

(earlier submission)

SUBMISSION TO THE GARNAUT CLIMATE CHANGE ENQUIRY

By Emeritus Professor Don Aitkin AO

This submission is a summary of an address to be delivered in March to the Australian Planning Institute. A copy of that address will be lodged as another submission after its delivery.

This submission can be summarised under five headings.

(1) Is the earth warming, and has it warmed since the beginning of the 20th century?

This question is essentially about measurement, 'Average global temperature' is a construct, not a real observation, and there is considerable uncertainty about the reliability and validity of the construct. In any case, the IPCC's estimate of global warming in the 20th century is $0.6^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 0.2^{\circ}\text{C}$, which is unlikely to be greater than the error surrounding the measurements. It is not a large increase.

(2) Is the warming unprecedented?

The answer is 'No'. There is abundant evidence that the earth has been through cold and warm periods in recorded human history, periods that last for scores of years, even centuries.

(3) Is the warming due to human activity, especially in releasing CO₂ into the atmosphere?

It is possible, and physics provides the theory, through greenhouse gas emissions. But there is no observational evidence that whatever rise in temperature has occurred is due to the increase in CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere. The IPCC does not advance any, and relies on computer modelling to support its claim that increases in carbon dioxide result in increased temperatures. There is good evidence that rises in temperatures lead much later to increases in CO₂, and that argument is no less plausible.

(4) Due diligence should lead the Enquiry to inspect carefully all the IPCC and SPM papers, given that the IPCC's very existence is predicated on anthropogenic global warming. That is to say, the IPCC is not disinterested in the findings and advice it offers.

(5) I recommend that the Enquiry search for a way to have the science of climate change discussed publicly and at some length. Despite the Al Gore film, the

science is not settled. In my judgment, no body like the IPCC would be set up today with its present terms of reference were it not in existence now.

My address will deal with these matters at greater length. In the meantime I strongly commend to the Enquiry the submissions of John McLean and Richard Mackey.

Author: Don Aitkin, historian and political scientist, has been Chairman both of the Australian Research Grants Committee and the Australian Research Council, Chairman of the Board of the Institute of Advanced Studies at the Australian National University, a member of the Australian Science and Technology Council and of a number of other research and science bodies, and most recently the Chairman of the Multidisciplinary Assessment Committee of the Canada Foundation for Innovation. Over the past twenty years he has written extensively on peer review and on research and science policy.