Top geoscientist debunks climate change

Professor Ian Plimer has often trodden on political corns and challenged sacred cows in education. He made it clear to a mining forum that he considers climate change is an exaggerated issue that will cause more harm than good, particularly among poorer nations.

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PERTH -

Leading Australian academic, author and commentator Professor Ian Plimer considers the groundswell of concern about climate change is nothing more than political hot air and that a major earthquake or volcanic eruption are the real threats to the world atmosphere.

Prof Plimer told Mineweb that the current push on climate change was the new version of the Y2K farce where billions of dollars were spent on compliance and regulatory issues in case computer and digital equipment shut down at the turn of the new millennium, only to be proven a pointless exercise.

"Global warming is not a word of science, it's a word of politics," he said.

As a keynote speaker at the Association of Mining & Exploration Companies annual convention in Perth, Prof Plimer said a real threat with the climate change push is that it will impose on Third World and other poorer nations costly climate regulatory measures when the money should be spent on creating quality water, better education and other important matters.

There was a need, he said, for common sense in combating the cacophony on climate change, as science is related to learning and theory that comes from working out what this means, rather than the politically-driven theories that abound, including among issue or politically driven scientists.

There is no scientific evidence that carbon dioxide causes global warming.

Over time the planet will "wobble" on its axis, and over time the sun will generate sun spots, so there have been times where the earth has been far warmer than it is today - an example of this was an abundance of fruit trees near Hadrian's Wall built in AD 122-30 on the border of England and Scotland.

Prof Plimer, who is Professor of Mine Geology at Adelaide University, said what is clearly misunderstood is that 96% of greenhouse gases are created by water vapour, almost entirely through mother nature, with the "man made" component being 0.001%. He asked: Who would want to eradicate water vapour?

Temperature variances taken since the late 1880s to 2000 in the United States showed that temperatures had increased marginally in cities and urban areas but declined in rural areas and a factor behind the heavily populated areas was the impact of concrete, roads and reflection.

Where does CO_2 (carbon dioxide) come from?

Volcanoes (such as Milos, Greece), earthquakes, intrusions of plutonic rocks (such as Kamchatka, Russia), metamorphism (such as the Alps), oceans degassing (evident in the tropics), life-bacteria (humans are riddled with bacteria) and comets.

"The human contribution is miniscule," Prof Plimer said.

Where does the CO_2 go?

Into weathering and sedimentation (silicate + water + CO_2 = hydrous silicate and carbonate), plants, polar and deep ocean water, carbonate reefs and bacteria.

Carbon dioxide, he said, is plant food.

A real problem with climate change are volcanoes, particularly in the island arcs, that produce dust, acid and the sulphuric acid that comes with the vapour wipes out plant life and people.

Eruptions that have been weather changing on earth include Krakatoa in 1883, Tampora in 1815 and the mighty bang of Santorini in 1470 BC that destroyed the Minoan culture and, as myths go, sunk the city of Atlantis. Volcanoes are still with us, and Anak Krakatau that emerged off Java from the devastation of Krakatoa, is still growing.

"One super volcano could wipe out a large part of the world and, if placed in the United States, would destroy the world's greatest economy or, in or off Japan, then the world's second largest economy would suffer.

The doomsayers looking at polar ice have it all wrong, for the Vostok ice core taken in Antarctica traces 420,000 years of temperatures and CO_2 concentrations, and another ice core study over a similar period on Greenland to cover dust, CO_2 and temperatures. Both showed huge fluctuations over those periods - influenced by "wobbles" in the earth axis and sun spot activity - and the near present and present are not at any of the peaks over that time.

The pictures of melting ice and ice caps falling into the sea can cover a genesis of at least 600 years, so it is not a sudden happening.