

Australia's power policies are killing its economy

By Ian Plimer, The Australian, 23 October 2017

You couldn't make it up if you tried. Australia is a huge exporter of energy as coal, LNG and uranium, yet it has unreliable and expensive electricity. South Australia has achieved a first for Australia: it has the most expensive electricity in the world. A short time ago it had cheap coal-fired power.

Australia remains the only G20 country with no nuclear power yet has 30 per cent of the planet's in-ground uranium, mainly in South Australia. Victoria has banned drilling for onshore gas in its two gas-rich basins yet suffers a gas shortage.

Australia's energy crisis is based on a flawed fundamental. Global human emissions are only 3 per cent of total annual emissions. It has never been shown that human emissions of carbon dioxide drive global warming. If it were shown, it would also have to be shown that the 97 per cent of emissions from natural processes such as ocean degassing, volcanoes, natural chemical reactions and exhalation don't drive global warming.

In the geological past, Earth's atmosphere had hundreds of times the CO₂ content of the modern atmosphere yet there were no carbon dioxide-driven catastrophes. The past shows that climate change is normal, that warmer times and more atmospheric carbon dioxide have driven biodiversity and that cold times kill.

Ice core drilling shows that 800 years after natural warming, the atmosphere increases in carbon dioxide. The zenith of the Little Ice Age was 300 years ago and since then we have slightly warmed and cooled during a long-term warming trend. Instrumental temperature measurements over the past 150 years show no correlation between human emissions of CO₂ and temperature. On all timescales it can be shown that there is no correlation between CO₂ emissions and global warming. Without correlation, there can be no causation.

The worldwide temperature record has been changed. Cooling trends have been "homogenised" to warming trends. In the corporate world, if a loss is "homogenised" to a profit, it is fraud. Why is climate science different?

No genuine environmentalist could honestly support subsidised wind turbines that despoil the scenery, slice and dice birds and bats, damage human health and spread toxins. This is not environmentalism. It is power over people by unelected activists, often funded from outside Australia.

Unless the laws of physics are changed, solar power cannot be made more efficient. Solar facilities result in the clearing and environmental degradation of huge acreages and depositing of toxins.

Construction and maintenance of wind and solar facilities release far more carbon dioxide than they are meant to save over their working lives and they need to be supported 24/7 by coal-fired generators. The Spaniards invented a way of producing solar power at night without changing the laws of physics. Diesel generators with floodlights illuminated solar panels. Subsidies were so generous that profits could still be made at night. No wonder Spain went broke.

Australia's CO2 emissions are only 1.3 per cent of global human emissions, which are 3 per cent of the total global emissions. To reduce Australian emissions will have absolutely no effect on the planet's temperature. The only effect will be a rapid reduction in jobs as electricity prices skyrocket.

Those who signed the Paris Accord actually believed they can twiddle the planetary dials to minimise warming to less than 2 Celsius yet seemed blissfully unaware that whatever humans do, they cannot change Earth's orbit and radiation released from the sun that drive climate. Australia's signed a suicide note yet didn't seem to notice that China, India, Indonesia and the US did not commit to reducing their large carbon dioxide emissions.

The grasslands, crops, forests and territorial waters of Australia absorb more carbon dioxide than Australia emits. Australia should demand the Paris Accord shell out some of the billions sloshing around in the climate business.

The subsidies for wind and solar power and the must-take mandate have attracted all sorts of dodgy enterprises, lickspittles and carpetbaggers to the renewable energy honey pot. The National Energy Market was the nail in the coffin and, after 40 years of falling electricity costs and a reliable grid, Australia now has energy poverty and destruction of businesses. Electricity is not a luxury; it is a necessity for any civilised society.

The solution requires political courage. Cancel the renewable energy target, large-scale RET, renewable energy certificates, clean energy target and any funding that subsidises renewable energy. Cancel funding for climate research institutes, climate conferences, carbon capture schemes and jaunts for signing suicide notes.

If any energy company provides electricity to the grid, decree that it must have 90 per cent availability 24/7 and get rid of the must-take mandate. Cancel the charitable status of feral activist groups like Greenpeace. Change the Corporations Law such that green activists, environmentalists, unionists and lobbyists abide by the same conditions of probity as company directors.

Because investment confidence in energy in Australia has been destroyed, governments must build modern coal-fired and nuclear power stations. Australia needs a nuclear industry that could start by using modular reactors for isolated mines and towns before growing a vertically integrated nuclear industry.

Only elections can change the madness but no major political party has nation-building leaders and a coherent policy to cut electricity costs and increase reliability. Politicians fiddle around the edges. As soon as the words emissions, climate change and Paris are used, you know you are being conned and that the world's biggest scam will continue.

Australia's energy policy is based on the fallacious assumption that human emissions of CO2 drive global warming. This underpins the Finkel and Australian Competition and Consumer Commission reports, the Paris Accord and political quick-fix solutions. Renewable energy has become ruinable energy, thanks to green ideology.

I fear there will be years of increasing pain before there is enough political courage to bring Australia to what it had in the past: cheap, reliable employment-generating electricity.

Emeritus Professor Ian Plimer's *Climate Delusion and The Great Electricity Rip-off* (Connor Court) has just been published.