

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee

Department of the Senate

PO Box 6100, Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

26 July 2017

Dear Committee members,

Thanks for the opportunity to respond to the terms of reference of the Committee in relation to the Implications of climate change for Australia's national security. I am very interested in the topic. I am a retired provincial general surgeon, farmer and I have a strong interest in contributing to improving the scope and quality of the Committee's work.

All but one of the discussion points listed are concerned with action once climatic events have occurred and it is assumed that is the intention as a part of this exercise. Alternatively it could be inferred that there is already acceptance that more dramatic climatic events are now inevitable, a view shared by this writer.

However, clause [f] appears to offer an opportunity to approach the question from the causation [or "supply", if you like] side.

For the 267 years since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution in the UK greenhouse gas emissions have increased in exact proportion to economic growth

The climate scientist , Michael Mann, says in “The Madhouse Effect” (2016, Columbia University Press) that in 2014 greenhouse gas emissions levelled while economic growth continued and that in 2015 greenhouse gases diminished while economic growth still advanced. The author represents this as something of a victory for those who say we can have a disconnection between growth and emissions which, with its twin of carbon capture and storage, is so desired by *growthists*. However the claim is spurious as it is attributed to 25% of the world’s electricity now being produced from renewable resources and to electric vehicles.

There is a causal and proportionate chain of events; Economic growth with the associated burning of fossil fuels [especially coal], greenhouse gases, and climate change.

Once the horse of climate change has bolted it seems we can do little more than ensure we have a substantial stockpile of emergency equipment, appropriate machinery and trained personnel. However all four of these elements can be addressed.

1. Economic growth. Reduce the rate of growth preferably to Steady-State Economics [the title of 2 books by Herman E Daly. published in 1970 and, virtually unchanged but with the addition of other essays, in 1990]. Total sustainability is synonymous with Steady-State Economics and is perhaps easier to understand since, if not totally sustainable, whatever it is, it must, to a greater or lesser degree, be unsustainable and therefore undesirable. Perpetual economic growth is, in any case, an “exponential impossibility” [MacFarlane Burnett] . For example a 3% growth rate results in a 16 fold increase in any entity in less than a century.
2. Fossil fuels. Should be substituted as soon as possible with renewable energy of all descriptions. While not advocating nuclear energy and recognizing it is unlikely, for various reasons, to be acceptable in this country, it should be observed that many concerned environmentalists have adopted a pro-nuclear position on the grounds that the state of the planet is already so serious that it must be considered.
3. Greenhouse gases. Can be “drawn down” by eliminating land clearing [rife in association with the infrastructure necessary for economic growth], revegetation, carbon farming, composting and biochar. Geo-

engineering solutions are of dubious value being expensive,  
unpredictable and are likely to engendered a false sense of security  
and detract from attention afforded to the supply side.

Climate change. Just to include the fourth issue, apart from emergency  
responses there are extensive and expensive engineering solutions  
including levee banks, relocations, tidal barriers, cyclone and fire proof  
dwellings etc., etc.

Yours Faithfully,

Dick Varley