

The lead story today is Nick Minchin's valedictory speech in the Senate. More than any other person Nick was responsible for leading the campaign against the CPRS Bill and incidentally in unseating Malcolm Turnbull as leader, (although Nick has often said that that was never his aim at all; Turnbull's suicide was collateral damage as they say in military circles).

His departure from the Senate will leave a big gap in our defence line in Parliament and his absence from the Abbott govt which will sooner or later take over the reigns of office is a source of concern. But he can claim with complete justification that he has done his bit and has earned the right to catch up on the family life which is denied to federal politicians through their frequent absences in Canberra.

Also of great interest is the publication today in the Melbourne Age – yes the Melbourne Age – of a piece by Bob Carter. My understanding is that it is too late to save The Age (and the SMH) from an imminent demise – both papers are losing lots of money but, none-the-less, a death bed conversion is better than no conversion at all.

Also below is an open letter to the PM from the Fair Farmers' group, an excellent document for sending to friends, particularly in rural Australia, who may need encouragement right now.

Ray Evans

Nick Minchin's speech

Senator MINCHIN (South Australia) (16:00): The 30th of June will, in my case, bring to an end not just 18 years in the Senate but 32 years of full-time involvement in politics. Unusually for the conservative side of politics, I have spent virtually all my working life serving the Liberal cause rather than, perhaps more sensibly, pursuing a career in the profession for which I was trained: the law. My 18 years in this place were preceded by 14 years serving as a full-time professional officer in the Liberal Party at both state and federal level, and I must say it was superb training for my years of service in the Senate. The transition I made from the Liberal Party's professional wing to the parliament is also not common. I remain only the second Liberal Party state director in the history of our party, after John Carrick, to serve in the Senate. I do note with pleasure that former state directors David Kemp, Petro Georgiou and Scott Morrison have made the transition to the House of Representatives, serving there with great distinction.

It has, of course, been an enormous privilege to represent my state and my party in this place for almost one-third of my life. One of the British parliamentarians I most admire, Enoch Powell, wrote in his biography of Joseph Chamberlain, 'All political lives, unless they are cut off in midstream at a happy juncture, end in failure, because that is the nature of politics and of human affairs.' There is, regrettably, much truth in that maxim—which is why I am retiring now, while the going is good, in the hope that it is only my political enemies who will claim that it applies to me. I have been extraordinarily fortunate to have enjoyed a political life that has enabled me to serve at the highest levels of government available to a senator. Unburdened by the levels of ego and ambition which weigh heavily upon so many of our colleagues in the other place, I have instead been the beneficiary of chance, luck and being in the right place at the right time.

Entering the Senate in 1993 in the shadow of such political luminaries as my SA colleagues Robert Hill, Amanda Vanstone, Alexander Downer and Ian McLachlan, I happily resigned myself to a backbench career, feeling privileged indeed to even be here. A series of fortunate circumstances gave me the opportunity, after just nine months, to rise to the front bench as a shadow parliamentary secretary in opposition and then to serve as a parliamentary secretary, junior minister, cabinet minister, deputy leader, Leader of the Government in the Senate and, finally, opposition leader in the Senate. So I have spent 16 of my 18 years on the coalition front bench, including nine years in the cabinet. I remain surprised by the opportunities I have had—none of which, frankly, I expected.

Political life is, of course, a balance sheet and, while I hope history will judge mine as having a plus sign at the bottom, some may well judge that the positives and the negatives are fairly easily balanced. On the positive side of the ledger, I must say that I am delighted to have been able to serve in one of the best ministries in government, that of finance, for six years, making me the longest serving of Australia's 11 finance ministers. Fortuitously, I am also the only one whose every budget produced a surplus. I hasten to note that I lay no claim whatsoever to being the best. That honour rightfully belongs to Peter Walsh, the Labor identity whom I most admire and who is a great Australian. Having been the first South Australian to serve in the finance portfolio, I am pleased that another South Australian senator—albeit a representative of the ALP—currently serves in that role. I will bet that Senator Wong is very glad she is no longer looking after climate change!

The finance minister and the Treasurer are, in any cabinet, the only true representatives of the taxpayer.

Together they must fight an often lonely battle against the ravages of the spending ministers, from the Prime Minister down. I am sure that Senator Wong knows what I am talking about. It was a privilege to fight alongside that greatest of Treasurers, Peter Costello, in that battle to protect the taxpayers. Together we produced six consecutive surpluses, totalling almost \$82 billion. We eliminated government debt and, very importantly, established the Future Fund with sufficient resources to meet the government's substantial unfunded superannuation liabilities. I had Peter Costello's strong support in one of my toughest challenges, the sale of the government's remaining 50 per cent shareholding in Telstra—which, in a process known as T3, completed the privatisation of Telstra. I do not wish to be partisan at all today, but I have to say that I am a little disappointed to see taxpayers now being forced back into being the owners and operators of a telecommunications business, having worked so hard to get them out of it. I do earnestly hope, for the nation's sake, that Senator Conroy actually knows what he is doing.

It has been my privilege to be the first and only South Australian to serve in the industry portfolio, which, at the time I held it, also entailed responsibility for science, resources and energy. I had three years in that megaportfolio, which existed only for the three years I held it. After it nearly killed me, I recommended that it be broken up—a recommendation the Prime Minister sensibly accepted. That portfolio, among many other things, made me the only Commonwealth minister ever to have had responsibility for the whole nuclear fuel cycle, from uranium mining to our only nuclear reactor to radioactive waste management. During those exciting three years, I approved the Beverley uranium mine in my home state of South Australia, I commissioned a replacement nuclear research reactor at Lucas Heights, and it was my job to identify the central north of South Australia as the site for a national radioactive waste repository—all somewhat controversial decisions. I have often wondered why some on the Left show such hostility to me, but I think it does derive from that period. The Left have regrettably allowed radioactivity to blind them to the compassionate and sensitive side of my character. I did think that my initial responsibilities in government for native title and our constitutional convention on a republic would expose my inherent and, I thought, rather obvious limitations and be the summit of my career. Fortunately, Prime Minister Howard, to whom I do owe a great debt, thought he should test me some more. Responsibility for all matters radioactive was certainly testing. My task of devising and steering through the coalition party room and the parliament our reforms to Labor's Native Title Act saw me gain the dubious distinction of being responsible for and centrally involved in the longest debate on any single bill in the history of the Senate, a remarkable 56 hours. That first debate on the Native Title Amendment Bill regrettably did not resolve the matter, necessitating a second, 49-hour, debate. Thus, that bill, for whose carriage I was responsible, resulted in a total of almost 106 hours of debate, by far the longest in Senate history. The next longest was the GST debate, at a paltry 69 hours. That record no doubt reflects my inadequate powers of advocacy as much as it does the intricacies of the bill. It might also reflect Senator Bob Brown's seemingly endless series of questions to me, which turned the committee stages into an interminable tutorial on native title.

I am able to reflect with satisfaction on the 1998 Constitutional Convention, which it was my task to organise and which I think was one of the more successful events of its kind. I am particularly pleased concerning my deep reservations about the use of the Constitution's corporations power to underpin our government's Work Choices legislation. The High Court's frankly surprising decision to uphold the constitutionality of that legislation has been a disaster for federalism. I hope the coalition understands the lesson of our 2007 defeat: the Australian people will only ever accept incrementalism, not radicalism, when it comes to industrial relations reform.

Finally, I regret my incapacity to create the circumstances in which John Howard might have seen the wisdom in retiring on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of his prime ministership in March 2006. My career has been an odd mix of the occasional success and a sequence of failures, but I would like to think I am getting out before falling victim to Enoch Powell's maxim.

Perhaps the most curious thing to me on reflecting on my career is the amount of time and energy occupied by consideration of the issue of carbon dioxide. Little did I know when I entered this place 18 years ago that carbon dioxide would play such a significant role in my career. Education, health, defence, foreign affairs, taxation and fiscal and monetary policy—all of these I expected to dominate political discourse. But carbon dioxide? Never. As I learnt in school, carbon dioxide is a clear, odourless, tasteless and invisible gas that is actually vital to life on earth. It constitutes 0.04 per cent of the atmosphere. Nature is responsible for 97 per cent of the earth's production of CO₂; humans, just three per cent. And yet many now see anthropogenic CO₂ as the greatest threat to humankind on our planet, a threat which demands no less than an economic revolution to avert. Anyone who dares question this as yet unproven theory of anthropogenic global warming is branded a denier, as we heard from my good friend Senator Evans today, and treated as a veritable pariah.

I must say that when I first learned of the existence of the Australian Greenhouse Office, I assumed it was responsible for supplying tomatoes to the Parliament House kitchen. But, no, as I soon learnt as industry minister, it was in fact a government funded redoubt of veritable soldiers in a war against carbon dioxide. The zealotry and obsessive passion of these warriors in the battle against the apparent evils of carbon dioxide remains a curiosity to me. After fighting these people for three years as industry minister, I really did wish they would just go away and grow tomatoes. I am quite surprised and rather disappointed by the loneliness, isolation and indeed demonisation the sadly misunderstood CO₂ is experiencing. Thus, upon leaving the parliament, I am contemplating the foundation of an organisation called 'The Friends of Carbon Dioxide'. Membership will of course be open to all, including the plants whose very existence depends on CO₂. I think this organisation's slogan, 'CO₂ is not pollution', self-selects. It has both accuracy and melody to commend it. I do acknowledge the remarkable power of CO₂. After all, it led me to have to do something I had thought unthinkable, and that was to resign from the coalition frontbench at the end of 2009—albeit for only a very short time. CO₂ played a significant part in the demise of Kevin Rudd and Malcolm Turnbull. It may well result in the demise of our current Prime Minister, so that really is some gas!

I do remain optimistic that one day the world will realise that carbon dioxide is more of a friend than an enemy to the earth's flora and fauna, and I do seriously believe that, given the extraordinary complexity of the natural forces controlling our climate, which have done so for millions of years, the only sensible policy response to the natural process of climate change is prudent and cost-effective adaptation.

It is customary in valedictory speeches to express gratitude to those who have played a key part in one's political life. As a conservative with a keen eye for tradition I do take this opportunity. I remain enormously grateful to Tony Eggleton who, as Liberal Party federal director in 1977, gave me the most junior job in our federal secretariat. Five years later he appointed me as his deputy. Whatever skills I have in campaign management and political administration I learnt at the feet of Tony Eggleton. I am indebted to the South Australian Liberal Party for preselecting me for the vacant No. 3 spot on the Senate ticket for the 1993 election, after just seven years as a South Australian. I owe thanks to Alexander Downer, who, during his short but very exciting time as our leader, first appointed me to the coalition frontbench. I am of course grateful to John Howard for giving me so many opportunities to serve in his government, culminating in my appointment as Leader of the Government in the Senate. Can I say that managing a one-seat coalition government majority in this place for two years was particular challenging—thank you, Barnaby, for that!

I am deeply indebted to all my Liberal Senate colleagues for bestowing upon me the great honour of election as Leader of the Opposition in the Senate following the 2007 election defeat. Nothing has been more humbling to me than to have received the unanimous support of my colleagues to undertake the task. As leader I was fortunate to have in Helen Coonan and then Eric Abetz two hardworking, dedicated and loyal deputies. I want to thank especially my National Party Senate colleagues for their loyalty and support during my 4½ years as coalition Senate leader. I also express my gratitude for the friendship and professional working relationship I have enjoyed with non-coalition senators. May I express particularly my thanks to then defence minister John Faulkner for his significant personal support following the ADFA training accident last year that resulted in serious injuries to my son Oliver. Indeed, the support I received from all senators at that time was enormously important and gratifying. I do also want to thank Commodore Bruce Kafer, who as ADFA commandant was so extraordinarily supportive during that wretched period. I remain saddened that such a fine man has been so poorly treated after the events at ADFA earlier this year.

I want to thank the hardworking and professional officers of the Senate for their support during my 18 years in this place. I was fortunate to have had remarkably capable, tolerant and effective staff throughout my Senate and ministerial career. I thank them especially for restraining my wilder political side and prolonging my career! I also had in Dr Ian Watt, during my six years in Finance, an exemplary departmental secretary and a truly outstanding public servant.

Finally, I thank my wife, Kerry, and children, Jack, Oliver and Anna, for their forbearance in having a politician like me as husband and father. It is the truest of cliches that federal politics in Australia is tough on families and I cannot tell you how much it means to me to have all four members of my immediate family, especially Oliver, in the gallery this afternoon. I am also delighted to have my much younger and much more handsome brother William here today. I have been blessed to have had in Kerry a political wife who not only shares my conservative predilections but brought to our marriage her career as an *Age* journalist. She is the only conservative female journalist that paper has ever had, of course, and her career included service in the Canberra press gallery. I suspect I may be the only federal MP to have had not only a wife but also a mother who served in the Canberra press gallery. Maybe that is why I have perhaps uncharacteristically retained a soft spot for the members of that esteemed institution. I thank them for tolerating my incorrect views on so many issues!

May I conclude by wishing all my retiring Senate colleagues all the very best for the future. As someone who has chosen to retire I express my commiserations to those who have had retirement from the Senate imposed upon them. I want to express my particular gratitude to my fellow South Australian and voluntary retiree Alan Ferguson, with whom I have served for all my years here. I thank him for his friendship and support and especially his companionship on the cold winter nights in the Canberra accommodation we shared for most of my time as a senator. Of course, I refer to the warmth of his whisky, not the warmth of his embrace, which I know is the exclusive preserve of his wonderful wife, Anne.

I close with just one piece of gratuitous advice to all senators, and that is to remember the virtue of earning the respect of your colleagues on all sides of the chamber—earn their respect for your integrity, your decency, your passion, your commitment to your ideals and your willingness to do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Open report to the Prime Minister by the Fair Farming Group; *critical scientific information overlooked in the Garnaut review negates the case for an Australia Carbon Tax or Emissions Trading Scheme (21 June 2011)*

ANALYSIS OF THE GARNAUT CLIMATE CHANGE REVIEW
UPDATE 2011

Introduction

In preparing this analysis The Fair Farming Group brings extensive agricultural, commercial and scientific experience to the issues covered by the Review of the Science of Climate Change Update 2011 submitted by Professor Ross Garnaut.

The Garnaut Review's principal conclusions are:

1. Mainstream science has a high level of certainty that the earth is warming and that human induced emissions of greenhouse gases are the primary cause
2. The severe consequences of a 550ppm concentration of greenhouse gases make it worthwhile to achieve a 450ppm outcome
3. The rate of sea level rise has accelerated and is tracking above the range suggested by the UN International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
4. The land and oceans are running out of their ability to absorb more carbon dioxide (CO₂)

These conclusions are taken to justify the introduction of a carbon tax and an emissions trading scheme (ETS) to drive reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases. These gases are principally comprised of CO₂ produced by burning fossil fuels and methane (CH₄) arising from grazing animals and fugitive coal seam gas emissions.

The following report provides an analysis of the science relevant to each of these conclusions, using information available from the Bureau of Meteorology, the CSIRO and other climate science research institutions.

Our analysis demonstrates that the conclusions of the Garnaut Review:

- are not supported by scientific facts or objective measurements
- ignores the geological history
- are based on projections from questionable computer modelling

This indicates that Professor Garnaut has not been well advised on climate science. Critical scientific information overlooked in the Report negates the case for an Australian carbon tax or emissions trading scheme.

Garnaut Conclusions 1 and 2 – Climate Change

Underlying all Garnaut's major conclusions is the belief that CO₂, sequestered in fossil fuels and now being released through human activity, and methane, arising from coal mining and grazing animals, will have a dangerous impact on climate. The following scientific evidence does not support this belief.

(i) Fossil Fuels and CO₂ Cycle

The burning of all currently identified fossil fuel reserves in the world would double the level of CO₂ in the atmosphere to about 800ppm. This is well below the concentrations of 2000 to 3000ppm at the time when fossil fuels were formed in the Carboniferous era. That was a very good time for life on earth and for the

growth of the vegetation which subsequently formed fossil fuels. The eminent scientist Dr. Richard Dawkins described the period as supporting abundant plant and animal life. Yet the Garnaut Review predicts severe consequences with greenhouse gas concentrations of 550ppm.

There is clearly a discrepancy between the computer models' alarmist predictions contrasted with the geological record of no runaway temperature at much higher atmospheric CO₂ levels. This points to a fundamental question of the ability of the computer models to reproduce the characteristics of the climate system and predict future temperatures.

Recent measurements and analysis by Professor Richard Lindzen at MIT, Dr Roy Spencer at the University of Alabama at Huntsville and Dr. Frank Wentz at Remote Sensing Systems in Santa Rosa, California exposed a problem with the computer modelling of the atmosphere, let alone its accuracy.

There is general scientific acceptance that an increase in CO₂ will cause a lessening in the increase in infra-red radiation and as a result a reduced temperature increase at the earth's surface (*Figure 1*). Thus a doubling of CO₂ in the atmosphere will give rise to about a 1° centigrade increase in temperature.

To this extent the science is settled.

The IPCC models multiply this effect by a factor of 2 to 4 from the assumed "feedback" effect of increased cloud cover and water vapour, the most important greenhouse gas. It is on this assumption that the science is certainly not settled.

The analysis of actual measurements in the atmosphere by the above-named scientists shows that the multiplier is of the order of one or even less. This reduced multiplier has also been explained by William Kininmonth, former Head of the Australian National Climate Centre.

Dr. David Evans, a carbon accounting modeller who consulted full-time for the Australian Greenhouse Office (now the Department of Climate Change) from 1999 to 2005 and part-time from 2008 to 2010, in a speech in Perth on 23 March 2011 noted that this critical information had not been given or explained to the general public.

There is no geological evidence of extreme or runaway global temperatures in the past when there have been high levels of CO₂. This can be understood after taking into account the diminishing greenhouse impact from increasing CO₂ levels in the atmosphere, when combined with the measured temperature multiplier of one or even less.

(ii) Measured Temperature Change

Temperatures rose in Australia during the last century by 0.8° centigrade, however 0.5° of this increase was caused by the Great Pacific Climate Shift of 1976-77, an event identified by oceanographers as a part of the Pacific Decadal Oscillation that is recognised by the IPCC as not related to increasing atmospheric CO₂. After allowing for the Great Pacific Climate Shift, the temperature increase attributed by climate modellers to rising CO₂ as the primary cause, is then 0.3° centigrade for the century, not the full measured 0.8° centigrade increase.

In the twentieth century CO₂ increased by 5ppm in the first half and by 70ppm in the second half of the century. In the corresponding periods the Australian temperature increased by 0.15°C in the first half and by 0.15°C in the second half of the century after adjusting for the Great Pacific Climate Shift. CO₂ is clearly not the only cause of the temperature increase, otherwise there would have been a greater increase in temperature in the second half of the century.

It must also be acknowledged that temperature has increased in the 20th Century, independent of CO₂ levels, as a recovery from the Little Ice Age, which peaked around 1670.

(iii) Climate variability

Climate variability, in particular rainfall variability, is a key measure in assessing farming risks. Greater climate variability is predicted by computer models as a result of higher CO₂ levels. The 1963 study by Sir Samuel Wadham and his colleagues, of rainfall variability for Australia compared with overseas, used as a measure the percentage variation each year compared with the average. This measure can be used to compare the first half of the last century with the second half. The 50 year periods for comparison are chosen because selected shorter periods can provide information that is not representative.

The average variability of rainfall in the Murray-Darling Basin during the first half of the century was 24% compared with 22% in the second half. On the other hand, average annual rainfall in the first half of the century was 451mm but increased in the second half to 496mm (*Figure 2*). IPCC computer models in

contrast predict less rain and more variability.

(iv) CO₂ is essential to plant life

The frequent referral to CO₂ as a pollutant lacks any scientific credibility. CO₂, an odourless and colourless gas, as scientists know is essential for plant life where photosynthesis enables plants to capture the carbon in CO₂ to grow and produce food and release oxygen essential for animal and human life.

The use of the word carbon as an abbreviation for CO₂ in the atmosphere is not correct and referring to it as a pollutant is simply misleading.

Prior to industrialisation the level of atmospheric CO₂ was near 270ppm (0.027%) and it has now reached 390ppm (0.039%). These levels are much lower than at the time when plants evolved. The levels are deficient for optimal plant growth and constrain food production. For this reason market gardeners for the past 100 years have been adding CO₂ to glasshouses to achieve levels near 1000ppm.

Some 550 million years ago, CO₂ is estimated to have been at 7,000ppm (the US Navy allows 8,000ppm level in the air inside its fleet of submarines). In the past CO₂ levels were therefore many times the present level. Over subsequent geological time atmospheric CO₂ levels have declined. This is because the equivalent of 20,000,000 billion tonnes of CO₂ has been removed by combining it with calcium, mainly in marine skeletal material, to form limestone. This process continues.

The white cliffs of Dover are an example of these huge deposits which have removed CO₂ from the atmosphere.

This explains why CO₂ levels have reached such a low level by historical standards. It emphasises the importance of the CO₂ now being recycled from sequestered CO₂ in fossil fuels to improve food production.

In the Carboniferous period a much lower quantity of some 3,000 billion tonnes of CO₂ was captured by plants which subsequently formed fossil fuels. As these fuels are burnt this becomes available to replenish CO₂ depleted by limestone formation.

(v) Methane

Methane is a greenhouse gas associated with grazing animals and considered a factor causing global warming. Methane from grazing animals is estimated by government to be 10% of Australian emissions of greenhouse gases. However, these estimates also show no increase in agricultural methane emissions over the last 20 years.

Recent research shows that the increase in methane emissions in the past can be explained by the dramatic increase in natural gas (fossil methane) use and leakage from badly managed transmission and distribution systems in the Northern Hemisphere. With the improvement of these systems leakage has been reduced and there has only been a slight methane increase since 1990 - the level has in fact varied with El Ninos and La Ninas.

Grazing animals only release carbon that has already been removed from the atmosphere by the pastures they consume. This process, which recycles carbon over the short term, is carbon neutral as methane is broken down in the atmosphere. It is the same closed cycle which is recognised to justify biofuels.

Therefore there are no grounds for the later inclusion of methane from grazing animals in a carbon tax or ETS.

Garnaut Conclusion 3 – Ocean Levels

Alarmist predictions of rising temperatures in turn have led the IPCC to forecast an acceleration in the rate of rise in ocean levels to rates several times that measured over the past 100 years of 2 to 3mm per year. However, this has not been observed to date despite rising CO₂ levels.

In fact actual values derived from satellite altimeter measurements by University of Colorado scientists demonstrate no measurable increase in the rate of annual sea level rise over the period 1993 to 2010. Indeed they show that the annual sea level rise over this period has actually declined in more recent years as shown in the following table.

Oceans	Annual sea level rise from 1993	Annual sea level rise from 2002 to
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	to 2010 - mm per year	2010 - mm per year
Global – all oceans	3.1 +/- 0.4	2,2 +/- 0.3
Pacific Ocean	2.8 +/- 0.2	0.9 +/- 0.3

The reported rise in sea levels on some Pacific Islands has been due to the slow consolidation of underlying coral causing subsidence. The mining and erosion of protective reefs has made the islands more vulnerable to violent storms and the subsequent damage has been wrongly attributed to climate change.

Garnaut Conclusion 4 - Ocean Acidity

The claim that oceans will become more acidic and threaten coral is open to serious question. The oceans are alkaline and range from 7.9 to 8.2pH (less than 7pH is acidic) depending on location. Minerals dissolved in seawater buffer the pH level by reacting with dissolved CO₂ to form neutral compounds and thus safeguard the ocean against any significant change in pH levels. This would occur even with massive absorption of CO₂ well in excess of what has been generated by human activity.

Coral which has existed for over 500 million years and other marine life which form limestone have been protected by this pH buffer, when CO₂ levels were many times the present level. The Garnaut Review ignores that alkaline seawater provides a buffer against acidity.

The oceans contain about 80 times as much dissolved CO₂ as is contained in the atmosphere. On this basis even a doubling of CO₂ in the atmosphere will lead to a negligible increase in total CO₂ dissolved in the oceans, which can be accommodated as past geological events demonstrate.

Conclusion

There is no clear or compelling scientific evidence to support the conclusions in the Garnaut 'Review of the Science of Climate Change Update 2011'. The Review overlooks recent analysis of the climate measurements which expose the fundamental problems at the heart of the IPCC climate models.

Mankind is simply returning CO₂ to the atmosphere from whence it came. This is at a time when a low level of CO₂ is limiting plant growth when more food is required for a growing world population. CO₂ is essential for all plant life and thus not a pollutant. From the perspective of food production, a carbon tax or ETS would also be inappropriate.

Scientific evidence based on past events demonstrates that the release of CO₂ previously sequestered in fossil fuels will not cause dangerous global warming. Again it follows that a carbon tax or an ETS which would impose a severe cost penalty for agriculture and for the economy overall is not required.

Scientific evidence supports the conclusion we need CO₂ rather than fear it. To suggest otherwise, ignores our obligation to provide increasing food production for a growing world population and the best interests of the Australian community.

The Fair Farming Group, which prepared this report and analysis, has two key objectives:

1. To ensure that discussion of issues related to climate is based on scientific fact and analysis.
2. To protect Australian agriculture and industry from any unwarranted penalties in the guise of a carbon tax or Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), either of which would have an adverse impact on the farming community and the economy.

Members of The Fair Farming Group bring extensive agricultural experience and business and scientific backgrounds to this analysis.

The Fair Farming Group comprises:

John Chambers BCom, MBA, CA, FAICD, FFin;
 Andrew Miller BBus;
 Richard Morgan AM BSc (Ag), BCom, FAIAST (Convenor);
 Bob Officer BAgSc, MAgEc (UNE), MBA, PhD (Chicago), FASSA, SFFin;
 Mark Rayner BSc (Hons), ChemEng (UNSW), FTSE, FAusIMM, FIEA, FAICD;
 Graham Sellars-Jones BCom.
 Consultant to the Group, Australian physicist Dr. Tom Quirk MSc, MA, DPhil (Oxon), SMP (Harv).

R M Morgan, The Fair Farming Group, email: bpchpl@bigpond.com
 For scientific reference details please contact Dr Tom Quirk, email: twquirk@labyrinth.net.au

Labor's Green alliance to colour taxation debate

- Editorial from: [The Australian](#)
- June 27, 2011 12:00AM

INCREMENTALLY, a more detailed picture is emerging about the pivotal climate change policy debate shaping national politics.

The Prime Minister has revealed that a combination of tax cuts, increases in family payments and boosts to pensions will ensure that seven million households, or 90 per cent of Australians, will receive some compensation for the carbon tax. While Julia Gillard will need to provide much more detail, such as dollar figures and rates, she at least faces no ambiguity about the source of her funds - they will be raised by the carbon tax itself.

Tony Abbott, on the other hand, has pledged to rescind any carbon tax, yet now also promises tax cuts. He will have to propose sufficient budget cuts to fund more than \$3 billion over four years for the Coalition's direct action carbon abatement plan, plus some broad tax cuts, likely to be substantially more expensive. Mr Abbott has already rejected Ms Gillard's offer of Treasury resources to detail his funding plans.

The political calculations, of course, have been made. Mr Abbott will be happy to wear the taunts about his absent costings from now until the election, content that his promise of tax cuts dents Labor's attack that he will be scrapping the government's package. But this newspaper believes he should go further. The Coalition should detail its tax cuts and the proposed savings measures. If it is good enough to flag tax cuts at this stage of the electoral cycle, it is good enough also to quantify them and identify the savings measures to pay for them.

In broad brush, this argument will shape much of the political debate between now and the next polling day. It is a discussion not just about climate change and what is best for the environment, but increasingly about economic management and who is best equipped to restore the budget. Ms Gillard will need to explain why she believes her carbon tax does not put us ahead of the international emissions reduction game and place Australian jobs at risk. Mr Abbott will need to justify his less efficient carbon abatement program and detail significant spending cuts to pay for it, along with his tax cuts.

But the Prime Minister is not well served by having the Greens make her economic arguments for her. When Bob Brown attacked the Coalition's plan yesterday it was a reminder that Labor's formal partner in government is a high-taxing, big-government party. Senator Brown was brutally frank about his desire to see the carbon tax eventually force the closure of coalmines. Ms Gillard must consider the implications of a formal alliance with a party that openly seeks to shut down the nation's largest export industry. Taxpayers deserve to know what role Senator Brown is playing in major economic decisions.

With the Greens assuming the balance of power in the Senate next week, the portents are ominous. As if destroying our main export industry isn't odd enough, Senator Brown has announced a bizarre assortment of 70 portfolios to be shared among the 10 Greens. The leader takes responsibility for foreign policy but there are separate spokespeople for Burma, Tibet, West Papua and East Timor. Whaling and Antarctica will form another portfolio -- one of the seven held by Senator Brown, another of which, it must be noted, is Treasury.

Abbott's tactic is right for tax fight

- Christopher Pearson
- From: [The Australian](#)
- June 25, 2011 12:00AM

ONE of Mark Latham's important contributions to the national conversation on politics was to point out that it was too often a dialogue of the deaf.

Political insiders, people "within the beltway", spend almost all their time talking to or about one another. Regardless of party allegiances, they share assumptions and speech codes that others find well-nigh impenetrable.

Outsiders are mostly passive, inarticulate and fairly powerless. They are people who tend to make relatively few life-shaping decisions for themselves but on whose behalf such decisions are routinely made by politicians and bureaucrats. They flesh out T.S. Eliot's axiom: "Neither shall the agent suffer nor the patient act."

Latham's instinct to recruit the outsiders in his bid for power was sensible enough.

What brought it unstuck in 2004 was a typical exercise in insider politicking, where federal Labor was revealed as much more interested in Green preferences and preserving forests than in preserving timber workers' jobs. John Howard knew where most of the votes were to be garnered and triumphed.

Arthur Sinodinos, Howard's former chief of staff and a regular columnist for The Australian, playfully refers to Tony Abbott as Spartacus and sees him as proposing to lead a revolt of the slaves.

While it turns on their heads some entrenched views about the way conservatives conduct themselves, it's an apt analogy.

Abbott sees all of the reluctant conscripts to a carbon tax, both those who didn't vote for it and especially those who were deceived by Julia Gillard's Labor, as a natural part of his constituency. The proposal in parliament last week to introduce a plebiscite on the matter was designed to highlight him in that role.

As Paul Kelly noted on Wednesday: "It is proof, again, of the defining insiders-outsideers gulf that splits Australia. Among insiders, Abbott's bill is a stunt; among outsiders it is a valid exposure of Gillard's broken election pledge not to have a carbon tax. Abbott knows this issue may terminate Gillard's career."

It's unfortunate that Kelly, having got to the heart of that apparently unbridgeable divide, spent the rest of his column asserting his insider affiliations.

"There is no established practice in Australian national politics for plebiscites to determine policy issues," he wrote, "for the obvious reason they are a bad idea that advances neither democracy, good government nor sound public policy. The plebiscite on the carbon tax proposed by Tony Abbott is not smart politics. It does not assist Abbott's cause or his standing. It suggests the Coalition needs stunts, not sound argument, to buttress its case."

As if that weren't enough, he further agitated: "It is a mistake for the Liberal Party to propose 'government by plebiscite'. This violates the practice and philosophy espoused by its former leader, John Howard. It defies the principles of representative democracy that have served Australia well. There is one certainty: the notion is inconsistent with the principles of conservatism that Abbott is supposed to uphold."

Four indignant paragraphs later, Kelly was still on his high horse, asserting that "the policy plebiscite undercuts the high practice of Westminster politics Australia-style where politicians govern for a three-year term, make their decisions for better or worse, and accept the public's judgment at the next poll".

I've worked closely with Abbott through the years he has been in parliament, editing two books he wrote on the Constitution, and I must say he has never struck me as a constitutional vandal or as someone in the least bit interested in undercutting the Westminster system. Quite the opposite, in fact, unlike the pro-republican majority of the Canberra press gallery. I think that proposing a

plebiscite on the carbon tax is a perfectly defensible position for an opposition leader facing a minority government and that he would be failing in his duty not to test the resolve of both houses of parliament. After all, it's not as though the government didn't have a yawning democratic deficit over a contentious, economy-wide measure it promised not to introduce and that, had Gillard been truthful about her intentions, would in all probability have cost her the election.

It was likely, until Steve Fielding suddenly abandoned his previous position on the carbon tax, that the upper house would have voted to debate a bill for a plebiscite. It was less likely, though by no means inconceivable on the basis of recent votes, that the lower house also might have allowed the matter to be debated, regardless of whether a majority ended up voting for an indicative poll. Had the bill passed both houses, an embarrassed government would probably have gone to an early election instead. So it was more than just a thought bubble or a stunt on Abbott's part.

He wasn't proposing to abandon Westminster in favour of "government by plebiscite" but using the forms provided by the parliament to focus public attention on a deal being stitched up in camera by the misleadingly named "multi-party committee".

If, in the process, he persuaded voters that they ought to be given a say in the decision to introduce the tax, before rather than after the event, he may actually have narrowed the gulf between insiders and outsiders.

It would be remiss not to end by noting the departure last week of Family First's Fielding. He has had three years exercising a vote in a chamber where the Howard government couldn't depend on a majority and another three in the Rudd-Gillard governments holding the balance of power.

He has had many opportunities to build up a niche constituency. He has had plenty of staff to advise him, the rudiments of a party machine and at least at the outset no shortage of willing helpers. Yet, to the astonishment of apparatchiks across the political class, he hasn't been able to convert those assets into a second Senate term. His place will be taken by another, rather more conservative Victorian, the Democratic Labor Party's John Madigan, a blacksmith by trade.

The Age: Record number oppose price on carbon: poll

Daniel Flitton

June 27, 2011



Australians are less concerned about greenhouse gas emissions than they were five years ago, according to new polling. *Photo: Reuters*

AUSTRALIANS are far less worried about the world choking on greenhouse gas emissions than they were five years ago - and a record number of people now oppose a price on carbon, new polling has found.

The hardening of attitudes on environment policy appears to further dent support for Julia Gillard's proposed carbon tax, with nearly 40 per cent of Australians now not prepared to pay anything if tackling climate change involves a rise in electricity bills - an almost two-fold increase compared with 2008.

Overall, the number of Australians who believe the country should take urgent steps to address the problem "even if this involves significant costs" has plunged from 68 per cent in 2006 to 41 per cent today.

Advertisement: Story continues below

The poll of Australian's opinion on international issues by the Lowy Institute in Sydney also shows combating climate change has continued to drop among issues ranked as priorities for Australia - with only 46 per cent seeing it as "important" compared with 75 per cent in 2007.

The number of people willing to pay an extra \$10 each month for energy fell to 19 per cent - down from 25 per cent last year.

But there is little consolation for the government, even among those who see global warming as a gradual problem that will involve some costs.

This group is intensely critical of federal Labor's environment policy, with more than 80 per cent saying the government is doing a poor job.

Protecting Australian workers, stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and combating terrorism remain the major public priorities in world affairs.

Asylum-seeker arrivals are also a major concern, with most people fearing for refugees' safety during a hazardous boat journey, the cost of processing and security risks.

The poll also shows the war in Afghanistan remains deeply unpopular, with well over half of Australians wanting to see troops return home.

But at the same time, 72 per cent of people are willing to keep a military presence in Afghanistan to protect rights of local women.

Only 38 per cent agree Australia should remain engaged as long as its US ally is in the country.

The poll of 1002 people was taken in early April, before the April 29 death of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

As the government embarks on a major review of the positioning of Australia's defence assets - known as a force posture review - the prospect of additional US bases in Australia has support from 55 per cent of the population.

But efforts to cast any change to defence arrangements as a response to a growing threat of China runs against majority opinion, with most people believing the rise of China has been good for Australia and unlikely to rank Beijing as a future military threat.

The WikiLeaks website gets a tick from almost two-thirds of Australians as a "good thing" after leaking thousands of classified US military and diplomatic files.

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/environment/record-number-oppose-price-on-carbon-poll-20110626-1glp4.html#ixzz1QQYRq23r>

Lawson In Australia: 'Saving The Planet' Will Destroy The Economy

Saturday, 25 June 2011 09:10 Christian Kerr,
The Australian

MARGARET Thatcher's one time right-hand man Nigel Lawson is not so much a climate sceptic as sceptical of the necessity for action, let alone the ways we are tackling climate change.

Lawson will be in Sydney in six weeks to expound his views at a public debate on the proposition: "We need a carbon tax to help stop global warming."

The combatants themselves should raise temperatures. The former British chancellor of the exchequer and energy secretary will lead a negative team comprising former Keating government minister Gary Johns and University of Adelaide geologist and author of the sceptic's bible Heaven and Earth, Ian Plimer.

The affirmative will be put by two former opposition leaders, John Hewson and Mark Latham, backed by University of NSW climatologist Benjamin McNeil.

Lawson says it is scientifically established that increased carbon dioxide emissions will warm the planet, but adds, "it is uncertain how great any such warming would be and how much harm, if any, it would do". He urges governments "to consider the damaging economic impact of blindly following the climate change agenda".

He dismisses as "complete nonsense" the argument that Australia has a special responsibility as a carbon-intensive economy and big coal producer to show global policy leadership.

"If China wants to develop and wants to increase productivity through, among other things, increasing electricity output rapidly and has been building coal-fired power stations and wants to import the coal to fuel them from Australia, I think you would be mad if you didn't supply it," he tells *The Weekend Australian*.

Lawson sees continuing strong demand for Australian coal despite promises by China and India to reduce their energy intensity, calling the pledges "cover". "Economic development happens because of increased economic efficiency," he says. "That means increasing labour productivity and that also means increasing the productivity of the other factors of production of which energy is one of the most important."

Lawson adds the development of a less energy-intensive services sector is one of the characteristics of economic development. But he adds: "That doesn't mean energy consumption will decline. Energy consumption will rise. Carbon consumption will rise because economic growth will trump the lesser amount of energy used for each particular unit of output."

He calls energy intensity promises by China and India "convenient cover for their saying, quite rightly, 'no way are we going to impede or in any way slow down our economic development by having restrictions on the use of carbon energy'. They go for carbon intensity rather than carbon emissions, which they can be perfectly confident is bound to decline through a process of development as it has in every country in the world."

Lawson warns our politicians not to hold up his own party's policies as exemplars.

Julia Gillard regularly points to British Prime Minister David Cameron's environmental plans to embarrass the Coalition, but Lawson says Tory backbenchers "are increasingly uncomfortable and indeed hostile to policies [that] are being proposed on the climate change front, which mean higher energy costs, which are bad for consumers ... and bad for British industry".

He points out Cameron and his ministers have a plan B. "The government has said it will review the matter in January 2014 in the light of what other European countries are doing and this is clearly a get-out clause, this is clearly new, and it was clearly put in at the behest of the Treasury as both the Treasury and Treasury ministers are very concerned at the cost of going it alone."

Economics and energy security are at the core of Lawson's critique of the climate policy debate. "The world relies on carbon-based energy simply because it is by far the cheapest available source of energy and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future," he says. "The major developing countries, in particular, are understandably unwilling to hold back their development and condemn their people to avoidable poverty by moving from relatively cheap energy to relatively expensive energy."

Lawson heralds new developments that permit extraction of gas from shale in an economic way as "one of the most remarkable technological developments there has been", saying the shift from coal to gas that is set to follow will cut emissions.

"This is carbon energy but the amount of carbon dioxide produced per terawatt of energy generated from gas is half that from coal," he says. "You don't eliminate carbon emissions but you reduce them quite considerably by moving from coal to gas. Of course the environmentalists are appalled by this because they believe that carbon energy has to be eliminated altogether but that's not going to happen."

Lawson returns once again to the cost of renewable energy. "If renewable energy is cheaper than carbon energy, then that's fine," he says, "but for the present time and in the foreseeable future most forms of renewable energy are massively more expensive."

Lawson dismisses as economic illiteracy claims of a green jobs boom powered by renewables that will mop up unemployment from the structural adjustment to a low-carbon economy, recruiting one of the great classical liberals to back his case.

"The French 19th-century economist Frederic Bastiat said you might as well go round breaking windows saying you're creating jobs for glaziers. The fact is you can't look at just one sector. The government can create jobs by employing large numbers of people to build statues of prominent politicians. You can always create jobs in a particular area.

"What you've got to be concerned about are jobs in the economy as a whole and you don't create jobs in the economy as a whole by promoting something [that] is wholly uneconomic and has to be subsidised."

Lawson has strong views about what decarbonisation means. "The plain fact is the total economy will be harmed. A lot of these green jobs will be in China. The Chinese can see there is a market in the West for solar panels and other things so they are producing them very much more cheaply. In so far as there are jobs they will be there, not in the consuming countries."

[The Australian, 25 June 2011](#)

The Age: An inconvenient fallacy

Bob Carter, Illustration John Spooner

June 27, 2011



There is no need for a carbon tax because dangerous global warming is not occurring.

WELL, you have to admit that they've tried hard. Labor, that is. In April 2007 Kevin Rudd, prior to his election as prime minister, appointed distinguished social scientist Ross Garnaut to advise the party on global warming. A strange decision, that: "Here's a scientific problem so let's appoint an economist to give us policy advice."

Roll forward 18 months to September 2008 and the publication of the first Garnaut report, in which we find much esoteric economic advice on how to deal with an assumed global warming problem for which no independent scientific evidence was provided. Instead, Garnaut relied then, and still relies now, upon the alarmist and politicised "science" provided by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Unfortunately, the panel's reputation as a source of credible, impartial science advice was badly damaged by the leaked "Climate-gate" emails in November 2009, and has since continued to decline as evidence mounts for the controlling influence of environmental lobby groups on its activities.

Pass on again to February this year, past the final defeat of the emissions trading bill in the Senate in July 2009, the collapse of the Copenhagen climate talks in December 2009 and the rise of Julia Gillard to the prime ministership in June 2010. On February 10, Tim Flannery was appointed Climate Commissioner - presumably to provide a more friendly public face to the government's anti-global warming campaign. Unfortunately, Flannery's Gaia-esque style and his numerous failed climate prognostications undermine the credibility of the commission.

Advertisement: Story continues below

Now, just last week, we discover that the new Chief Scientist, Ian Chubb, believes too that "scientific consensus ... provides the best guidance we have for decisions that are informed and rational", and that "the science is in on climate change".

Wrong on both counts. Where a scientific issue is involved, the best way to approach the formulation of public policy is not to base it on a contrived consensus of self-interested parties, nor to "ask the UN", but to pay attention to the facts and keep an open mind.

Since 2007, then, the government's chosen climate communicators have failed to confront the real climate change issue (which is natural climate hazard). Second, and as opinion polls clearly show, they have failed to convince the public that a global warming crisis exists, or that a carbon dioxide tax will have any beneficial influence on future climate. Labor's woe-is-me moment has clearly arrived.

Climate Change Minister Greg Combet announced the government's solution on June 16. It is to spend \$12 million on "informing" the electorate about the need for a carbon dioxide tax.

It is certainly true that voters need to understand better the most important facts relevant to allegedly dangerous, human-related global warming. So let us list the five most salient facts the minister might try to communicate in his advertisements.

Fact 1. A mild warming of about 0.5 degrees Celsius (well within previous natural temperature variations) occurred between 1979 and 1998, and has been followed by slight global cooling over the past 10 years. Ergo, dangerous global warming is not occurring.

Fact 2. Between 2001 and 2010 global average temperature decreased by 0.05 degrees, over the same time that atmospheric carbon dioxide levels increased by 5 per cent. Ergo, carbon dioxide emissions are not driving dangerous warming.

Fact 3. Atmospheric carbon dioxide is beneficial. In increasing quantity it causes mild though diminishing warming (useful at a time of a quiet sun and likely near-future planetary cooling) and acts as a valuable plant fertiliser. Extra carbon dioxide helps to shrink the Sahara Desert, green the planet and feed the world. Ergo, carbon dioxide is neither a pollutant nor dangerous, but an environmental benefit.

Fact 4. Closing down the whole Australian industrial economy might result in the prevention of about 0.02 degrees of warming. Reducing emissions by 5 per cent by 2020 (the government's target) will avert an even smaller warming of about 0.002 degrees. Ergo, cutting Australian emissions will make no measurable difference to global climate.

Fact 5. For an assumed tax rate of \$25 a tonne of carbon dioxide, the costs passed down to an average family of four will exceed \$2000 a year.

So the cost-benefit equation is this: "Your family pays more than \$2000 a year in extra tax in return for a possible cooling of the globe by two one-thousandths of a degree." Remember, too, that Garnaut's recommendation is that the tax rate should be increased at 4 per cent a year, which would result in a cost doubling in less than 20 years.

In the light of these facts, little wonder the government's four horsemen of the climate apocalypse have been unable to convince the public of the desirability of carbon dioxide taxation. Labor has indeed tried hard and valiantly, but it is time to admit failure and to adopt an alternative policy.

Voters now recognise that in the absence of an international agreement no action that Australia takes can "stop global warming". But natural climate hazard in Australia is so dangerous that nonetheless a need remains for a politically feasible, environmentally sensible and cost-effective climate policy. That policy should be to prepare for and adapt to all climatic hazards, as and when they occur and whatever their cause.

In the meantime, watch out for those ads that Minister Combet is going to run towards this end. After all, you're paying for them.

Professor Bob Carter is a geologist and the author of *Climate: The Counter Consensus*.

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/politics/an-inconvenient-fallacy-20110626-1glmu.html#ixzz1QQCZve93>

Carbon tax is economic disarmament: US MP

- EXCLUSIVE: Greg Sheridan, Foreign editor
- From: [The Australian](#)
- June 27, 2011 12:00AM

AUSTRALIA will be embracing "unilateral economic disarmament" if it adopts a carbon tax, says the key US Republican congressman on climate change.

In a devastating judgment for the Gillard government's carbon tax plans, Jim Sensenbrenner told *The Australian* the US had turned its back on a carbon tax.

Mr Sensenbrenner said cap and trade - the US term for an emissions-trading scheme - was "dead in the US".

"Any kind of direct carbon tax is dead in the US," he said.

He said the Republicans, who oppose an ETS, had won every coal seat in congress in last year's election - seats the Democrats would need to win back if they were to regain a majority in the House of Representatives.

Mr Sensenbrenner believes climate change stopped former US vice-president Al Gore from becoming president in 2000.

"George W. Bush won the presidency by winning West Virginia, which had never voted Republican in a presidential race, unless it was for an incumbent Republican, since 1928," he said.

"Gore's close association with the Kyoto process lost him West Virginia. If Gore had won West Virginia, he would have been president."

Mr Sensenbrenner is a key figure in the US politics of climate change.

He led the US congressional delegation to Kyoto, is a former chairman of the congressional science committee and judiciary committee, and was the senior Republican on the climate change committee until it was abolished when the Republicans won control of the house last year.

Mr Sensenbrenner believes Barack Obama's climate change target, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on 2005 levels by 17 per cent by 2020, will neither be achieved nor approached. "The target is unrealistic," he said.

Mr Sensenbrenner's comments point to the possibility that generalised pledges on climate change action by other countries will not be realised, whereas the report by the government's adviser, Ross Garnaut, takes all such pledges at face value.

It is Professor Garnaut's assessment that allows Canberra to claim other nations are taking action on climate change.

A senior strategist for the Democratic Party in Washington has confirmed that neither Mr Obama nor congressional Democrats would campaign for a carbon price in next year's presidential and congressional elections.

Mr Sensenbrenner said he did not believe carbon taxes would ultimately reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"It just changes where they take place," he said, "and this doesn't make any real difference because there are no customs posts in the atmosphere."

Mr Sensenbrenner is familiar with the Australian debate, and has long been a friend of Australia on Capitol Hill, having sponsored liberal visa arrangements for Australia as part of the US-Australia Free Trade Agreement.

"A carbon tax is akin to unilateral economic disarmament," he said. "It gives China and India and Brazil and Mexico and all your key competitors a licence for no reductions from business as usual.

"It increases the cost of your manufactured products. Price signals work, so as a result you don't sell so many of your products."

Letter from Peter Nixon to the Herald Sun

The Editor
Letters to the Editor
Herald Sun
24 June 2011

Open Response to Eminent Persons and Others

Carbon is a dirty grimy substance that pollutes the atmosphere and for this reason is presented to you as the Government's target to tax.

However the substance the Government intends to tax is carbon dioxide [[CO₂] which is neither a pollutant or a poison , but a colourless tasteless, odourless gas that as my agricultural science master taught me is nature's greatest fertiliser necessary for the life of all trees plants, pastures and crops.

Then through photosynthesis those same trees, plants, pastures and crops turn CO₂ into oxygen the very substance we breathe to live and that sustains all human, animal and bird life on earth

It is intellectually dishonest for Prime Minister Gillard, Minister Combet, and advisors Garnaut and Flannery to mislead people by using the term carbon pollution.

The people of Australia deserve honesty in a debate that seeks to raise

billions of dollars in a new tax.

Peter Nixon
Fmr Minister for Primary Industry