

The Australian Academy of Drama Queens

By Tony Thomas, Quadrant Online, 3 May 2021

The green-left Australian Academy of Science has produced another outburst of climate doomism: “[The risks to Australia of a 3 degC warmer world.](#)” Nearly 50 years ago the same Academy was assessing [the risks to Australia of a cooling world](#) that climate scientists feared might nip crops and leave us shivering under our Doonas. Who would deny that climate science is a slave to fashion? [1]

The Academy report of last March opens and closes with scary pics of fire-blackened bushland. It’s a vanity project, with the authors citing their own works multiple times, especially chair Ove Hoegh-Guldberg (16 self-citations), Mark Howden (11 times) Lesley Hughes (10 times), Will Steffen (10 times), and David Karoly and John Church (8 times). Even Sarah Perkins-Kilpatrick, who is supposed to be reviewing the document, is reviewing herself as she’s cited seven times in the references.[2] Reviewer Jason Evans is cited nine times. Another reviewer is Martin Rice, who works for Tim Flannery’s propaganda outfit Climate Council, but he features only four times in the body of the report.

Perkins-Kilpatrick is convinced by her climate models that warming is turbo-charging everything (but apparently not our cool summer of 2020-21, nor the current deep freeze in the Northern Hemisphere).[3] She’s so confident about the modelling that she’ll mortgage her house and [happily bet her kids lives](#) on it.[4] I will necessarily win this bet as the RCPs (Representative Modelling Pathways or official scenarios) she uses [are discredited](#) and climate models have overshot actual warming to date by a factor of at least two.[5] I’ll enjoy her house but I promise not to slay her kids.

The above-mentioned [Will Steffen’s co-authored piece](#) on “climate tipping points”, was headlined, “The growing threat of abrupt and irreversible climate changes must compel political and economic action on emissions.” The *Nature* paper included political rodomontade like:

In our view, the consideration of tipping points helps to define that we are in a climate emergency and strengthens this year’s chorus of calls for urgent climate action — from schoolchildren to scientists, cities and countries.

The Australian Academy’s 3deg scare paper in March, also co-authored by Steffen, draws on that Steffen et al *Nature* article and re-produces its text and graphics of tipping point “domino effects”. Five months after the *Nature* paper was published, the journal had to grovel horrifically because the seven apex climate scientists had screwed up.[6] Here’s the grovel – try to restrain your mirth (emphasis added):

Correction 09 April 2020: *The figure ‘Too close for comfort’ in this Comment incorrectly synthesized and interpreted data from the IPCC. The graph labelled the temperatures as absolute, rather than rises; misrepresented the levels of risk; misinterpreted data as coming from a 2007 IPCC report; extrapolated the focus of a 2018 report; and was not clear about*

the specific sources of the data. The graphic has been extensively modified online to correct these errors.

Mercifully, Hoegh-Guldberg, Steffen *et al* have pasted the corrected graphic into their Academy report, not the discarded FUBAR version.[7] Maybe climate science isn't so "irrefutable" after all.

Just in case, the Academy has given itself a free card to exaggerate and scaremonger:

We adopted the precautionary principle: if a potentially damaging effect cannot be ruled out, it needs to be taken seriously.

The Academy's authors failed to heed the devastating critique of their scenario methods in [a paper last May led by Roger Pielke of University of Colorado](#), titled "Systemic Misuse of Scenarios in Climate Research and Assessment." The Academy paper has about 20 mentions of official but discredited scenario RCP8.5 and about 50 mentions of other RCP scenarios. Typical:

RCP8.5 assumes little mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and is associated with global warming of 4°C or more above pre-industrial levels by 2100. Up to now, anthropogenic emissions have tracked the RCP8.5 pathway most closely...

Graphics misleadingly show the various scenarios as consistent and comparable. And RCP8.5 is used in the body of the report to imagine horrible warming outcomes, e.g. hailstorms, p32.

Pielke, who is not a climate sceptic, says that, at worst, the extreme and implausible projections of RCP8.5 are touted as "business as usual". He wrote:

The misuse of scenarios in climate research means that much of what we think we know about our collective climate future may be incomplete, myopic or even misleading or wrong, and as such, 'uncomfortable knowledge'.

Pielke tracked 4,500 scientific papers misusing the most extreme scenario RCP8.5. The dud scenario featured in 16,800 scholarly articles since 2010. In January-February 2020 alone, more than 1300 studies quoted RCP8.5, at the rate of about 20 per day, with serious misuse at the rate of two studies per day.

The consequences of RCP scenario misuse include a myopic perspective on alternative futures and a correspondingly limited view on policy alternatives, the creation of a vast academic literature with little to no connection to the real world, and an unwarranted emphasis on apocalyptic climate futures that influences public and policy-maker perspectives.

The objective of understanding scenario misuse is not to apportion or assign blame, but to understand how such a pervasive and consequential failure of scientific integrity came to be on such an important topic, how it can be corrected and how it can be avoided in the future.

Pielke and co-author Ritchie sheet some blame home to the incestuous connections among prominent climate scientists.

The IPCC scenario process has been led by a small group of academics for more than a decade, and decisions made by this small community have profoundly shaped the scientific literature and correspondingly, how the media and policy communities interpret the issue of climate change.

The Academy paper, with its incestuous group of self-citing authors-cum-IPCC-contributors, could be a case in point.

Their chair Hoegh-Guldberg is a climate activist *par excellence*. [As the ABC put it in a fawning interview in 2009](#) “Hoegh-Guldberg’s work has been embraced by the likes of Al Gore and David Attenborough” and “his mission now is to travel the globe as he fights to raise awareness of what we stand to lose.” He’s been forecasting the bleaching death of the Great Barrier Reef from climate change since 1998, when his modelling put the Reef’s demise as early as 2030 – less than a decade from now. He lamented that his science peers were giving his research bad reviews: “They were meant to be anonymous but someone slipped them to me, and they were very scathing ...” [Climategate’s cynical emails of 2009](#) threw plenty more light on this “anonymous” and gamed peer-review system.

In the same 2009 interview Hoegh-Guldberg forecast the disappearance of Arctic sea ice by 2019. He argued with Andrew Bolt: “This is four million kilometres square of ice that’s disappearing. It’s not a tiny thing! But wouldn’t you say that’s a bad sign?” Fact Check: Hoegh-Guldberg confused square miles with square kilometres – but in any event the ice extent last month was [5.7 million square miles or 14.8 million square kilometres](#). (Hoegh-Guldberg’s “*This is four million kilometres square of ice*” could not be more wrong. What he said, but doesn’t mean, is a square with sides of 4 million km to give a total area of 16 trillion sq km.)

The ABC interviewer spliced in tape of Hoegh-Guldberg addressing a conference in Saudi Arabia (of all places) and saying, “Let’s now change the world.”

Canadian investigative journalist Donna Laframboise has provided detailed history on Professor Hoegh-Guldberg, under the header, [The WWF Activist in Charge at the IPCC](#) (March 30, 2014). Among other things, she accuses him of using “[drama queen language](#)”, such as this (you be the judge):

The world is currently facing the greatest challenge of all time ... Humanity is at the crossroads. The message is quite simple and the choice stark: act now or face an uncertain, potentially catastrophic future ... World leaders can change the history of the planet and directly influence the survival of millions upon millions of people ... Basically, the future is looking very gloomy unless we act immediately and decisively.

Laframboise wrote,

The fact that he *has spent his career* cashing cheques from Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) was no impediment to him participating in the latest [Fifth] IPCC assessment. The geniuses there decided he wasn't merely lead-author material, but that he deserved to be placed in charge of a chapter it's called *The Ocean*.

WWF Australia published a spiffy, 16-page brochure titled "Lights Out for the Reef". Hoegh-Guldberg's photo and biographical sketch are one of the first things you see. In the foreword, he says that unless we "increase our commitment" to caring for the Great Barrier Reef, it "will disappear." He knows what the future holds – and he knows it's apocalyptic. Not content to merely express his own opinions, he presumes to lecture the rest of us. We need to "take action" and "act now." We need to "deal decisively with climate change." Behind all of this, of course, lurks a threat: if we don't follow his advice, we'll be really, really sorry.

Hoegh-Guldberg's Queensland University biography lists *four reports he did for Greenpeace from 1994-2000*. After Laframboise's post, Hoegh-Guldberg penned yet another tract for WWF, "*Reviving the Ocean Economy – the Case for Action – 2015*" and the following year he *conducted a WWF seminar*. The president and CEO of WWF (US), Carter Roberts, recalled schmoozing with him on a diving trip and:

Ove showed us maps tracking elevated levels of CO₂ in the oceans, and how those levels corresponded with the declining health of the world's coral reefs. If current trends continue, he told us, we will watch corals around the world wink out year after year until the only reefs left alive are found in a small remote spot in the South Pacific...

James Cook University's Professor Peter Ridd was sacked in 2017 for demanding audits of alleged systemic flaws in Barrier Reef scientists' methodology. He's now taken his case to the High Court. As a further example of contested reef science, researcher Dr Jennifer Marohasy has challenged the standard methodology of assessing GBR coral die-back *from the window of an aeroplane overflying at 120 metres*. She says this is too high to give realistic results and when she has dived or used a drone on the same reefs, she's found the corals perfectly healthy.

None of the Academy folk doing the *3deg* report noticed that they were reinventing the (square) wheel. In 2007 climate guru of the era Dr Barrie Pittock wrote a 16,000-word tract for WWF headed: "Dangerous Aspirations: Beyond 3degC warming in Australia". It's full of the same guff and doomism as that of the Academy's folk, who toiled a year over their "Risk to Australia of a 3degC warmer world" lookalike.[8]

The supposedly dispassionate Academy paper makes no mention whatsoever of nuclear power, and just one passing mention of China – whose emissions will swamp whatever cuts Australia tries to make.[9] The Academy paper appears even more ridiculous when set against the views this month of Obama's chief scientist of the Energy Department, physicist Steven Koonin, who is by no means a sceptic. He expects only 1degC more warming this century – hardly worth spending trillions to combat and easy to adapt to. Further, he says the scientists, politicians and the media have generated a narrative that is *absurdly, demonstrably false*. That includes the "extreme weather" meme which the IPCC itself rates as "low confidence" – and which the Academy paper touts at least 27 times. The models can't even agree on the current actual global temperature to within 3degC while claiming 1 per cent

precision on key variables. The modellers' guesses on the temperature impact of doubled CO2 have not improved in 40 years and are now diverging even more widely, Koonin gripes.[10] The darling of catastrophists circa 2019 was David Wallace Wells with his scare book *The Uninhabitable Earth*. But even he is calling on fellow activists to revise their advocacy "in a less alarmist direction."

The Academy – its members are overwhelmingly taxpayer-funded – wants to force Australia's blue-collars, tradies and non-public servant middle classes into unpalatable and dark-green lifestyle changes. One example: "large-scale adoption of EVs [electric vehicles]." Let's check the data (the report does not).

EV sales last year were [just 6,900, up a mere 182 cars on 2019](#). That 6,900 total was not even 1 per cent of car sales. To date in 2021, EV sales (excluding Teslas at \$73,000 upwards but including hybrids) are just 0.6 per cent. Last [year 50 per cent of sales were fat gas-guzzling SUVs](#), up from 45 per cent in 2019. The Academy wants to push us into EVs via government subsidies and by penalties/restrictions on normal cars.

Ponder the EV handwaving by the Academy, as evident in the passage below, taken from Academy paper March 31, 2021 (emphasis added):

On current estimates, lifetime costs of electric vehicles (EVs) are similar to those of conventional internal combustion engine vehicles and are likely to fall further.

Now check back into the real world, as described in a [Federal Department of Industry, Science and Energy paper](#) published last February:

Currently, closing the total cost-of-ownership gap with battery electric vehicle subsidies would not represent value-for-money. Analysis shows that this would be expected to cost the taxpayer \$195-747 per tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent, depending on the vehicle type and usage. This is high when compared to the Emissions Reduction Fund price of \$16 per tonne of carbon emitted. This translates to around \$4,500 to \$8,000 over the life of the vehicle, or around 10-40 cents per kilometre over a 10 year vehicle life.

The Academy leaves it to the omniscient government to fix the "adjustment challenges" to jobs and industries arising from its pro-EV policies. Otherwise, "Australia will be left with an inefficient car fleet, dependent on mostly imported oil, for many years to come." What's "inefficient" about my little family car Hyundai i30 (price new, \$23,000)? It carries us like a charm on a whiff of petrol.

The Academy calls for "an immediate halt to new thermal coal mines and coal-fired power stations" and expects the bureaucracy to somehow find coal workers better jobs or earlier retirement. But anyway, it cites its own author, economist John Quiggin,

Thermal coal mining is not a major employer in Australia's overall labour market and most employees in the industry have skills that make them employable in a wide range of industries. Only a small number of communities, mostly in central and northern Queensland, depend critically on coal mining...

Those thermal coal miners whom the Academy is happy to disappear, [number about 20,000](#), out of about 40,000 coal miners in total, plus, of course, their household and commercial dependents. Nevertheless, the Academy continues:

Many coal-dependent workers and communities will be better off under a compassionate, pro-active transition program than by simply carrying on with 'business as usual' (Wiseman et al. 2017)."

Professor John Wiseman works at the dark-green end of Melbourne University at its Sustainable Society Institute. The title of [one of his co-authored publications](#), "The Degrowth Imperative: Reducing energy and resource consumption as an essential component in achieving carbon budget targets" gives the flavour. "Degrowth" means reducing living standards like GDP per capita. [As Wiseman's co-author, Samuel Alexander, puts it](#), "And can we come together to build resilient, relocalised economies as globalised, carbon capitalism comes to an end in coming years and decades?" Wiseman's also a writer on climate change and mental health, e.g. "And while many people feel [grief and despair](#) about the prospects of climate change, others see transformational hope..."

The Academy report starts with a full-page 230-word kow-tow to Aborigines, including a homily by Aboriginal Dr Emma Lee, one of the 15 members of the expert panel of authors. (The Academy signed up to a "Reconciliation Action Plan" in August 2019 to burnish its woke credentials). Dr Lee told a conference in March about living in Country with ancestors "[every day watching our midden sites along the coast getting washed away with increasing tides.](#)"[\[11\]](#) One of the oldest-tide gauge benchmarks in the world is at Port Arthur in south-east Tasmania. CSIRO says it shows 160 years of sea rise there [totalling a mere 13.5cm](#), or about two-thirds of my palm and fingers. A more precise study put the rise there at [1mm a year or 10cm per century](#). I had no idea that modern Tasmanian Aborigines could so closely detect the tides increasing.

I checked other recent Academy reports for apologies for squatting on Aboriginal land, without success. One report reviewing "Decadal plans for Australian Astronomy" has 90 words of acknowledgements to whites [but not one mention of Aborigines or the pioneering work of Aboriginal astronomers](#), now being [dinned into Australian schoolkids](#) by the ABC and officialdom.

How left can the Academy get? Last November it bagged President Trump and [threw in its lot with the doddering fraud Joe Biden](#):

He will restore funding to environmental and climate programs and, most importantly for Australia, pressure other nations to raise their emissions reductions ambitions...

The [Trump] administration has also harmed the free movement of scientists and ideas. Travel restrictions have made it more difficult for foreigners from different countries to work or study in the US... Rising concerns about Chinese technological advancements have resulted in investigations into links between US-based scientists and China, leading to Chinese claims of McCarthyism—a claim familiar to Australians" (My emphases).

What? Why is the Academy recycling propaganda from China intended to minimise the Communist Party's wholesale stealing of Western know-how? I sought clarification from the Academy but got no response. [12]

And what's behind the Academy saying that the China-alleged "McCarthyism" is a "*claim familiar to Australians*"? That comment appears to derive from a [Senate committee hearing last October](#). Liberal Senator Eric Abetz asked three Chinese-Australian researchers whether they were prepared to "unconditionally condemn the Chinese Communist Party dictatorship". One of them, a Labor candidate for Melbourne's deputy mayor, later called the question "race-baiting McCarthyism." [I make no suggestion that the three witnesses are in any way disloyal]. The Venona code-breaking transcripts proved that in the US, Senator McCarthy was not just imagining nests of traitors within the post-war establishment.

The Academy's climate doomism is squandering prestige built over half a century. Someone there should have run a check on its *3degC* warming nonsense before the Academy does any more damage – to itself.

Tony Thomas's new book, [Come To Think Of It](#) – essays to tickle the brain, is available [here](#) as a book (\$34.95) or an e-book (\$14.95)

[1] The fourteen Academy people wrote sagely in 1976, "We conclude that there is no evidence that the world is now on the brink of a major climatic change. There is ample evidence that the world's climate has changed widely during the geological past, and while there is every expectation that it will continue to change in the future, the time scale of these changes is in the range of thousands to hundreds of thousands of years rather than decades or centuries." (My emphasis).

[2] There is scientific etiquette that a reviewer does not review his/her own prior publications, yet here we see senior climate scientists doing just that.

[3] The UK is copping its frostiest April in at least 60 years, CO2 notwithstanding, [according to its Met Office](#).

[4] At 1.10.00secs in the video.

[5] IPCC's Third Report 2001: "In climate research and modelling, we should recognize that we are dealing with a coupled non-linear chaotic system, and therefore that the long-term prediction of future climate states is not possible." (Chapter 14, Section 14.2.2.2.)

IPCC's Fifth Report, 2014: 111 out of 114 model runs showed temperatures above actual data. [chapter 9, text box 9.2, page 769]

[6] "The Australian Academy of Science comprises 550 Fellows whose common link is [their exceptional scientific achievement](#)."

[7] Fouled up beyond all recognition.

[8] The Pittock biography [incorrectly](#) credits him with a share in the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, which [the ABC's Sophie Scott](#) elevated even further to describe Pittock as a “Nobel Prize winner”.[8]

[9] China, pretending at the Paris talks to be a less-developed country, intends to reach peak emissions only in 2030. It's burning more than half the globe's thermal coal consumption and is planning or starting 247 gigawatts of new coal-fired power, six times the total coal-power use of Germany and equal to about 80 Loy Yang power plants.

[10] The last official IPCC statement was a footnote in IPCC, 2013: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. SPM page 16. It reads '**No best estimate for equilibrium climate sensitivity can now be given because of a lack of agreement on values across assessed lines of evidence and studies.**'

[11] at 1.24.40sec.

[12] In a marvellous each-way bet, the Academy's anti-Trump document says

- *This analysis has the endorsement of the Secretary for Science Policy, President and Chief Executive of the Australian Academy of Science.*
- *“Views expressed in this feature remain those of the authors.”*