



Science, Climate and a Load of Codswallop

It's too late, but Pierpont has just thought of an infallible way of making money at this year's Diggers and Dealers in Kalgoorlie.

He should have made a voodoo doll of Professor Ross Garnaut and auctioned it to the miners, together with a large hatpin. The bidding would have been fierce, because Ross is the government's cheerleader for both the mining super profits tax and the carbon tax which La Joule and her Axis of Evil (the independents and Bob Brown's Watermelon Party) are using to kill off the Australian resources industry.

Your correspondent believes the so-called carbon tax is really a political device for ripping money out of resource companies and scattering it among lower income groups in the hope they will all vote for La Joule at the next election.

Pierpont's belief that carbon dioxide is innocent is shared by Dick Warburton, former chairman of Caltex and David Jones and one of Australia's most respected businessmen. In the early days of the CO₂ debate, Dick chaired a committee appointed by the then Minister for Climate Change, Penny Wong. The committee's job was to verify the process under which permits were to be given to companies and industries whose activities emitted CO₂.

After studying the matter, Dick decided the process was quite good but the policy was nonsense. "The more I looked at it [the purported threat of CO₂ to the climate] the more I thought it was a load of codswallop," Dick told Pierpont.

When the committee reported, Dick told Penny there were different schools of thought on the science. "She said 'The science is absolutely settled and I don't want any discussion on that'." Dick's chairmanship was not renewed and he sounds lucky to have escaped Canberra without having his mouth washed out with carbolic soap.

By now, astute readers will be muttering to each other "Ah, but Dick and Pierpont aren't scientists!" True, but neither is Ross. Ross is an economist, yet every word he utters on about carbon dioxide is treated as though handed down on stone tablets from Mt Sinai.

The 2008 Garnaut climate change review and the 2011 update are the intellectual foundation for La Joule's CO₂ tax. Ross says mainstream science believes with a high level of certainty that the planet is warming and that human emissions of CO₂ are the cause. "By mainstream science I mean the overwhelming weight of authoritative opinion in the relevant disciplines, as expressed in peer-reviewed publications", he says.

The trouble with that definition of mainstream science is that peer-reviewed papers on global warming are controlled by a closed priesthood. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has been widely criticised for its alarmist views on CO₂ and global warming. Not much of this criticism is in peer-reviewed publications, however, because it is the IPCC's true believers who do the reviewing and they dismiss papers critical of their beliefs.

Professor Hans von Storch, a climate scientist at the Meteorological Institute of Hamburg University who believes the warming of the planet has been oversold, says: "The IPCC has failed to ensure that the

assessment reports, which shall review the existing published knowledge and knowledge claims, should have been prepared by scientists not significantly involved in the research themselves. Instead, the IPCC has asked scientists like Professor Mann to review his own work. This does not represent an independent review."

Professor Michael Mann is a climate scientist at Penn State University whose hockey stick graph is at the epicenter of the climate debate. In 1998 he published a graph which showed the planet's temperature had been pretty well flat for 1,000 years, but had just jumped and was about to rise steeply for the next 100 years.

That graph has been the target of more criticism than any other scientific research Pierpont can recall in the last half a century. It looked just like the graphs readers see in dubious prospectuses, where the company's earnings have been flat since its formation but are going to rise magically as soon as all the wood ducks subscribe. So it's been called Michael's hockey stick graph ever since.

The graph had glaring scientific flaws. It ignored the well established Medieval Warming Period from roughly 600 AD to 1100 AD, when temperatures were as warm or perhaps higher than now. That warming was followed by the Little Ice Age from 1600 to 1860. Neither of these large events were shown adequately on the hockey stick graph, which therefore exaggerated the predicted rise.

Another problem was that the older temperatures were estimated using 183 tree ring samples, working on the theory that the width of the rings were a direct guide to the temperature at the time of growth. Tree rings do give such a guide, but it's not infallible. Nevertheless, this was the graph used in Al Gore's horror movie *An Inconvenient Truth*.

When other researchers checked Michael's data (not an easy job, because he took time to part with the numbers, his findings were widely criticised, notably by the Wegman panel in 2006. That panel, comprising three independent statisticians, found the hockey stick graph was based on "simply incorrect mathematics" and that its contention that the 1990s was the hottest decade in a millennium was "essentially unverifiable".

Even Michael has conceded, in an interview last month (June) in the London Daily Telegraph, that there were always 'uncertainties' in his work. "I always thought it was somewhat misplaced to make it [the hockey stick graph] a central icon of the climate change debate," he said.

When Ross talks about the 'overwhelming weight of authoritative opinion', he must be talking exclusively about the true believers of the IPCC dogma. It's a bit less overwhelming to anyone who looks around.

Oklahoma Republic Senator Jim Inhofe is the minority leader of the Environment and Public Works Committee of the US Senate. Jim says more than 1,000 scientists from around the world now dissent from manmade global warming claims.

Ross sweeps them all under the carpet, but they include at least a few scientists who should know what they're talking about. Dr Claude Allegre, for example, is a top French geophysicist with 11 books and more than 100 scientific articles to his credit.

Claude was one of the first scientists to sound global warming fears two decades ago, but now says the cause of climate change is 'unknown'. "Glaciers' chronicles or historical archives point to the fact that climate is a capricious phenomena," he says.

Dr Nir Shaviv is an astrophysicist at the Racah Institute of Physics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He originally believed CO₂ was 'the bad culprit', He now says: "But after carefully digging into the evidence I realised that things are far more complicated than the story sold to us by many climate scientists". Nir believes that solar activity could explain much of the 20th Century global warming. But that is unacceptable advice because La Joule can't tax the sun. Easier to kick the resource industry around.

Dr David Evans is a mathematician and engineer who devoted six years to carbon accounting, building models for the Australian government. He wrote the carbon accounting model (FullCAM) that measures

Australia's compliance with the Kyoto model in the land use change and forestry sector. When he started that job in 1999, he thought the evidence that carbon emissions caused global warming seemed pretty conclusive. "But after 2000 the evidence for carbon emissions gradually got weaker – better temperature data for the last century, more detailed ice core data, then laboratory evidence that cosmic rays precipitate low clouds," he says.

He wrote in a newspaper article: "The signature of an increased greenhouse effect is a hot spot about 10 km up in the atmosphere over the tropics. We have been measuring the atmosphere for decades using radiosonde weather balloons with thermometers that radio back the temperature as the balloon ascends through the atmosphere. They show no hot spot. Whatsoever."

"If there is no hot spot then an increased greenhouse effect is not the cause of global warming. So we know for sure that carbon emissions are not a significant cause of the global warming. If we had found the greenhouse signature then I would be an alarmist again."

David ranks as a modern hero, because his adherence to science cost him personally. He says: "I was on that gravy train, making a high wage in a science job that would not have existed if we didn't believe carbon emissions caused global warming. And so were lots of people around me; and there were international conferences full of such people."

An important point. Governments are throwing billions of dollars at greenhouse research, but only to true believers. Sceptical scientists are left out in the cold. Some noble scientists may stay true to their code and take a vow of poverty, but even scientists are human beings and lots of them like comfortable government-paid sinecures and trips to overseas conferences, so the playing field is not level.

Worse still, one CSIRO scientist was punished by the organisation for criticising the proposed emissions trading system without seeking CSIRO's permission. He was forced to resign. (CSIRO's politically correct views are admired by Ross, incidentally.)

And despite CSIRO there's not much evidence of global warming this antipodean winter. Australia has just recorded its coldest autumn since at least 1950 and Sydney and Canberra have been enduring near-arctic temperatures for the last couple of months. Instead of sitting over his computer models in his ivory tower at the Australian National University, perhaps Ross should stick his head out of the window occasionally.

But rather than look at the thermometer, Ross has declared that it is "beyond reasonable doubt" that the globe is warming and the cause is manmade CO₂ emissions. Over in Washington, Jim Inhofe has branded catastrophic global warming as "the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the American people" and claims he is backed by more than a thousand sceptical scientists. Even if you're a devoted Ross fan, the issue doesn't sound beyond reasonable doubt.

Your correspondent would love to quill more words about the fallacies in computer modeling of climate change and quote more sceptical scientists, including some who've been peer reviewed, but he's run out of space.

Anyhow, Pierpont must start work on a voodoo doll for next year. Does any kindly reader have the phone number of a good witch-doctor in Haiti? And the name of Canberra's best barber? Pierpont needs a lock of Ross's hair.

Pip! Pip!

Pierpont

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