

'Fixation on CO2 is misplaced'

by Martin Gibson

AN environmental protest that started inland from Gisborne has spread through New Zealand, and is linking up with others around the world.

The husband and wife behind the protest are not in the pocket of oil companies, are very keen on trees, and anxious to protect New Zealand's environment, so what have they got against the Emissions Trading Scheme?

Neil and Esther Henderson's petition is in shops throughout the district. They are also running advertisements in national papers. They have been collecting information on their website: www.climaterealists.org.nz and the number of people on their network has quadrupled to about 300 since July, showing that they are not a lone voice.

Scientific arguments might be of limited interest to the public but as New Zealanders face the possibility that an ETS in its present form could cost a New Zealand family of four \$5400 per year (at a price of \$100 per tonne of carbon), people are less willing to take the word of actors and actresses to approve \$6 billion annually coming out of New Zealand's economy, says Mr Henderson.

"Environmentalism is a noble cause, and I'm thrilled so many young people care about this planet and want to save it, but this fixation on carbon dioxide is seriously misplaced.



PROUD CLIMATE HERETICS: Talking about the likely costs to New Zealanders of the ETS gets them interested in the science justifying it, say Gisborne farmers Neil and Esther Henderson.

"Carbon dioxide is not a pollutant, but an essential gas. Plants grow much better in CO₂-rich environments.

"New Zealand is responsible for just 0.2 percent of world CO₂ emissions. The Government is pushing for a

15 percent decrease below 1990 levels but even this small figure would cost farmers nearly \$13 per sheep and \$66 per cattle beast, making agriculture uneconomic," Mr Henderson says.

Mr Henderson and his daughter collected 130 signatures at the recent Motu Triathlon, and the family also hope to collect many more signatures at their Climate Realists' stall at this year's A & P Show.

"All it takes in most cases is for people to be asked," he says.

"The overwhelming majority will sign."

The volume of information on climate change creates a challenge, says Mrs Henderson.

"I'm a school teacher myself, and I know people don't want to be overwhelmed by information — today everything is reduced to bullet points," she says.

"For those who really want to understand why we are so sceptical about the politically correct view of global warming, there is no shortage of excellent websites catering for all levels of scientific competence.

"If people believe the country is heading for disaster, they need to take action," she says.

"We would be keen to see more people on the ground, so if there's anyone with time on their hands who is able to attend large events and collect signatures, bulk copies of the petition papers are available free, just contact us."

HERESY IN A NUTSHELL

WHAT the sceptics think is wrong with the science behind the Emissions Trading Scheme. This is a complex issue so the list is not exhaustive.

1. The greenhouse effect is a natural and valuable phenomenon, without which the planet would be uninhabitable.
2. Modest global warming has been real, at least up until 1998 when a cooling trend began.
3. CO₂ is not a significant greenhouse gas; 95 percent of greenhouse effect is due to water vapour.
4. Man's contribution to greenhouse gases is relatively insignificant — we didn't cause the recent global warming and we cannot stop it.
5. Solar activity appears to be the principal driver for climate change, accompanied by complex ocean currents which distribute the heat and control local weather systems.
6. CO₂ is a useful trace gas in the atmosphere, and the planet would actually benefit by having more, not less of it. It is not a driver for global warming and would enrich our vegetation, yielding better crops to feed an expanding population.
7. CO₂ is not causing global warming. In fact, CO₂ is lagging temperature change in all reliable datasets as the ocean releases CO₂ as it warms from the "mini ice age" of the 1850s.
8. Nothing happening in the climate today is particularly unusual. It has happened many times in the past and will likely happen again in the future.
9. The UN International Panel on Climate Change badly corrupted the "reporting process". They do not follow the scientific method, modifying the science as needed to fit predetermined conclusions. In empirical science, one does not write the conclusion first then solicit opinion on the report, ignoring anything which does not fit a predetermined conclusion while falsifying data to support unrealistic models.
10. Polar bear populations are not endangered, in fact current populations are healthy and at almost historic highs. The push to list them as endangered is an effort to gain political control of their habitats.
11. There is no demonstrated causal relationship between hurricanes and/or tornadoes and global warming. This is conjecture, totally unsupported by any material science.
12. Observed glacial retreats in certain areas have been going on for hundreds of years, and show no serious correlation to short-term swings in global temperatures.
13. Greenland is shown to be an island completely surrounded by water, not ice, in maps dating to the 14th century. There is active geothermal activity in the currently "melting" sections of Greenland.
14. The Antarctic ice cover is currently the largest ever observed by satellite, and periodic ice shelf breakups are normal and correlate well with localised tectonic and geothermal activity along the Antarctic Peninsula.
15. The global warming panic was triggered by the "hockey stick graph", an artefact of poor mathematics which has been thoroughly disproved. The panic is being nurtured by those who stand to gain both financially and politically from perpetuation of the hoax.
16. Scientists who "deny" the hoax are often threatened with loss of funding or even their jobs.
17. The correlation between solar activity and climate is now so strong that solar physicists are seriously discussing the much greater danger of pending global cooling.
18. Biofuel hysteria is already having a disastrous effect on world food supplies and prices. Current technologies for biofuel production consume more energy than the fuels produce.
19. Global warming hysteria is potentially linked to a stress-induced mental disorder.
20. In short, there is no man-made "climate crisis" of any kind at work on our planet, but the warm climate humans have enjoyed for millennia is unusual, and the Earth is capable of unthinkable climatic upheaval.

Scientific and political considerations

The Prime Minister's science adviser Peter Gluckman:

"Understanding the complexity of climate science requires the involvement of many scientific disciplines, and this creates difficulties in reaching conclusions.

"There are unknowns, such as what will be the effects of altered cloud patterns on climate as global temperatures increase. Nevertheless, there is a high degree of agreement among scientists about the situation and the probable path ahead for our planet. Much of this agreement is encapsulated in the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which is the scientific group charged by the global community to assess the state of understanding and integrate that understanding across these different scientific domains.

"The whole matter is compounded by the reality that science cannot provide absolutely precise predictions about a future scenario for which there are no precedents. Action on climate change therefore depends on a set of political decisions that in turn must be made on the current assessment of the science and on the basis of scientific assessment of probability and risk."

Climate Change Minister Nick Smith:

"This debate about the 2020 target — people want to be big and bold on climate change, but the moment you mention putting petrol prices up and power prices up, it gets politically pretty ugly, and I think that what this really shows is the Government has got some really tough choices here, and that's the trade off."

East Coast MP Anne Tolley:

"The science debate will continue, that's the nature of the scientific world, however there is another really compelling position that New Zealand has to take, and that is with regard to our trade . . . how we are perceived as a trading nation forms a huge part of what we're doing.

"While the science is being debated in the world forum, we have to be seen to be making changes. We had that big

scare with England last year when they suddenly put so-called carbon footprints, travel miles on to food, and who gets affected first? Us.

"While the conversations have to happen, we have to play our part in the wider global conversation — which is different from some of the things that the scientific community is talking about."

Climate scientist, Associate Professor in the School of Geography, Geology and Environmental Science at University of Auckland, Chris de Freitas:

"The notion of an unchanging climate has been used to deceive us. It is a conveniently forgotten fact that most of the industrialised world went into hysterics during the 40 years of global cooling beginning in the late 1930s. It has been replaced by global warming hysteria over a temperature rise over 100 years of less than one degree, a trend that started before modern industrialisation caused atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations to rise.

"Climate change' has become a pseudo religion, and much of the blame lies with the media. Rather than focus on hard climate science, the media have instead become enthusiastic advocates for scientifically unfounded alarmism.

"The IPCC is a governmental institution that selectively accepts and rejects critical comments from expert reviewers of its reports, as my climate science colleagues and I can prove, having been part of the IPCC-managed review process."

Engineer and energy expert Bryan Leyland:

"Global climate models (GCMs) are unreliable. They do not adequately simulate global climate, or even get close. They do not properly handle 'feedbacks' in the Earth's climate system, and to get scary results from GCMs, modellers build in positive feedbacks.

"CO₂ is increasing but the Earth's climate is not changing in an unusual or anomalous fashion. There no observed data at all to suggest rejection of the hypothesis that CO₂ is only a minor player in the Earth's climate system.

"The cost of the ETS has been estimated in excess of \$4000 per family, but no accurate estimate has ever been made. If it had, it would probably be higher rather than lower. But we do know that a carbon tax of \$20 per tonne would increase the price of electricity by \$800 million per year.

"There is no need for urgency. Copenhagen will not come up with any mandatory requirements. Instead, there will be lots of pious words and people and countries will promise to do things they probably know they cannot do."

Professor of environmental economics and author Ross McKittrick:

"I have been probing the arguments for global warming for well over a decade. In collaboration with a lot of excellent co-authors I have consistently found that when the layers get peeled back, what lies at the core is either flawed, misleading or simply non-existent . . . The surface temperature data is a contaminated mess with a significant warm bias, and as I have detailed elsewhere, the IPCC fabricated evidence in its 2007 report to cover up the problem. Climate models are in gross disagreement with observations, and the discrepancy is growing with each passing year. The often-hyped claim that the modern climate has departed from natural variability depended on flawed statistical methods and low-quality data. The IPCC review process, of which I was a member last time, is nothing at all like what the public has been told: Conflicts of interest are endemic, critical evidence is systematically ignored and there are no effective checks and balances against bias or distortion.

"I get exasperated with fellow academics, and others who ought to know better, who pile on to the supposed global warming consensus without bothering to investigate any of the glaring scientific discrepancies and procedural flaws. Over the coming few years, as the costs of global warming policies mount and the evidence of a crisis continues to collapse, perhaps it will become socially permissible for people to start thinking for themselves again."

Iconic warming graph discredited

THE "hockey stick graph" has been an iconic symbol of the climate change debate. It was the star of Al Gore's movie *An Inconvenient Truth* and provided a sobering proof for many people that action on climate was essential to human survival.

Developed by US climatologist Michael Mann, it was a statistical compilation of tree ring data supposedly proving that air temperatures had been stable for 900 years, then soared in the 20th century.

Prior to the publication of the "hockey stick", scientists had held that the medieval era was warmer than the present, making the scale of 20th century global warming seem relatively unimportant. Professors Ross McKittrick and

Steve McIntyre tried to replicate the graphs, and discovered the data was from small samples of tree rings of bristlecone trees.

Concerns about the data were investigated by the US Congress and Academy of Sciences, which confirmed concerns about the data.

A second study by British scientist Keith Briffa achieved similar results.

Briffa refused to release his data. It later turned out that it came from just 15 trees in the Urals, and if different ring data from the area were used the graph would be almost flat.

The IPCC later appointed Briffa as lead author on tree ring data and the hockey stick graphs featured prominently in its 2007 report.

