

The profiteers of doom are at it again

By Christopher Monckton of Brenchley

When climate scientists unfairly give only one side of the story, as Professor Wratt *et al.* did earlier this week (Opinion, *Dominion Post*, February 10), taxpayers should keep a tight grip on their wallets.

The Professor starts out by saying the world is 0.9 Kelvin warmer than in the late 19th century. What he does not say is that in absolute terms this represents an increase of just 0.3%. Unspectacular.

Next, we are told that “last year – 2014 – was the warmest year globally since comprehensive records began in about 1880”. Actually, the global instrumental temperature record began in 1850, but let that pass. The HadCRUT record, kept since that year, shows 1998 as warmer than 2010, with warm spikes in 2002 and 2011 also above anything in 2014.

The RSS and UAH satellite datasets also do not show 2014 as the warmest year on the record. Only two of the five global reference datasets – GISS and NCDC – show 2014 as the record.

And, as the director of GISS admitted, his record showed only a 38% probability that 2014 was the warmest, and even then only by a hundredth of a degree.

Notwithstanding record rises in CO₂ concentration, the RSS satellites show no warming since the end of 1996, and all other datasets are within statistical shouting distance of that. Professor Wratt calls this 18-year-long absence of global warming a “short-term wiggle”.

Let us go back a full quarter of a century to the first multi-thousand-page Holy Book in the Pentateuch of the UN’s climate panel. The druids then stated their “substantial confidence” that the computer models had captured the principal features of global climate.

Well, they hadn’t. On all five global temperature datasets, the rate of global warming in the 25 years since 1990 has been half of the central business-as-usual estimate which the IPCC had so confidently but misguidedly predicted, even though CO₂ concentration has risen faster than the IPCC’s then prediction. As Professor Feynman used to say, “If it disagrees with experiment, it’s wrong.”

Next, Professor Wratt talks of “Arctic sea ice melting”. Though he also mentions Antarctica, he fails to mention that sea ice there has been on a strong uptrend since satellite monitoring began 35 years ago, and that as recently as September last year the extent of global sea ice was greater for the time of year than ever before.

The Professor may like to read Doran *et al.* (2004), on the damage done by extreme cold in some Antarctic glens. Warmer is better. Yet he says Arctic ecosystems are being “affected”.

Take polar bears. The Professor says there is no peer-reviewed evidence for an increase in their numbers. Let him read Peacock *et al.* (2013), for instance, which finds polar bears have increased to carrying capacity in the Davis Strait.

Then, inevitably, sea level. Professor Wratt says, “The average rate of sea-level rise during the past century has been larger than the average during the past 2000 years.” But that type of comparison of a short period with a long one (where short periods of sharp rise and fall are averaged out) is statistical malpractice.

Is the rate of sea-level rise over the past century greater than in any previous century? That is the right question, but the Professor did not ask it. So I asked it. Grinsted *et al.* (2009) showed that between 950 and 1050 AD, as the medieval climate optimum took hold, the rate of sea-level rise was no less great than in the past century. Not many SUVs about in those days.

Interestingly, Grinsted also showed that sea level was higher than today by 20 cm in the mediaeval climate optimum (or warm period, for warmer is better than colder), and lower than today by 20 cm during the little ice age about 300 years ago. Sea level does not change much in modern conditions, and, according to Professor Niklas Mörner in a 2011 paper, it may not be rising at all at present.

And why should it? One of the best-kept secrets in the climate debate is that the 3600 automated bathythermograph floats of the ARGO project, which measure the temperature of the upper 2000 m of the extrapolar ocean and report the results by satellite, show warming over their 11-year record at a rate equivalent to just 0.2 Kelvin (or Celsius degrees) *per century*. The Professor is careful to tell us the oceans are warming, but he is just as careful not to reveal just how little it is warming.

It is only by warming the ocean that we can cause sea level to rise. But after up to 18 years without any global warming, and up to 26 years without any statistically significant warming, the Professor’s statements about low-lying small islands being at risk from rising seas, and about “heat-induced mass coral bleaching” are unfounded.

Coral islands actually grow as sea level grows. It is no mere coincidence that thousands of coral atolls worldwide are exactly at or just above sea level. They have grown that way because sea level has risen by 130 m in the past 11,700 years. That is well over a metre a century, compared with just 0.2 metres in the 20th century.

The corals have simply grown to match. Besides, the satellite records from ENVISAT showed sea level rising from 2004-2012 at a rate of 3 cm *per century*.

The GRACE gravitational-anomaly satellites actually showed sea level falling from 2003-2009, so the data had to be adjusted to create a large enough sea-level rise to keep the panic dollars flowing.

As for coral bleaching, indeed it did occur during the natural Great el Nino of 1998, which transiently but sharply warmed the oceans. However, coral stratigraphy has shown that in the two previous great el Ninos over the past 300 years the corals bleached too, and those episodes too were nothing to do with us.

What about ocean “acidification”? The Professor mentions it, of course, but fails to mention that it cannot happen. For the oceans are overwhelmingly buffered by the alkaline rock basins in which they lie. For that reason, the oceans are pronouncedly alkaline themselves and – under anything like today’s conditions – must remain so.

Besides, the corals have survived for 550 million years. They even survived the last genuine acidification of the oceans, 55 million years ago. After all, many reefs are directly in the firing-line of river estuaries, where floods can bring millions of gallons of rainwater into the oceans and straight on to the reefs.

Rainwater is truly acid, at a pH of 5.4 (7 being neutral). The oceans are alkaline, at a mean pH of 7.9. Yet the corals do not curl up and die when rainwater hits them. They thrive.

Besides, there is no global network of pH measurements, and no standard equipment for making the measurements. All we have are a few random transects by research vessels, and a few local data series.

But should we expect ocean “acidification” to be happening? No. Despite almost 300 years of industrialization, with all the benefits that has brought to Man, one of the biggest secrets in the climate debate is that, to the nearest tenth of one per cent, there is no CO₂ in the air at all.

Besides, if the oceans were warming as rapidly as the Professor imagines, the warmer water would outgas CO₂, partly balancing such tiny changes in pH as might otherwise have occurred.

Next, we are told that “Glaciers have continued to shrink long-term almost worldwide”. In fact, there are more than 160,000 glaciers worldwide. Most of them have never been visited or measured by Man.

Some glaciers have shrunk, revealing forests, mountain passes and even an entire silver mine underneath, showing that they had been far less extensive than today in the Middle Ages.

But in Antarctica, where there has been little or no warming according to the UN’s climate panel, there is no reason to suppose that most glaciers are receding.

Then the Professor says a “substantial contribution” to global warming since 1950 must have come from greenhouse gases because he cannot think of any other explanation. That is the shop-soiled Aristotelian fallacy of the argument from ignorance. It has no place in the writings of any true scientist.

Just look at the increase in solar activity from the Grand Minimum of 1545-1715 to the near-Grand Maximum of 1925-1975, peaking in 1960. Allow for the massive thermal inertia of the oceans (one reason why one need not fear rapid climate change), and the record increase in solar activity over the past 300 years is quite enough, on its own, to explain all the trivial warming of around 0.6-0.7 K that we have seen since 1950. I’d expect some contribution from Man now and in future, but, on balance, not a lot.

Next, the Professor reveals he has not kept current with the paleoclimate literature. He says that for the Northern Hemisphere the past 30 years were the warmest such period in the past 1400 years.

However, the evidence from proxy reconstructions, rather than from people playing with failed computer models, is near-unanimous in finding the medieval warm period real, global, and almost everywhere warmer than the present. I can provide some 450 scientific papers establishing this fact not by modelling but by measurement.

The Professor then shows ignorance of the learned journals of agricultural science. He says that climate change “risks severe yield decreases” in wheat, rice and maize. Yet tests at agricultural stations have shown that yield increases of 20-40% are to be expected in these staple crops owing to what is known as CO₂ fertilization.

For CO₂ is plant food, and its atmospheric concentration at present is close to the lowest in the long-term record.

Finally, the Professor says, “Changes have been observed in many extreme weather events”. Yet the UN’s climate panel says otherwise. It reports no changes in the frequency, intensity or duration of floods, droughts, tropical cyclones, hurricanes, typhoons, extra-tropical storms or tornadoes. Deaths owing to extreme weather are close to an all-time low, having fallen dramatically over the past half-century.

As is traditional among true-believers in Thermageddon, the Professor ends on an apocalyptic note almost entirely absent in the reviewed literature on climate change. I was a co-author of Legates *et al.* (2013), which found that of 11,944 papers on climate and related matters published in the 21 years 1991-2011 just 64, or 0.5%, even went so far as to state that most of the global warming since 1950 was manmade.

Very few of even these papers said global warming would be dangerous. The notion that it may be dangerous, therefore, is almost entirely political, and has very few explicit endorsements anywhere in the reviewed papers published in the learned journals of science.

It is precisely because too many “scientists” have been too selective with their facts and have preferred models to data that the climate scare is still running. The day of reckoning is at hand, however.

Already the entire board of the CSIRO in Australia has been sacked, at least in part because the institution, like so many, prostituted science for profit.

As the profiteers of doom continue to be proven wrong by events, more heads will roll. And good riddance. They have flung science back into the Dark Ages.