

Dr JENSEN (Tangney) (12:33): Speech to Parliament

I have been dreading this moment since I first became interested in the science of climate change and anthropogenic global warming, and particularly since the Prime Minister misled the Australian people by saying that there would be no carbon tax under the government she led. As the only PhD qualified scientist in this parliament, I have watched with dismay as the local and international scientific communities and our elected leaders have taken a seemingly benign scientific theory and turned it into a regulatory monolith designed to solve an environmental misnomer. With a proper understanding of the science, I believe we would not even be entering into this carbon tax debate. To put it simply, the carbon tax, with all its regulatory machinations, is built on quicksand. Take away the dodgy science and the need for a carbon tax becomes void. I do not accept the premise of anthropogenic climate change, I do not accept that we are causing significant global warming and I reject the findings of the IPCC and its local scientific affiliates.

On the subject of the science, I note that pre-eminent 19th century physicist Lord Kelvin said to physicists at the British Association in 1900:

There is nothing new to be discovered in physics now. All that remains is more and more precise measurement.

Settled science indeed! Quoting 'the science' is the same as appeals to 'God says' hundreds of years ago. It is an attempt to stop debate. When I hear the likes of the member for Sydney invoking 'the science', as she did in her utterly unsupported claim that the Central Coast will be the area of New South Wales hardest hit by sea level rise resulting from AGW, I look for the snake oil.

I would happily debate the science with any member opposite but I know they are too gutless to take me on.

Science does not work the way that those opposite believe or would have us believe. It is strange how Al Gore, a failed student in science, is automatically accorded reverential scientific status by those opposite while they castigate the likes of Professors Bob Carter and Ian Plimer, people well qualified to talk about the science. I would happily debate the science with any member opposite but I know they are too gutless to take me on. I will take the likes of Al Gore and Tim Flannery seriously when they live the emissions-austere lifestyles they advocate for everyone else, rather than the emissions-profligate lifestyles they themselves hypocritically live.

Still on the subject of the science, have a look at the data for Darwin. If you look at the raw data from the last 110 years, it shows that temperatures have gone down by 0.7 degrees per century. Funnily enough,

after 'homogenisation' by the CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology, the data magically shows an increase of 1.2 degrees per century. You wonder why I call for a royal commission!

A whole lot of the argument for a carbon tax is premised on models, but models only have any relevance if they have predictive capacity. The reality is that this graph I am holding up shows the prediction of the IPCC's fourth assessment report. All of their ensemble models indicated that there should have been an increase in temperatures this decade. This other graph I am now holding up is the reality according to the Hadley Climate Research Unit, the repository of the IPCC's data.

Initially, the so-called 'consensus scientists' rejected the theory that there has been no temperature increase in the last decade. They are now coming to the realisation that they have to deal with it, so we get peer reviewed papers, papers that Al Gore said did not exist, like: 'Reconciling anthropogenic climate change with observed temperature 1998-2008' and 'Trend analysis of satellite global temperature data'. They both accept that there has been no temperature increase this decade. The reconciling paper suggests that maybe it is global dimming that has caused the problem. The problem is they did not do their literature survey. If they had had a look at global aerosol climatology, they would have realised there has been no change to the optical depth in the last 10 years.

Let us look at the models. 'Tracking earth's energy', by Kevin Trenberth—lead author with the IPCC, second, third and fourth assessment reports, and still a current lead author—says that we cannot explain it. I have a chart here from Kevin Trenberth showing a massive deficiency in the global net energy budget. Also by Kevin Trenberth is 'An imperative for climate change planning: tracking earth's global energy'. Another: 'On the observational determination of climate sensitivity and its implications' by pre-eminent scientist, Richard Lindzen, found that the feedbacks have been overstated. The paper on the misdiagnosis of climate feedbacks and variations found a large discrepancy between observed and stimulated precipitation.

I have numerous papers here that I will seek to table

[Kate Ellis was approached and refused to give permission for those papers to be put on the official parliamentary record.]

On ocean temperature, the projections were all for increased ocean temperatures. Since the launch of the Argo network, what do we have? 'Tracing the upper ocean's missing heat' acknowledges there has been no increase but in fact a decrease in ocean temperature since 2003—they cannot explain it. The 'Importance of the deep ocean for estimating decadal changes' accepts there has been a reduction in the globe's ocean temperatures. 'On the decadal rates of sea level change during the 20th century,' by Holgate, found no acceleration of sea levels. Similarly, the paper on the dynamic response of reef islands showed that many of the islands in the Pacific have actually been increasing in area. 'Sea-level acceleration based on US tide gauges and extensions of previous global-gauge analyses' shows there has been no acceleration; in fact, a deceleration in sea-level rise. The conclusion from the paper 'Is there evidence yet of acceleration in mean sea level rise around mainland Australia?' is that, no, there has not been acceleration.

What we see is that the peer-reviewed science is not anywhere near as solid as those opposite suggest. If the science is settled, ask the scientists if they believe we should stop funding the IPCC and anthropogenic global warming science. Let us investigate some of the science and assume that the IPCC models are correct. Even if we reach the five per cent reduction—and government figures show an increase from 580 million tonnes to 620 million tonnes by 2020, an increase not a decrease—then global average temperatures will only be a few thousandths of a degree cooler than business as usual. If we reach 50 per cent less CO₂ emissions than today in 2050 and hold that to 2100, the reduction in global average temperatures will be less than one-hundredth of a degree. No wonder the government is trying to spin this policy as a clean energy bill, as it patently does nothing to address the so-called anthropogenic global warming problem. I thought that was the point of the pain associated with this tax—so a whole lot of pain for essentially no temperature reduction.

The reality is that bankers and the like are rubbing their hands in glee at the prospects of the billions, at least, to be made in trading a commodity with no intrinsic value. Even with this tax, most Australians will maintain their current fossil fuel consumption and, more crucially, Labor's tax will have no effect on the big polluters overseas. It should go without saying that any solutions Australia considers for global warming must have real, measurable impacts on reducing global temperatures. But it seems this point has been lost in the rhetoric and catchcry.

We must ask the fundamental questions: will the carbon tax fulfil its purpose and energise other nations to join us and cool the globe? If not, why are we barrelling ahead? At this time of global economic uncertainty, governments and public policymakers around the world are focused on saving old jobs and creating new jobs. Why then is the government introducing job-killing legislation? The government's own modelling acknowledges that this scheme is not enough of itself enough to reach the 2020 targets. To make up the shortfall, Australian taxpayers will be spending an estimated \$3.5 billion a year by 2020 to buy foreign carbon credits. By 2050, funding going overseas for foreign carbon credits is expected to rise to \$57 billion per year—the government's own figures.

Why are we paying any money overseas for carbon credits? Even if you accept 'the science', there are numerous other ways to tackle the issue, including putting money into research and development—the cheap end of the innovation pipeline. Funding for advanced energy R&D will lead to a more energy efficient future by making low-emission technologies more accessible. If we can get sustainable energy to be cheaper than fossil fuels then an economic imperative will drive industry and big business. Copenhagen showed us we cannot get a global approach to climate change at this time. The big polluters of the world—China, India and the US—just are not interested. The Australian government are being completely disingenuous, saying that only 500 or so companies will pay—but then again they have a complete lack of economic understanding; after all, they believe that they can tax the mining industry into greater prosperity and that instituting a carbon tax will drive green jobs. Ask Spain and California how successful that has been. If there are these wonderful opportunities waiting out there, the reality is that industry would be doing it with alacrity.

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Further, in order to change behaviour, you need alternatives to go to. In the case of electricity, apart from nuclear we have nowhere to go. We are already paying massive costs associated with a small penetration from renewables. Germany, touted by the government in terms of solar power, led the world in putting up solar panels—€47 billion in subsidies. Using IPCC models, the legacy of that bill will mean a seven-hour delay in global climate change by 2100. Regarding wind power, Denmark led the world in embracing wind power, yet their wind industry is almost completely dependent on taxpayer subsidies and the Danes pay the highest electricity prices in the world.

When Cyclone Yasi hit Queensland, we desperately needed power due to some of those Queensland power stations shutting down. Wind in South Australia provided two megawatts out of an installed capacity of 400—some success.

In terms of transportation there are similarly no alternatives to fossil fuels at present. Indeed the government's scheme has a negative impact as it makes public transport less competitive than private vehicles. Trying to force carbon cuts instead of investing first in research puts the cart ahead of the horse. Then there is the whole issue of carbon leakage—that is, cement and aluminium industries going overseas, killing our industries, but still emitting carbon dioxide.

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The PM backstabbed former Prime Minister Rudd. Now she plans to backstab the Australian people, not only with legislation she promised the Australian people she would not introduce, but also by adding landmines to that legislation—with clauses such as carbon credits being personal property—to make the carbon tax harder to rescind. The Russians used scorched earth against Napoleon and against the Germans respectively when they invaded. This Prime Minister plans to use scorched earth as well, not against an invading enemy, but against the very people she purports to represent. There should always be a get-out-of-jail clause in legislation. I ask those opposite this: if the scientific view were to change to one of unanimity that we were not causing a problem on the day after this bill becomes law, what would you think of those mines placed in the legislation then? We do not have cars because we taxed flatulence from horses.

The fact is there are things in the environment we all want—clean air, clean water, good food and reducing birth rates. Look at the countries in the world with the cleanest air, cleanest water, lowest birth rates and best food. They share affluence. Why are we attempting to make ourselves and the world less affluent.

We are promised most Australians will be compensated for the impost of the carbon tax. Calculating the impact of the carbon tax is hard enough, but what happens when it becomes an ETS? You will have an extremely volatile price. The government is betting it will be around \$30 a tonne but you can trade it down to \$15 a tonne. What happens if it comes in at \$15 and you are compensating at \$30? Hello, taxpayer, we need some more money please for that compensation. Alternatively, if you compensate for \$15 and it

comes in at \$30 or \$45, the compensation will be totally inadequate. More taxes will be needed to cover the shortfalls.

The whole point of this carbon tax is to change behaviour to reduce emissions, which means there must be pain if we are to move from an efficient industry to one that is less efficient. The simple fact is that the Gillard government is being deliberately disingenuous on this issue as they know full well that they will never be able to compensate the people adequately or economically when it becomes an ETS. In the national interest it is time to move past the politics of fear, such as, 'You need to be heavily taxed or the Great Barrier Reef or Kakadu gets it!' In conclusion, for all these and multiple other reasons, the Gillard government should not pass this legislation without the consent of Australians.

Madam Deputy Speaker Burke, I seek leave to table these peer reviewed science reports.

Leave not granted.

Dennis Jensen has been warning us about climate science for years, his earlier warnings have turned out to be prescient, and ahead of his time — speaking out when few dared too. He deserves credit for his honesty and insight. Parliament could use more people like him.

Why do we need to ask permission to put any document on the official Parliamentary record?

About Dennis Jensen

Dr Dennis Jensen is the Liberal federal member for Tangney in Western Australia. A former air traffic controller, CSIRO and later Defence research scientist, and defence analyst, he was widely recognised as one of the rising stars on John Howard's backbench. He's played an important part in Australia's air capability debate. [From [Online Opinion](#)]

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