

## Senator Fielding on ABC TV "Is Global Warming a Myth?"

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Broadcast: 14/06/2009

Reporter: Barrie Cassidy

Family First Senator, Stephen Fielding, joins Insiders to discuss his fact finding mission to Washington DC, where he tried to find answers to some key questions on climate change.

BARRIE CASSIDY, PRESENTER: Now to our second guest, Family First Senator Stephen Fielding who will join us here in the studio.

Senator Fielding has just returned from a fact finding mission to Washington DC where he tried to find answers to some key questions on climate change.

So to take us there to the interview, here is the reaction to his trip from the major parties.

GREG HUNT, SHADOW CLIMATE CHANGE MINISTER (excerpt from "Breakfast", Radio National, June 10, 2009): There is a danger I think in the way the Government acts, that anybody who does what Senator Steve Fielding does and considers their position is attacked as some form of heretic and that's not a good thing in a democracy. So I disagree with Steve but I stand for his right to examine and to have different views.

PENNY WONG, CLIMATE CHANGE AND WATER MINISTER (at press conference): The CPRS (Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme) is an important enough issue for senators to pass the legislation. We think this is in the national interest. I think Australians do want action on climate change.

Every senator in this coming parliamentary session will have to front up to the people who put them in the Parliament and explain why they are taking the position they are taking.

BARRIE CASSIDY: Senator Fielding, welcome.

STEPHEN FIELDING, FAMILY FIRST SENATOR: Good morning.

BARRIE CASSIDY: Given the nature of your trip we probably should start right at the beginning. Is the world still warming?

STEPHEN FIELDING: Look the issue that I went to a self funded trip to Washington was to actually find out what the Obama administration are doing with addressing climate change and also to hear from some other scientists on their views.

Now the issue that I've got is I was presented some information that showed that over the last decade or so carbon emissions have been going up, but global temperature hasn't.

Now that's a fundamental question that I want to put forward to the Minister Wong and the chief scientist to get an explanation of what is going on.

Up until now I think we've all believed that carbon emissions are actually driving up global temperatures and causing global warming which is a real concern for all of us...

BARRIE CASSIDY: And you're not convinced, you're not even convinced of that basic fact?

STEPHEN FIELDING: Well I'm open Barrie. And this is the key to it. I'm actually open to both sides.

Now up until now we've all just believed the science has proven beyond a doubt that carbon emissions are causing catastrophic global warming.

Now I've been presented with some information that actually puts that into question. Now I need to take that to the Australian Government and the chief scientist at Monday at four o'clock. It's a very important discussion to actually get to the bottom of it.

BARRIE CASSIDY: With Senator Penny Wong?

STEPHEN FIELDING: With Senator Wong and with the chief scientist. And they're the people that actually are saying that we've got a real problem with carbon emissions. I need to hear from them an explanation of why carbon emissions have been going up over the last decade and temperatures haven't been going up.

BARRIE CASSIDY: So Penny Wong will need to convince you not only that the globe is warming but that humans are responsible for that.

STEPHEN FIELDING: It's not a matter of saying that... I'll go through this again Barrie. They have clearly shown me, and these are credible scientists from what I can gather, they have put together some figures and some data which I will present to Penny Wong and the chief scientist on Monday that show over the last decade carbon emissions have been going up but global temperatures have not.

Now that causes a huge question about how we respond to climate change. If it's not carbon emissions that are the problem then what do we need to do? And that's the question.

I'm open to it. I'm hoping that Minister Wong and the chief scientist can convince me that, Steve, look it really is carbon emissions; and then we can get on with it. But at the moment I've got some serious questions and I'm very open minded.

BARRIE CASSIDY: The scientists that you refer to, are they people who address the Heartland Institute of Chicago?

STEPHEN FIELDING: Yes, certainly some of them are. And some of them are actually Australian ones here, based in Australia.

BARRIE CASSIDY: But that's an organisation funded by the fossil fuel industry, right?

STEPHEN FIELDING: Look I don't know where it's funded from. What I do Barrie is look at actually information and facts and figures and being an engineer, that's what I'm trained to do is look at facts and figures.

Now they've put something in front of me and I need to get to the bottom of it. Again, if I make it quite clear, they have shown and they've got data that shows carbon emissions up, but global temperature not up. Now that's a serious concern. Not over one year, over 10 to 15 years.

BARRIE CASSIDY: Well the United Nations set up a panel representing thousands of scientists. They studied the issue for years and they concluded that man-made carbon emissions are the major cause of global warming. Why is that not good enough?

STEPHEN FIELDING: Well Barrie look I also heard in the States that there's thousands of scientists that have a different view, so I suppose look we can sort of say he said, she said. What I want to do is look at the facts and the figures.

And realistically, if carbon is not the problem, there's a serious question that needs to be answered and the best people to answer that is Minister Wong and the chief scientist, where Penny is actually getting her advice from.

BARRIE CASSIDY: Well it's a huge issue. How on earth are you going to clear up the science in a matter of months?

STEPHEN FIELDING: Well look, seriously, I don't think the question has been actually put that precisely to the minister before. The data is quite clear - carbon emissions up over the last decade or so, but global temperatures are not going up.

Now if that's the real, if that's true, then you've got to, it's a fundamental question that undermines how we respond to climate change. Both sides agree in climate change. What both sides disagree on is what is causing climate change.

BARRIE CASSIDY: Well you're open minded about that. The chances are you will still be torn when the vote is taken, given that's less than two weeks away. So what do you do? If in doubt, what do you do?

STEPHEN FIELDING: Well look I'm hoping that we get a little bit more clarity on this on Monday. We may have to go back and forward a bit between the two sides but I think that ultimately you have got to pin it back to the facts and the figures and that is absolutely key.

Now you could end up with a situation that says potentially you may need to take insurance out, but gee, then you've got to start to ask yourself the question: how much is that insurance going to cost? How many thousands of jobs in Australia?

So I don't want to go there yet until we actually look at the facts and figures, until, because really there's got to be a logical answer, there has to be a logical answer.

If Minister Wong and the chief scientist are so convinced, they have to front it up and rather than just saying, oh the IPCC says. You just can't keep on giving that answer. You must go through the facts and figures and give a logical reason to why global temperature is not rising but carbon emissions have been going up. If there's that direct link, if that's the direct driver, you've got to actually then prove beyond a doubt.

BARRIE CASSIDY: But if in the end, and I'm sure people will say this to you that if in doubt then give the benefit of the doubt to the planet.

STEPHEN FIELDING: Well Barrie I think you've got to actually ask yourself the question is: are there other things driving it?

If for example the chief scientist and Penny Wong cannot come up with a logical argument, then you've got to ask yourself what else is driving global change and then start to address those issues.

And I really think it's really important. Now, obviously over in the States I actually spoke to the Obama administration, the special assistants to the President. I've given him some same charts and I'm waiting for a response back from them as well.

This is a very important issue and you've got to realise there are two sides to this debate. And I don't think we genuinely have given enough air and enough free sort of I suppose analysis on the other side of the debate.

BARRIE CASSIDY: Why do you think that is? Do you think there is community pressure not to examine both sides of the issue or is it simply that we had a long protracted discussion, debate on this and certain conclusions were reached?

STEPHEN FIELDING: Have we really Barrie? I know that we've had a lengthy discussion and debate of how we actually respond to climate change given that carbon emissions are the problem, but I like most Australians have just bought it and just sort of said look the IPCC must know what they're doing.

Now I don't want to say they didn't, but certainly if someone comes to me, and as an engineer and says Steve, do you know that over the last decade or so, carbon emissions have been going up strongly but global temperatures haven't been going up; doesn't that make you stop and question some of the science?

BARRIE CASSIDY: Okay and just finally, and I will ask you the same question that I asked Senator Milne, would you welcome a double dissolution election?

STEPHEN FIELDING: Look I don't think it's in my interests really at all. Look at the end of the day I think the Rudd Government should go the full term...

BARRIE CASSIDY: But the smaller the quota, the easier your chance of getting re-elected?

STEPHEN FIELDING: Look I think I'm going to find it pretty tough to get re-elected. But look what I did from day one, as I said when I got in, I would actually look at the issues on their merits,

question. And that's exactly what I'm doing with the emissions trading scheme or how to respond to climate change.

And I think that's healthy. I think a lot of people like people being in the Senate that are prepared to ask and stand up and ask the tough questions and make sure you're looking on facts and figures and not just on political point scoring.

BARRIE CASSIDY: Thanks for your time this morning.

STEPHEN FIELDING: Thank you.