

# Geology prof dubs climate change a myth

Ian Plimer is professor of mining geology at the University of Adelaide and emeritus professor of earth sciences at the University of Melbourne. His books include *How To Get Expelled From School* and *Heaven And Earth*. He has the following iconoclastic view on climate change (*Business World* 26-11-11). You be the judge:

Science is married to evidence. this evidence is from measurement, observation and experiment. Predictions from a computer are not evidence, especially as computers can be programmed to give a desired answer. A conclusion is reached on the basis of transparent and repeatable evidence. This can be tested with new independent evidence and needs to be in accord with previous validated evidence. If a scientific conclusion is not in accord with evidence, it must be rejected. The theory that human emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) drive global warming can be tested and is shown to be contrary to validated geology, ice core data and history. The theory should have been rejected decades ago, but there is too much money involved.

To be a scientist, one has to be sceptical, bow to no authority and be an independent thinker. The history of science shows that consensus thinking has never made a great scientific discovery and only those that challenge popular paradigms have made discoveries. Consensus is a tool of politics, not science. As a scientist for over 40 years, I have seen how the peer review system supports fads and fashions and excludes contrary thinking.

Climate has always changed, nothing we measure today is unusual. There are numerous climate cycles. In every 143 million years, our solar system has a bad address. We get bombarded by cosmic radiation, low-level clouds form and the Earth cools. Every 100,000, 41,000 and 23,000 years the Earth's orbit changes such that we are closer to or further from the Sun, which pumps out variable amounts of energy on 1,500-, 210-, 87- and 22-year cycles.

It may come as a surprise to some that the great ball of heat and light in the sky has driven climate change for the past 4,500 million years. This cannot be changed by humans. The main greenhouse gas is water vapour, CO<sub>2</sub> has a minor effect, yet, it helps keep Earth habitable. Evaporation and precipitation transfer atmospheric energy and, with solar energy, have kept the planet habitable for thousands of millions of years. The oceans hold far more heat than the atmosphere, and slight

changes in ocean currents and temperature change climate and can be the driver of drought or rain.

Such cyclical ocean changes have been found recently in the Indian, Pacific and Atlantic oceans. A lunar nodal tide every 18.6 years can also push ocean water around and warm high latitude areas. The 1,500 terrestrial explosive volcanoes have slightly cooled the Earth just after eruptions of aerosols and millions of submarine volcanoes add heat and CO<sub>2</sub> to ocean waters. At times, a large submarine bulge of molten rock can heat the oceans, release CO<sub>2</sub> and methane and change ocean currents. At other times, continents can be at different latitudes. For example, nearly 260 million years ago, India was attached to a great southern polar continent.

### **Don't Blame The Trace Gas**

The Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change is charged with the brief to show human activity creates global warming and not the brief to understand climate. The panel states 3 per cent of annual emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> are of human origin and that this 3 per cent drives climate change. It appears natural emissions comprising 97 per cent of annual emissions do not change climate. CO<sub>2</sub> is a trace gas in the atmosphere (0.0389 per cent ). In past times, it has been up to 30 per cent and over time has been naturally sequestered into limestone (containing 44 per cent CO<sub>2</sub>), carbon-bearing sediments, coal, oil, soil and life.

There has always been far more CO<sub>2</sub> in the oceans and rocks than in the atmosphere. Further, CO<sub>2</sub> is not a pollutant. It is plant food. Every time in the geological past when the atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> content has been very high, plants and animals have thrived. Every time in the historical past when global temperatures were warmer than now, civilisations have become prosperous and have thrived. To argue that trace additions of a beneficial trace gas to the atmosphere drive climate change ignores the complexity of climate and Earth history.

There has been 330 years of warming since the Little Ice Age. Which part of this warming was natural and which part was of human origin? Even the past 150 years of temperature measurement shows three periods of warming (1860-80, 1910-40 and 1977-98) and three periods of cooling (1880-1910, 1940-77, 1998-present). The rate of warming in the three warming events is unchanged suggesting an invisible human influence. There is a 60-year warming-cooling cycle present in this temperature record, despite the primary data being adjusted before release to the public.

For more than 80 per cent of time, the planet has been warmer than now. Life did not fry and die. It thrived. Ice is a rare rock on planet Earth. During the Earth's history, there have been six great ice ages and each of these ice ages started when the atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> content was higher than now, showing that CO<sub>2</sub> in the past has not driven global warming. Why should it drive global warming now when the atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> content is relatively low?

During ice ages, there are alternating glaciations and interglacials. We are currently in an ice age that started 34 million years ago. The last few interglacials have been warmer than the current interglacial. Ice cores show that temperature increases some 800 years before CO<sub>2</sub> increases, hence temperature drives the release of CO<sub>2</sub> from the oceans into the atmosphere. This is the inverse of the current populist view that CO<sub>2</sub> drives global warming.

During the Medieval, Roman and Minoan warmings, it was warmer than now. There were no carbon dioxide-emitting industries then. Furthermore, there were no significant sea level changes during these warming events that lasted centuries. These were natural warming events unrelated to changes in the atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> content. If these previous warmings were natural, why is the current warming not natural? Since 1998, global temperatures have been decreasing yet the atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> content is increasing. So, CO<sub>2</sub> is not driving global warming.

Sea level has risen and fallen by up to 1,500 metres. In the current interglacial-glaciation cycles, sea level changes by 130 metres. Between 12,000 and 6,000 years ago, sea level rose 130 metres and maximum interglacial temperature and sea level was 6,000 years ago. In many parts of the world, sea level has actually fallen.

Further, not only does sea level rise and fall rapidly, but the land level rises and falls. So to only focus on sea level changes from climate change is invalid. In areas where there is sediment compaction (say, deltas), extraction of water, gas and oil from sediments and sedimentary rocks, sediment loading by ice and rifting, the land level is falling. In areas that have been unloaded of ice (Scandinavia, for example), undergoing intense weathering and erosion, continental and rift margins, areas undergoing compression (Maldives, volcanic island chains) or areas of active coral atoll growth, the land level is rising.

Sea level can change due to gravity, meteorological effects, ice melting, water expansion and sea floor level changes. It is a very long bow to draw that human additions of CO<sub>2</sub> warm the planet such that ice melts thereby raising sea level.

Slight warming of ice at  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$  will not cause melting. Further, ice in both the Greenland and Antarctic basins flows uphill before it flows to the coast as a glacier. If we really want to worry about the melting of ice sheets and sea level rise, we need to be concerned about the large volcanoes that sleep restlessly underneath the Antarctic ice.

### **The Green Religion**

The concept of human-induced global warming is very much a western fad and is the modern fundamentalist green religion. This modern green religion has elements of Christianity such as sin, guilt, penance and payment of indulgences, along with elements of European socialism (anti-industrialisation, transfer of wealth, control of individual freedoms, etc.). It needs a special sort of faith to think humans can change major earth systems with legislation, taxation or carbon trading. It requires a closed mind to ignore contrary evidence and to make predictions hundreds of years into the future based on a warming that occurred from 1977 to 1998.

The mantra of the warmists is that “the science is settled”, that there is a “consensus” and that dissidents are employed by “big oil”. Such statements are those of politics, not science. All statements are untrue and show that the modern fad of human-induced global warming has nothing to do with science and everything to do with power, wealth transfer and enriching traders, bankers and financial institutions. These are very fertile pastures for fraud on a scale that the world has never seen before.