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Could Australia Blow Apart the Great Global Warming Scare?

By Robert Tracinski and Tom Minchin

As the US Congress considers the Waxman-Markey cap-and-trade bill, the Australian Senate is on the verge of rejecting its own version of cap-and-trade. The story of this legislation's collapse offers advance notice for what might happen to similar legislation in the US—and to the whole global warming hysteria.

Since the Australian government first introduced its Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) legislation—the Australian version of cap-and-trade energy rationing—there has been a sharp shift in public opinion and political momentum against the global warming crusade. This is a story that offers hope to defenders of industrial civilization—and a warning to American environmentalists that the climate change they should be afraid of just might be a shift in the *intellectual* climate.

An April 29 [article](#) in *The Australian* described the general trend—and its leading cause.

There is rising recognition that introduction of a carbon tax under the guise of "cap and trade" will be personally costly, economically disruptive to society and tend to shift classes of jobs offshore. Moreover, despite rising carbon dioxide concentrations, global warming seems to have taken a holiday....

With public perceptions changing so dramatically and quickly it is little wonder Ian Plimer's latest book, *Heaven and Earth, Global Warming: The Missing Science*, has been received with such enthusiasm and is into its third print run in as many weeks. [It's now up to the fifth printing.]

The public is receptive to an exposé of the many mythologies and false claims associated with anthropogenic global warming and are welcoming an authoritative description of planet Earth and its ever-changing climate in readable language.

One of the most remarkable changes occurred on April 13, when leading global warming hysteric Paul Sheehan—who writes for the main Sydney newspaper, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which has done as much to hype the threat of global warming as any Australian

newspaper—reviewed Plimer's book and admitted he was taken aback. He describes Plimer, correctly, as "one of Australia's foremost Earth scientists," and praised the book as "brilliantly argued" and "the product of 40 years' research and breadth of scholarship."

What does Plimer's book say? Here is Sheehan's summary:

Much of what we have read about climate change, [Plimer] argues, is rubbish, especially the computer modeling on which much current scientific opinion is based, which he describes as "primitive." ...

The Earth's climate is driven by the receipt and redistribution of solar energy. Despite this crucial relationship, the sun tends to be brushed aside as the most important driver of climate. Calculations on supercomputers are primitive compared with the complex dynamism of the Earth's climate and ignore the crucial relationship between climate and solar energy.

To reduce modern climate change to one variable, CO₂, or a small proportion of one variable—human-induced CO₂—is not science. To try to predict the future based on just one variable (CO₂) in extraordinarily complex natural systems is folly.

In response, this is Sheehan's conclusion: "*Heaven and Earth* is an evidence-based attack on conformity and orthodoxy, including my own, and a reminder to respect informed dissent and beware of ideology subverting evidence." This cannot be interpreted as anything but a capitulation. It cedes to the global warming rejectionists the high ground of being "evidence-based," and it accepts the characterization of the global warming promoters as dogmatic conformists.

The political impact has been manifested in a series of climb-downs as Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's government has been forced to delay its plans for cap-and-trade controls. On May 4, the government announced it would postpone the onset of the scheme until mid-2011, a year later than originally planned.

On June 4, this delayed emission trading scheme passed the House of Representatives despite a vote against it by the opposition. But it now faces almost certain defeat in the Australian Senate. Whereas the Labor government controls 32 votes in the Senate, the opposition Liberal-National coalition controls 37 and is committed to vote against it if the Rudd government will not grant more time to consider the outcome of the Copenhagen climate conference in December and US Senate deliberations. This itself is a compromise position, because many of the coalition parliamentarians now want to vote unconditionally against an ETS in any form.

There are 7 other votes in the Senate: five Greens who say the scheme doesn't go far enough but who could be induced to go along; one independent, Nick Xenophon, who has pledged to vote against the bill unless the government waits till after Copenhagen; and one other, Senator Steve Fielding of the Family First Party, who has decided to

investigate the whole thing first hand. Fielding could turn out to be the single deciding vote.

His story is particularly interesting. Andrew Bolt, who has been leading the charge against the global warming hysteria for years, notes that Fielding's investigation "could blow apart the great global warming scare."

Fielding went to the US to assess the American evidence for global warming at close quarters. As Melbourne's *Age* reported on June 4:

Senator Fielding said he was impressed by some of the data presented at the [US Heartland Institute's] climate change skeptics' conference: namely that, although carbon emissions had increased in the last 10 years, global temperature had not.

He said scientists at the conference had advanced other explanations, such as the relationship between solar activity and solar energy hitting the Earth to explain climate change.

Fielding has issued a challenge to the Obama White House to rebut the data. It will be a novel experience for them, as Fielding is an engineer and has an Australian's disregard for self-important government officials. Here is how *The Age* described his challenge:

Senator Fielding emailed graphs that claim the globe had not warmed for a decade to Joseph Aldy, US President Barack Obama's special assistant on energy and the environment, after a meeting on Thursday.... Senator Fielding said he found that Dr. Aldy and other Obama administration officials were not interested in discussing the legitimacy of climate science.

Telling an Australian you're not interested in the legitimacy of your position is a red rag to a bull. So here is what Fielding concluded:

Until recently I, like most Australians, simply accepted without question the notion that global warming was a result of increased carbon emissions. However, after speaking to a cross-section of noted scientists, including Ian Plimer, a professor at the University of Adelaide and author of *Heaven and Earth*, I quickly began to understand that the science on this issue was by no means conclusive....

As a federal senator, I would be derelict in my duty to the Australian people if I did not even consider whether or not the scientific assumptions underpinning this debate were in fact correct.

What Fielding's questioning represents is just the tip of the kangaroo's tail. He speaks for a growing number of Australians who will no longer take green propaganda on trust.

And that's what makes Plimer so influential—not just his credibility as a scientist, but the righteous certainty with which he dismisses man-made global warming as an unscientific

dogma. He writes: "The Emissions Trading Scheme legislation poises Australia to make the biggest economic decision in its history"—Australia generates 80% of its electricity from coal, which would essentially be outlawed—"yet there has been no scientific due diligence. There has never been a climate change debate in Australia. Only dogma."

Plimer is not a "skeptic," a term which would imply that he merely has a few doubts about the global warming claims. Instead, he rejects the whole myth outright, and this seems to have emboldened and liberated a great many Australians who were already chafing under global warming conformity. As Plimer puts it:

[T]here are a large number of punters [Australian for "customers" or "gamblers"—in this case, skeptical customers who may or may not buy what the government's selling] who object to being treated dismissively as stupid, who do not like being told what to think, who value independence, who resist personal attacks and have life experiences very different from the urban environmental atheists attempting to impose a new fundamentalist religion. Green politics have taken the place of failed socialism and Western Christianity and impose fear, guilt, penance, and indulgences onto a society with little scientific literacy.

Australia is not that different from America. If a shift in public opinion against the global warming dogma can happen on one side of the earth, it can happen on the other—especially when the US edition of Plimer's book, scheduled for July 1, hits the stands.

His role, Plimer says, is to show "that the emperor has no clothes." After three decades of relentless global warming propaganda, it's about time.

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