

## PROPAGANDA?

Once you realise that there are a large number of individuals and organisations that will not hesitate to lie and deceive us, we need to not only sharpen our critical thinking skills but also increase our criticism of those who wish to deceive us.

Without sanctioning such people, not only will they be emboldened to continue to deceive, but many others will join them. Because of our growing irrationality and our degraded critical thinking skills, such people will find it quite easy to mislead us.

This Handout looks at just some of the criticism about Al Gore's film "An Inconvenient Truth" (referred to as 'the film') and how several organisations have behaved.

### THE FILM

The film, released in 2006, received widespread attention and acclaim. Politicians, most elements of the Media, the Green Movement and many education institutions quickly embraced the global warming creed's doomsday message. It was suggested by some that this was to promote different agendas they had concerning, for example, taxing carbon dioxide, slowing economic growth, de-industrialisation and promoting green energy <sup>[1]</sup>.

The public was told this was a documentary. However, we now know that the film has several major scientific errors and over 100 deception tools are used throughout the film – approximately one deception each minute.

### REACTION TO THE FILM

The bulk of the Media was quick to embrace the film as it realised reporting on it would sell newspapers and increase audiences. The Media would embrace this 'golden goose' and not report on any criticisms of this 'money earner', let alone critically examine it.

So, there was scant reporting on the UK court case concerning the film in October 2007 when Stewart Dimmock, a school governor, took the UK's Department of Education to court claiming the film was propaganda being distributed throughout the UK's education system.

Chief Justice Michael Burton in London's High Court found that many claims promoted in the film were made in "*the context of alarmism and exaggeration*". Chief Justice Burton pointed out that the "apocalyptic vision" promoted in the film was politically partisan, not an impartial analysis of the science of climate change.

Although Burton ruled that the movie could be shown in UK schools, he added that it must be accompanied by a cautionary statement about the

political/ideological nature of the movie. If this did not occur, then screening the movie would contravene an Act of Parliament (section 406 of the Education Act 1996) designed to prohibit the political indoctrination of school children.

Most of the schools ignored this Chief Justice, treating the film as a valuable teaching resource.

So here we have an education system, claiming to teach students critical thinking skills, not detecting a deceit every minute in the film. Or an education system responding to the Green Movements' repeated exhortation to "*brainwash the children – the earlier the better – so they became the future eco-warriors*" [2].

Similar responses were seen in the education systems of other Western Nations.

As examples, Justice Burton identified nine claims in the film which he considered inaccurate. These were;

**1.** Gore claimed that we can expect a sea level rise of up to 6 metres by the melting of either West Antarctica or Greenland ice sheets. He implied that this would be in the near future and would displace large numbers of people from locations such as Manhattan, the Netherlands and Bangladesh.

**TRUTH:** Greenland ice cores show that the medieval, Roman, Minoan, Egyptian and other periods were warmer than current temperatures in Greenland. No catastrophic sea level rises were seen. Gore's assertion is easily refuted. Justice Burton found no evidence to support Gore's claim.

**2.** Gore claimed that low-lying Pacific Islands are being inundated as a result of anthropogenic global warming with island populations being evacuated to New Zealand.

**TRUTH:** There is no evidence of sea level rise over the last 50 years and no evidence that Pacific Islands are under any threat. No populations are going to New Zealand. Gore's assertion is easily refuted. Justice Burton found no evidence to support Gore's claim.

**3.** Gore claimed that anthropogenic global warming could shut down the thermohaline circulation and move Europe into a new ice age.

**TRUTH:** There is no evidence of any weakening of the thermohaline circulation. Gore's assertion is easily refuted. Justice Burton found no evidence to support Gore's claim.

**4.** Gore displayed graphs showing rising levels of carbon dioxide and increases in global temperature, with the implication that carbon dioxide levels drive global temperature.

**TRUTH:** In the graphs, changes in global temperature precede changes in carbon dioxide levels. Gore's assertion is easily refuted. Justice Burton found no evidence to support Gore's claim.

**5.** Gore claimed that anthropogenic global warming is responsible for snowmelt on Africa's Mount Kilimanjaro.

**TRUTH:** In fact, melting of the Furtwangler Glacier at the summit of the mountain began more than 125 years ago and temperatures at the summit never rise above freezing point. Gore's assertion is easily refuted. Justice Burton found no evidence to support Gore's claim.

**6.** Gore claimed that Africa's lake Chad had dried up as a result of global warming.

**TRUTH:** In fact, the lake has been dry on numerous occasions in the past (8500 BC, 5500 BC, 1000 BC and 100 BC). Today's cause is more likely to be due to over-extraction and changing agricultural practices. Gore's assertion is easily refuted. Justice Burton found no evidence to support Gore's claim.

**7.** Gore claimed that Hurricane Katrina which devastated New Orleans in 2005 resulted from global warming.

**TRUTH:** Katrina was downgraded to category 3 when it made a direct hit on the levees, which failed as engineers predicted they would. Gore made no mention of the Category 4 Galveston hurricane that struck the Texas coast in 1900, or the Category 4 Palm Beach, Florida hurricane of 1928<sup>[3]</sup>. Gore's assertion is easily refuted. Justice Burton found no evidence to support Gore's claim.

**8.** Gore claimed that polar bears were dying because they had to swim long distances to find ice, which was said to be disappearing due to global warming.

**TRUTH:** It is not unusual for Arctic sea ice to disappear every season and over time and, despite continued hunting, polar bear numbers have grown from around 5,000 in the 1950's to more than 25,000 today – the largest number since records began. Gore's assertion is easily refuted. Justice Burton found no evidence to support Gore's claim.

**9.** Gore claimed that coral reefs are being bleached because of global warming. Strong El Nino events will lead to coral bleaching but there is no evidence to show that global warming would have long-term negative impacts on coral reefs. Gore's assertion is easily refuted. Justice Burton found no evidence to support Gore's claim.

Justice Burton could have included many more of Gore's errors which are just as easy to refute. Such as;

- 100 ppm of carbon dioxide leads to the difference between a nice day and having a mile of ice above your head.
- ice melt leads to the sun heating the Arctic Ocean.

- the Arctic is heating faster than the rest of the planet.
- a record number of typhoons impacted Japan in 2004.
- carbon dioxide is pollution; atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide will exceed 600 ppm by 2050.
- in 2003, global warming caused the European heat wave and killed 35,000 people.

Gore also asserted without supporting evidence;

- global warming is producing stronger hurricanes.
- insurance claims are increasing due to more extreme weather events.
- flooding in Mumbai is increasing.
- severe tornadoes are becoming more frequent.
- the Greenland Ice Sheet is becoming unstable.
- Himalayan glacial meltwater is declining.
- Peruvian glaciers are disappearing.
- Mountain glaciers are disappearing around the World.
- The Sahara Desert is drying.
- The West Antarctic ice sheet is becoming unstable.
- Antarctic ice shelves are breaking up.
- Mosquitoes are reaching higher altitudes.
- Many tropical diseases are increasing, with West Nile virus spreading throughout the USA.

And so, the list goes on.

The Green Movement and others rely on the generally low level of scientific literacy in the public and political communities to promote such unsubstantiated views. In fact, each of the above claims made by Gore can easily be checked in the scientific literature and shown to have little substance.

In the film, science is discarded and replaced by scaremongering and pseudoscience. The film is one-sided, misleading, exaggerated, speculative and uses bad science. Anyone with even a cursory understanding of climate science would agree.

So how did one of Australia's leading scientific organisations, the CSIRO, react to the film. In September 2006, Liz Minchin from The Age newspaper invited a number of "our best and brightest" to review the film and rate its scientific merit out of five.

Dr Penny Whetton, CSIRO's Climate Change Impact and Risk leader, was fulsome in her praise for the Australian scientists who had advanced awareness of greenhouse gases, and she was just as enthusiastic about the film. She said:

*"I was really quite moved, and given that this film was about a topic I deal with every day, this says something about how powerfully it communicates its message. Its scientific basis is very sound."* **Her Score 4.75 out of 5.**

Dr Kevin Hennessy, Principal Research Scientist, CSIRO Climate Impacts and Risk group who said:

*"The only minor quibble I had was that Gore implies that most of the climate trends and recent extreme events are due to human activities. It's not quite that simple ... But easily the best documentary about global warming I've seen."* **His score 4.5 out of 5.**

Dr Kathy McInnes, Senior Research Scientist, CSIRO Climate Impacts and Risk group said:

*"There were bits and pieces that were glossed over ... But I was surprised by how accurate the science was overall."* **Her score 4.5 out of 5.**

Dr Graeme Pearman, former CSIRO Director of Atmospheric Research said:  
*"By and large, I didn't feel that the presentation overstated what we can say based on current scientific knowledge."* **His score 4 out of 5.**

When Minchin asked Dr Barrie Pittock, former CSIRO Climate Impact group leader, for his opinion and rating, he said:

*"It is technically brilliant, remarkably accurate and up to date, and should be palatable to a wide audience."<sup>[3]</sup>* **His score 5 out of 5**

Let us stand back and put these comments of our best and brightest scientists into a 2006 perspective. By 2006;

- Global warming had stopped, and the only debate was about when it stopped.
- None of 74 climate models used by the IPCC, employing the "best science", had predicted that.
- Temperature predictions of rises of 3-5 degrees by the year 2000, had also failed.
- Sea level rises measured in metres predicted to inundate Florida Keys and the east coast of Australia didn't happen.
- The Humans had not become extinct, nor had four billion people died as a result of runaway global warming.
- The Green Movements' "Grandfather of Global Warming" James Lovelock was to publicly state <sup>[4]</sup> that by now we should have been half way to *"frying and dying. It is not happening – our theory must be wrong. We thought we understood the climate, but we don't. The climate is going on as it always has gone on."*
- Like Lovelock most scientists realised that the Greens' modified theory had been comprehensively falsified.

Yet here we have some of our "best and brightest" CSIRO scientists marking the falsified science highly and, apparently, completely unaware of all the scientific errors in Gore's film. Nor that this is a "Henny Penny" tale that they are supporting.

We are now very concerned if these are Australia's best and brightest. If they are good scientists, why is the CSIRO still promoting the latest Green alarmist

campaign. Before we assign these scientists to the dust bin for being incompetent, here is one explanation for their behaviour.

It appears that significant CSIRO funding comes from federal, state and local government agencies, underwriting a policy of pursuing climate issues from a 'alarmist' perspective. This has helped fund unvalidated computer-model projections of more frequent droughts, global-temperature increases and sea-level rises, all conveyed with unjustified alarmism.

Atmospheric scientist Dr David Packham, a former principal research scientist with Australia's CSIRO, made the point:

*"I find that I am uncomfortable with the quality of the science being applied to the global warming question ... research funding for environmental research in Australia, in my case mercury and wildfires, is almost impossible unless it is part of yet more greenhouse-data gathering. There is also an atmosphere of intimidation if one expresses dissenting views or evidence."*

Atmospheric physicist Professor Garth Paltridge, was a chief scientist with the CSIRO Division of Atmospheric Research:

*"They (CSIRO) have been so successful with their message of greenhouse doom that, should one of them prove tomorrow that it is nonsense, the discovery would have to be suppressed for the sake of the overall reputation of science."* Paltridge added:

*"The bottom line is that virtually all climate research in Australia is funded from one source – namely, the government department which has the specific task of selling to the public the idea that something drastic and expensive has to be done."*

Former CSIRO Chief Scientist Dr Art Raiche observed:

*"We were given very strict, VERY strict guidelines on not publishing anything or publicly discussing any research that could be seen as critical to Government policy. If we did do it, we would be subject to dismissal."*

A senior CSIRO environmental economist, Dr Clive Spash, resigned after saying his criticism of the emissions trading scheme (ETS) was censored. Spash had been in a dispute over the publication of his paper which criticised carbon trading schemes.

Spash submitted his paper to the UK journal *New Political Economy* in 2009 but the CSIRO contacted the editors, telling them the paper was being withdrawn because it had not been approved through internal CSIRO processes. Dr Spash said that CSIRO managers maintained they had the right to ban the paper. He resigned after saying his criticism of the emissions trading scheme (ETS) had been censored.



A 2006 ABC *Four Corners* interview between former CSIRO scientist Dr Graeme Pearman (**not** a global warming sceptic) and reporter Janine Cohen revealed some interesting insights into the CSIRO culture<sup>[5]</sup>. Here is an extract:

**Q.** *The Federal Government provides the majority of the funding to CSIRO; has that compromised the organisation in recent years?*

**A.** **There are times when it does.**

**Q.** *How were you pressured not to talk about climate change?*

**A.** **Well I was actually told that I couldn't engage in the group but at that stage it was pretty late and in fact publications had already been prepared and so I was told what I could and couldn't say publicly.**

**Q.** *And what were you told?*

**A.** **I was told that I couldn't ah say anything that indicated that I disagreed with current government policy and I presume that meant Federal Government policy and as I say, I tried to reiterate that in fact the document that we had prepared, any public statement that I made, was a partisan statement and that it did not refer to any particular government.**

**Q.** *Did you feel compromised?*

**A.** **I was definitely compromised, and it was probably only because I was in the latter stages of my career that I could handle it. I could see that a young scientist placed in this position in the earlier stage of their career would probably have to roll over.**

**Q.** *Were you restricted from talking publicly about emission reductions in general?*

**A.** **Yes, I was. I think it's an organisation, it's a CSIRO that is very afraid um that there may be consequences to their bottom line if they in fact are seen to be interfering with um government policy.**

**Q.** *Is there pressure to have only scientific results that deliver economic results?*

**A.** **Yes, lots.**

Scientists from the CSIRO are involved in the production of IPCC reports as contributors and reviewers. The CSIRO is quick to offer support for the IPCC process and its findings, despite ample evidence showing how both are seriously flawed.

## **THE CIRCULAR SOUP OF IRRATIONALITY**

What we have here, although oversimplified, can be summarised as follows.

To prevent the death of the movement and to sustain the nine billion dollar annual revenue from membership fees and donations, the Green Movement must create alarmist campaigns on a regular basis. Because alarmism is good for the Media for selling more newspapers and gaining audiences, it will uncritically report on the latest campaign.

When the population becomes concerned, the politicians will want to show empathy for these concerns to gain “the Green vote” and stay in power. They direct and pay for “scientific research” to support the actions that they are taking. The scientific community, which is largely funded by the government, delivers the ‘science’ the government wants to hear. Scientists need to do that to keep jobs, receive research funding, and gain promotion in their careers.

If this is not the case, then the assertion of the website that there is growing irrationality at all levels of our society is demonstrated yet again.

When a Chief Justice points out that “the soup is poisoned” the following are the excuses we will hear;

- The Green Movement will claim that the public needed to know,
- The Media will claim they were only reporting what the Green Movement said.
- The Government will say they were only responding to the voters’ concerns, and
- The scientists will say we are only doing what the Government asked.

### **How Did the Judge Avoid This?**

How did the Chief Justice see through all this irrationalism? He had three advantages that are missing in the rest of our society. First the legal fraternity is trained to think rationally and to unemotionally use facts and logic to arrive at the truth. These skills are used every day and, consequently, they become skilled in identifying all the deception tools used in an irrational argument. They separate views, assertions and hearsay and other emotional claims to arrive at the facts.

Second, the legal process demands that both sides of an argument are heard. Opposing views are not allowed to be silenced, denigrated, or ignored.

However, the most important advantage is the legal system is required to study each issue in depth. The growing tendency in our society of deciding issues by using personalities and throwing labels at one another and not studying the issue at any depth at all, is not followed in court proceedings.



## How to Un-Poison the Soup

The “circular soup” of irrationality is a chain. The poison can be removed by breaking any one of the links in that chain. For example;

- If the Green movement was like environmentalists, irrationalism would not be used, and all the lies and deceit would not be tolerated.
- If the Media behaved responsibly, they would highlight all the Greens’ irrationalities, lies and deceit in their reporting.
- If the citizens were more rational and had good critical thinking skills, they would not be misled by the Greens’ “Henny Penny” tales.
- With informed voters, the government would not feel it necessary to behave irrationally to garner votes, and
- With no pressure from their paymaster, scientists might re-embrace scientific professionalism.

### CONCLUSION

Endorsing and promoting the integrity in science should be the goal of anyone practicing or teaching science at any level. Yet we appear to have the blatant politicising of science by vested interest groups such as the government, the CSIRO, the IPCC, various environmental groups, the Media and, of course, individuals such as Al Gore.

When this this film is ‘sold’ to us as a documentary, supported by so many organisations, it could be described as ‘*using propaganda on the masses*’.

### Notes:

1. **Happs, John, Quadrant online article “Al Gore’s Enduring Climate Con”, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2013.**
2. **Leonardo DiCaprio**, “Children are now the number one target of the global warming fear campaign. DiCaprio announced his goal was to recruit young eco-activists to the cause. "We need to get kids young," DiCaprio said in a September 20 [interview](#) with USA Weekend
3. **Quadrant Online - Blogs 13/07/13, 11:48PM**<file:///Users/johnhapps/Desktop/Al%20Gore's%20enduring%20climate%20con.webarchive> Page 2 of 4.
4. **“Scientist cools on climate alarmism”, AAP, 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2012**
5. **Quadrant Online - Blogs 13/07/13 11:48 PM,**  
<file:///Users/johnhapps/Desktop/Al%20Gore's%20enduring%20climate%20con.webarchive> Page 3 of 4