

# NZCPR Weekly

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NEW ZEALAND CENTRE FOR POLITICAL RESEARCH

## WHERE IS THE EVIDENCE?

Dr Muriel Newman

Earlier this month the Royal Society of New Zealand issued a special statement designed to clear up the “controversy over climate change” and “possible confusion among the public”. The statement from the Society's Climate Committee asserts that “The globe is warming because of increasing greenhouse gas emissions” and that “human activities” are to blame.<sup>1</sup> This statement reinforces the governments' position that in order to prevent climate disaster, legislation must be passed to force the public to make personal sacrifices and reduce their consumption of energy.

According to their website, the Royal Society is an independent, national academy of sciences, representing nearly 20,000 scientists, technologists and technicians. They administer science and technology funds worth \$40 to \$50 million for the government, publish science journals, offer advice to Government, and promote science and technology. The Society operates on a budget of over \$5 million.

In response to the Climate Committee's statement, a long-standing member of the Royal Society, Dr Vincent Gray, resigned. Dr Gray, a climate consultant and expert reviewer of all four of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment Reports, claimed that his resignation was in protest at the major inaccuracies contained in the Society's climate statement. His concerns include the fact that the globe is now cooling, not warming, and that there is “no evidence whatsoever for a human contribution to the climate”.<sup>2</sup>

The Society's climate change statement also drew strong criticism from the New Zealand Climate Science Coalition. The Coalition was founded in 2006 by a group of climate experts (including the late Augie Auer) who had become increasingly alarmed about the misleading information being disseminated about climate change and so-called anthropogenic (man-made) global warming. In their detailed response to the Royal Society they stated: “It beggars the imagination that an expert committee can launch a public statement about climate change that is so partial in its arguments and so out of date in its science”.

They claim that the Society has a major conflict of interest: “Six of the eight members of the expert committee carry the conflict of interest that they work for institutions that garner research funds to investigate the human influence on global warming. ...five members are employed by NIWA, one member works within a global change research institute and one is associated with 'carboNZero' - which is a 'greenhouse gas emissions management and reduction scheme offering carbon credits'. Incredibly, the committee contains not a single person drawn from research agencies

other than NIWA, nor any independent climate scientist rationalists. The Chairman of the committee through senior positions that he holds at NIWA and within the IPCC - also advises government on climate change... In view of such manifest conflicts, it is not surprising to discover that the RSNZ statement on climate change is both biased and inadequate”.<sup>3</sup>

Around the world, as controversy over climate change continues to grow, it remains very clear that contrary to what the politicians tell us, not only is there is no consensus of scientific thought on this matter, but the science is certainly not settled.

In fact, in a bizarre twist of fate, at a time when advocates of man-made global warming continue to push government policies to restrict energy use and the burning of fossil fuels in order to prevent 'catastrophic' warming, the world continues to cool. That is leading to increasing scepticism that the call to sacrifice living standards in order to “save the planet” is just political spin designed to persuade the public to accept green taxes.

Dr David Evans, this week's NZCPR Guest Commentator, understands the controversy over global warming better than most. As a scientist working for the Australian Greenhouse Office, he developed the carbon accounting model that measures Australia's compliance with the Kyoto Protocol:

“When I started that job in 1999 the evidence that carbon emissions caused global warming seemed pretty good. The evidence was not conclusive, but why wait until we were certain when it appeared we needed to act quickly? Soon government and the scientific community were working together, and lots of science research jobs were created. We scientists had political support, the ear of government, big budgets, and we felt fairly important and useful. It was great. We were working to save the planet!

“But since 1999 new evidence has seriously weakened the case that carbon emissions are the main cause of global warming, and by 2007 the evidence was pretty conclusive that carbon plays only a minor role and is **not** the main cause of the recent global warming. As Lord Keynes famously said, *When the facts change, I change my mind. What do you do, sir?*”

Dr Evans explains that because there has not been a public debate about the **causes** of global warming, people are not aware of the most basic accepted facts: that the “**greenhouse signature**” (which would prove global warming) is missing; that there is **no evidence** that carbon emissions cause global warming; that the warming trend

ended in 2001 and it's now cooling; and that the temperature rises around 800 years **before** the accompanying rise in atmospheric carbon.

He explains that there is now greater urgency to get answers: "Until now the global warming debate has merely been an academic matter of little interest. Now that it matters, we should debate the causes of global warming. Don't you think some evidence is required before wrecking the economy? Someone simply has to demand to see evidence. You will find that there is none". To read the article, see [www.nzcpr.com](http://www.nzcpr.com).

That there is no evidence that man is causing global warming was one of the key messages presented in the British documentary The Great Global Warming Swindle, which was broadcast in New Zealand in June by Prime TV. 4. The documentary essentially claimed that the theory that man-made greenhouse gases are causing global warming is a scam. Following its screening in the UK in 2007, more than 260 complaints were lodged with the regulator Ofcom, the British Office of Communications. Just last week, Ofcom released its long-awaited ruling, which included the finding that the programme did "not materially mislead viewers so as to cause harm or offence" by claiming that *man-made global warming is the biggest scam of modern times*.

This is in contrast to the finding of the British High Court that Al Gore's An Inconvenient Truth contained 11 serious inaccuracies which must be pointed out to children if it is to be shown in schools. 5.

With growing numbers of people now questioning the whole basis of the man-made global warming theory, there is increasing speculation that the defeat of the British Labour Party in the local body elections and more recently in the by-election in their former safe seat of Glasgow East is indicative of a change in the mood of the British public against the government's climate change agenda. A recent survey suggests that more than 70% of British voters are no longer willing to pay higher taxes to fund climate change initiatives, with two-thirds of those surveyed believing that the green agenda has been exploited in order to increase taxes.

In an article "A Green Miscalculation", published in the Financial Post, the editor of the international science policy network CCNet, Benny Peiser, states: "For many years, Labour has chanted the green mantra that in order to prevent disastrous climate change caused by excessive energy consumption, Britons must make personal sacrifices in their lifestyle and behaviour. No other government in the world has employed the spectre of climate catastrophe as forcefully as Britain; no other administration has saddled taxpayers with a heavier burden of green taxation... Labour's fundamental miscalculation has been to bank on the strength of the environmental movement and climate change anxiety in an attempt to 'modernize' its agenda. Labour's climate policy, however, is now backfiring, turning into one of its biggest political liabilities" 6.

With the 2008 general election fast approaching our local politicians might like to learn from the UK experience. That experience suggests that politicians who ignore public sentiment on the climate change issue might just feel voter backlash at the polls.

#### FOOTNOTES:

1. Royal Society of New Zealand, Climate Change Statement <http://www.rsnz.org/news/releases/clim0708.php>
2. Vincent Grey, Climate Statement "An Orchestrated Litany Of Lies" [http://nzclimatescience.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=312&Itemid=1](http://nzclimatescience.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=312&Itemid=1)
3. NZ Climate Science Coalition, Coalition Challenges Royal Society 'Climate Report' [http://nzclimatescience.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=309&Itemid=32](http://nzclimatescience.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=309&Itemid=32)
4. Ofcom Ruling [http://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv/obb/prog\\_cb/obb114/issue114.pdf](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv/obb/prog_cb/obb114/issue114.pdf)  
To watch The Great Global Warming Swindle <http://www.nzcpr.com/forum/viewforum.php?f=7>
5. Dr Muriel Newman, Politics in School on Trial <http://www.nzcpr.com/weekly102.htm>
6. Benny Peiser, A Green Miscalculation <http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fpcomment/archive/2008/05/27/a-green-miscalculation.aspx>

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