houses or carbon sequestration facilities)*

**Term of Reference #2: The possible ameliorating effects of international policy reform on climate change, and the costs and benefits of various international and Australian policy interventions on Australian economic activity**

RESPONSE: The climate change issue has gained huge international momentum and is supported by massive funding. The anthropogenic climate change hypothesis has gained its status as an 'indisputable fact' largely through the IPCC reports and through lauding of those well-known identities who are promoting the cause such as Al Gore receiving the Nobel Peace Prize and Tim Flannery being awarded 'Australian of the Year'. It is unlikely those who stand to benefit through fame, research grants and/or carbon trading will allow the bandwagon to slow. Consequently, Australia and the rest of the developed world can expect continuing political pressure form within and without to embrace the alarmist view of climate change and to become signatories to related international agreements to reduce, or compensate for, emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

Since the authors of this paper are convinced that current levels of climate change does not need amelioration and that, anyway, it is impossible to ameliorate global warming (or cooling) by controlling levels of carbon dioxide gas in the atmosphere, we can only urge that *Australian policy makers should resist local and international pressure to act on this issue, at least until open debate between the alarmists and the sceptics, informed by existing and continuing scientific research, produces true consensus as to what climate change is occurring, whether its is dangerous or desirable, whether humans are influencing it, and, if so, to what extent?*

**Term of Reference #3 : The role that Australia can play in the development and implementation of effective international policies on climate change.**

RESPONSE: We believe that the most important role that Australia can play is to exert a moderating influence on those who have fully embraced the anthropogenic climate change concept and who are urging immediate and extreme actions in response to the assumed problem without first establishing evidence which confirms that the problem exists and that human activity is a significant cause.

*We believe our political leaders need to admit that the matter remains controversial, to be open to hearing both sides of the argument, to establish forums where the presumed problems, its causes and its solutions can be debated and to establish a permanent advisory panel composed of informed but unprejudiced individuals who will continuously monitor the emerging evidence, the controversy within the scientific community and only recommend policy or actions if and when the 'science is settled'.*

Such a position would allow Australia to demonstrate its independence from international 'groupthink' and to provide a leadership model for other developed and developing nations which are at risk of being bulldozed into premature and ill-informed responses to scare-mongering about global warming and its hypothetical effects.

**Term of Reference #4: In the light of 1 to 3, recommend medium to long term policy options for Australia and the time path for implementation which, taking the costs and benefits of domestic and international policies on climate change into account, will produce the best possible outcomes for Australia**

RESPONSE:

We recommend that the Australian Government:

1. *holds back on making, in the short or medium future, any policy decisions or mandates which are designed to reduce levels of carbon dioxide in the Australian atmosphere, particularly in regard to the use of coal for generation of electrical power.*
2. *establishes an ongoing, open 'Climate Change' Commission of Enquiry, supported by a research panel, to monitor progress in the climate change debate, to gather and assess evidence on both sides of the argument and to regularly report its findings to the Australian public.*
3. *commissions relevant Ministeries to thoroughly evaluate the possible costs and benefits of the various responses to climate change which have been proposed as ways of ameliorating anthropogenic climate change but which may have other, real environmental or economic benefits for Australia. Some examples are:*
  - *utilisation of nuclear, solar, wind, tidal and geothermal energy sources*
  - *production of biofuels*
  - *development of vehicles which do not generate true air pollutants such as nitrogen oxides, soot, carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon vapours*

- *irrigation of the Australian interior*
  - *reafforestation of denuded or weed infested areas of the continent*
4. *continues to plan for effective responses to extreme weather events (such as storms, floods, droughts and bushfires) which will continue to affect Australian communities whether or not global climate change is occurring and whether or not future trends are towards global warming or global cooling*
  5. *advises the United Nations of its position and urges moderation in climate change action by other governments until we can be sure any longer term actions are for betterment of the planet and its inhabitants*
  6. *provide technical advice and support to China and India in order to help them control the real problems of air, water and land pollution they are experiencing as their industries and economies grow rapidly.*

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\* Although this brief paper does not include references to supporting publications, the authors have assembled an extensive collection of print and audio-visual resources which support the positions they have taken in this paper. They would be happy to make this collection available on loan to the Garnaut Review Committee.