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“Look before you Leap”

*A Submission to “Climate Smart 2050”
(a proposed energy policy for Queensland)*

from

The Carbon Sense Coalition

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*“Future generations will wonder
in bemused amazement that the early
21st Century’s developed world
went into hysterical panic
over
a globally averaged temperature increase
of a few tenths of a degree,
and,
on the basis of gross exaggerations
of highly uncertain computer projections,
combined into
implausible chains of inference,
proceeded to contemplate
a roll-back of the industrial age”.*

Professor Richard Lindzen, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

This submission is presented on behalf of future generations of Queensland consumers and taxpayers by “The Carbon Sense Coalition”.

The Carbon Sense Coalition is a group of individuals concerned at the growing vilification of carbon in the global warming debate. More information can be found on our web site at www.carbon-sense.com.

A summary of our key responses to the policy proposals are presented below. Supporting material is contained in the linked/appendix report below:

“Carbon Sense”:

<http://carbon-sense.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/06/cs.pdf>

1. Earth’s climate is changing and always has been changing – it is the norm, not the exception. This is well documented in historical records and is obvious even by casual observation. Current conditions are warm and benign but not unusual or extreme. It is tragic that people with no apparent knowledge of earth’s climate history are filling our children with fear and our adults with guilt for a perfectly natural phenomenon.
2. All life forms have carbon at their core. Hydrocarbons, carbohydrates, protein, coal, oil, gas, meat, milk, grain, wool and cotton – all are all compounds of carbon. It is the most important element to life on earth. All life processes, all food and natural fibre and most of our energy are based on carbon. More than any other element, carbon has lifted mankind from the Stone Age.
3. Carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is the crucial recycler of all organic matter. It is via carbon dioxide that carbon emissions return to the oceans, the soil and all plants to rejoin the cycle of life. Current levels are neither extreme nor dangerous. All life on earth depends on the carbon dioxide extracted by plants from the atmosphere, and all plants will benefit from increased levels of this “Food of Life”.
4. Carbon dioxide is a colourless, odourless, non toxic gas and its role in the atmosphere (even at significantly higher concentrations) is totally beneficial to plants, wildlife and humans. It is not a pollutant.
5. Carbon dioxide does play a role in affecting the surface temperature of the earth. However, there is no evidence that it is the key driver, or even a significant driver of temperature. And there is no evidence whatsoever that increasing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will cause or increase other climate catastrophes such as droughts, floods, cyclones or the spread of malaria. Attributing every storm, flood or drought to man’s emissions of carbon dioxide is scaremongering driven by ignorance, or other agendas. *(But I expect that the recent record breaking cold in several areas of Queensland will somehow be morphed into yet another example of the relentless march of global warming).*
6. Determining trends in temperature depends on the start and end point chosen and the period covered. For example, based on the same ice core data, it could be concluded that earth’s temperature has been:
 - In a warming trend for the last 16,000 years
 - In a cooling trend for the last 10,000 years
 - In a flat trend for the last 700 years
 - In an uptrend for the last 100 years
 - Level or falling for the last several years

7. The burning of ANY carbon fuel (coal, oil, petrol, diesel, natural gas, coal seam gas, ethanol, bagasse, macadamia shells, grass, biomass, wood or litter in National Parks) produces two main emissions – water vapour and carbon dioxide. Both gases have a Greenhouse effect, and water vapour is approximately 100 times more abundant in the atmosphere. Should we thus panic about adding more water to the atmosphere?

(Combustion of carbon fuels also produces the visible “smoke” which is the dirty bit. Smoke comprises particles of ash and unburnt carbon, plus other gases of sulphur, chlorine, nitrogen etc. These are collected in modern power stations but obsolete or dirty plants, bush fires or open fires do pollute the air.)

8. The whole global warming scare from the IPCC is based on forecasts of future temperature produced by computer models. The output of a complex computer simulation of the atmosphere is not “evidence”. It is a fluttering flag of forecasts, hung on a slim flagpole of theory, resting on a leaky raft of assumptions, which is drifting without the rudder of evidence, in cross currents of ideology emotion and bias, on the wide, deep and restless ocean of the unknown.

Climate is a complex chaotic system and there is little hope that models and equations will ever simulate all the factors involved. Computer models cannot forecast the weather for next weekend, nor can they predict the path of a cyclone from hour to hour, yet we are asked to slash our industry and move towards a peasant life style on the sole basis of some computer forecasts of temperature for decades ahead. We are entitled to remain sceptical. As the old saying goes:

*“Give me four parameters and I can make an elephant.
Give me five, and I can make it’s trunk wiggle.”*

9. Prophecies of doom are a common feature of human existence. The following have been reported:
- Medieval man (and modern man) blamed weather catastrophes on the wickedness of man.
 - In the 1800’s Malthus produced an impeccable mathematical model which said that mass starvation was inevitable (just before the energy and enterprise unleashed by the industrial revolution and the American revolution abolished famine in the western world.)
 - The weird weather of 1816 (caused by the explosion of Mt Tambora in 1815) was blamed on new fangled lightning rods.
 - In the 19th Century, both de-afforestation and re-afforestation were blamed for falling water levels in rivers.
 - At about 1900, the US secretary of the Interior predicted that petroleum supplies would be exhausted in 20 years. The Club of Rome ran out similar forecasts of resource exhaustion based on more complex models in the 1960’s.
 - In the early 1900’s, a mathematical projection showed that the streets of New York would soon be buried deep in horse manure. Henry Ford made garbage of that forecast.
 - During World War I, gunfire was blamed for wet summers.
 - The boom in radio transmission saw this blamed for weird weather.
 - 1924 saw “signs of a new ice age”.
 - 1933 had reports of the “longest warm spell since 1776”.
 - 1974: “A major cooling is widely considered to be inevitable”.

- Aircraft vapour trails were blamed for either droughts or floods (can't remember which).
- 1970's: Rising carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will cause runaway Global Warming.
- 2002: "A new Ice Age?", Discover Magazine, Sept 2002.
- 2005: "There are few reasons to relax about new warming"
- 2007: Nicholas Stern warns in apocalyptic tones that global warming could lead to a global catastrophe "on a scale similar to those associated with the great wars and the great depression."
- Now, as doubts arise as to whether we are in a warming phase or a cooling phase right now, more canny seers are having an each way bet, and man's wicked emissions from fossil fuels are said to be the cause of "Global Climate Change".

10. Truth in scientific matters is never determined by "consensus". Moreover, there is no consensus on the climate forecast models, even among well qualified scientists.

"Consensus" usually comprises an aggressive majority trying to intimidate a group of dissenters. The truth is usually recognised first by one maverick individual. A few other sceptics with open logical minds start to join him. If they survive the scorn and abuse, the tide will start to turn. Suddenly, it will be impossible to find anyone who believed in the wacky theory in the first place.

11. Evidence of past surface temperature exists in direct satellite and thermometer measurements, and in ice cores, tree rings and ocean sediment cores. These records show that temperatures vary in close correlation with output from the sun and maybe other cycles in the solar system. Carbon dioxide levels vary in a similar pattern, but the turning points in carbon dioxide lag those in the temperature record ie carbon dioxide does not drive temperature, but the reverse may be true.

The most recent trend of rising temperature started about 1800, and has been steady or lower since the 1990's. In many rural areas, away from urban heat, temperatures show no rising trend for decades.

12. Turning to the specifics of "Climate Smart 2050" (CS50), we find it unbelievable that the government of Queensland, a state which has always depended on the production and export of carbon based agricultural and energy products, can support a policy based on "a low carbon future" when there is no credible EVIDENCE (projections from dubious computer models is not evidence) that man's emissions of carbon dioxide are significant in driving climate. This policy will herald a lower standard of living for all Queenslanders, many of whom will live in poverty should a low carbon future be forced upon us.

13. Queenslanders are entitled to expect that, before their representatives in Parliament force such draconian policies on them, supporting evidence would be presented. However:
- There is no evidence that man's emissions are causing a significant rise in surface temperature
 - Even if climate is in a warming phase right now, history and biology suggest that this may be an overall benefit for life on earth.
 - There is no attempt to quantify costs and benefits.

14. Queensland is famed for three carbon products – coal, cattle and cane. Coal is the main target of the “Carbon Killers”, but they also have cattle, sheep, fishing, cement making, land management and forestry in their gun-sights. *(Al Gore, the prophet of the Global Warming religion, would not stop there – he looks forward to the complete elimination of the internal combustion engine, and his local disciple, Bob Brown, wants all coal power stations closed within 5 years. Other red-green disciples look forward to epidemics to eliminate most of those other people.)*

Do the policies of CS50 aim to turn Queensland into one big National Park surrounded by a million peasant-sized veggie gardens or will this be just another “unexpected consequence”? We would expect that governments would reject and dissociate themselves from such extremist nonsense.

15. The CS50 document proposes to meet a “greenhouse reduction target of 60% below 2000 levels by 2050”.

We need to examine what these targets could mean. Suppose that the Queensland population grows by, say, 2% per year. By 2050 it will grow to 269% of 2000 levels. That larger population is supposed to exist on 40% of the level of carbon emissions in the year 2000. This indicates emissions per person are mandated to fall to 15% of 2000 levels – a reduction of 85%! If this occurs, by the year 2050 Queenslanders will be living like Tibetan monks, and showering once a week in tepid water from a canvas bucket shower hung under the mango tree. The dream of the levellers will be achieved – equality of emissions per person.

16. We also need to retain a sense of perspective:
- Carbon dioxide comprises a minute component of the atmosphere – 0.038%.
 - Carbon dioxide comprises only 3-4% of greenhouse gases.
 - Man's emissions of carbon dioxide are about 5% of total emissions.
 - Australia's emissions are about 1.4% of the world emissions. *(I suspect this figure is inflated by the silly practice of counting carbon products exported by Australia and used overseas as part of our emissions!)*
 - Over the 100 years ending in the year 2000, the century of coal, steel, electricity, the internal combustion engine, jet planes, two world wars and a population explosion, the average surface temperature rose by only 0.6 deg, and seems to be falling now.

Thus, even if Australia stopped every engine, closed every coal mine and power station, shot all farm animals (they fart a lot) and all held our breath, it would reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere by 1.4% of 5% of 4% or 0.0028%. Even if greenhouse gases were the sole factor affecting surface temperature, Australia may thus unilaterally reduce the growth in temperature over the next century by 0.0028% of 0.6 deg, or nothing at all. For the

Queensland Government to bet our future against odds like this is an exercise in futile, reckless and ill informed speculation.

17. There is no salvation in “alternative” energy sources. All they offer is feel-good, higher cost energy and no capacity to supply reliable base load power. And to cover landscapes of land with solar panels or monstrous windmills is no gift to the environment. People should be free to use, develop or invest in their favoured alternate energy, and to put whatever they like on their own land, but no one is entitled to assume we can supply the base load power for a modern industrial society on any alternative energy available now.
18. The Carbon Sense Coalition is not promoting nuclear power. However, it is obvious to us that in the time horizon of most politicians (the next election), nuclear energy is the only real alternative to coal for base load power. Thus, those who peddle fear and loathing about carbon are promoting nuclear whether they planned to so or not.
19. The artificial force-feeding of the ethanol industry is mis-directed. Ethanol production is not environment friendly, has a poor energy balance, and it will push up the costs of food products as diverse as sugar, grain, beef, pork, chicken, eggs and dairy. This is no benefit to the great majority of Australians.
20. Portable fuel for transport and machinery (currently diesel, petrol and gas) is essential for the survival of the human race (unless a dramatic reduction in numbers or living standards is planned). The price of oil is high, many of the big producing countries are political powder kegs and there are huge barriers to further exploration. If government has money to waste on “Climate Change” it would be better spent improving access to land for oil and gas exploration or clearing all obstacles to the production of portable fuel from our abundant coal, from oil shale or from new technologies.
21. The term “clean coal technology” is a distraction and a deception. Burning a lump of coal is no more dangerous than burning a lump of wood. Modern power station technology removes soot, dirt and the minor constituents such as nitrogen, sulphur and chlorine, leaving only the clean combustion products of water vapour and carbon dioxide. Neither of these gases is “un-clean” – thus there is nothing left to clean.
22. The suggestion that we remove carbon dioxide from man’s emissions and bury it in carbon graves would have no measurable effect on future temperature or anything else, but would be enormously costly to implement. Geo-sequestration aims to prevent carbon dioxide from getting back into the carbon cycle of life, thus depressing plant growth and human food supplies. It is an anti-life anti-human policy.
23. It is impossible to have “Zero Emissions” from the combustion of any carbon fuel or food. All that is possible would be to collect the emissions, hence the invention of geo-sequestration.

In certain circumstances it may be sensible to pump carbon dioxide into oil bearing strata in order to drive out the oil. If this makes economic sense, it will be done. But to talk of locating future coal power stations near sites suitable for geo-sequestration, rather than in the lowest cost location (beside the coal

mine), would be an exercise in economic stupidity. If there is to be Truth in Labelling, “Zero Emissions” should be re-labelled “Costly Power Policies”.

24. Nothing in this submission should be taken to suggest that The Carbon Sense Coalition supports or condones pollution, which is “the transfer of harmful or annoying matter or energy to another’s property without his permission”. We do not support the unchecked emission of particulates (smoke), unusual gases or metals, polluted water or unwelcome noise or light.

Carbon dioxide dissipated into the atmosphere is not a pollutant – it is a beneficial nutrient.

25. The uncritical worship of trees is a threat to the livelihood of future Queenslanders. Trees are becoming like cows on the streets of Delhi – untouchable. This is destroying other land industries such as forestry, grazing and farming. There is a need for some locked up bushland, and our Parks and Nature reserves are serving this need. But to subsidise or legislate the replacement of productive farms and grasslands by a sterile monoculture of woody-weed eucalypts is a policy with no benefits. It will reduce food production, increase the risk of fire and feral pests, and in the long run, does nothing to extract carbon dioxide – growing trees extract carbon, and then as they die and rot, they give it all back. (*National parks give it all back in one day when the inevitable bushfire sweeps thru them.*) Trees are only useful as carbon harvesters if mature trees are logged and their carbon stored in houses, poles and fence posts.

26. Well managed grasslands have an enormous capacity to absorb carbon dioxide, both for the growing plants on the surface and the microbe life in a healthy soil. Providing the grasses are removed by grazing animals or human harvesting, carbon is “fixed” and removed in the grazing products.

27. Queensland's water crisis is not caused by man-made carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. It is the inevitable result of several factors:

- A drought of severe but not unique duration.
- Drought subsidies that encourage overstocking.
- Rising urban population and living standards.
- Underpricing and waste of water.
- Insufficient recycling of city waste water.
- No dams or pipelines built for decades.
- Continual change and uncertainty regarding ownership of water.

28. The Carbon Sense Coalition is opposed to all laws which mandate market shares to particular energy sources, and also to taxes, subsidies or emission caps which discriminate for or against any fuel or technology. No one should be allowed to pollute (carbon dioxide is not a pollutant) but otherwise the market should be left to discover the best technology, the cheapest fuel and the best location.

29. The Carbon Sense Coalition thus believes that the \$1.3 billion of taxpayer funds to be spent by the Queensland Government on “Climate Change” should be put to better use such as dams, pipelines, roads, railways, ports, city infrastructure or tax reduction.

30. Achieving an 85% cut in carbon emissions per person by 2050 will not be achieved by fiddling with light bulbs and the seals of fridge doors. Even if alternative fuels, clean coal technology and geo-sequestration were all successful, such deep cuts could not be achieved without either nuclear power, or the sudden discovery and development of a completely new power source, or deep cuts in energy used.
31. The imposition of carbon caps, carbon taxes, carbon emissions trading, and carbon offsets will have many effects, none of them beneficial to the great majority of Queenslanders. Here is a fictional scenario of developments if these proposals are implemented and followed through:
- A new make-believe electronic trading industry will be created.
 - A large bureaucracy will be set up to regulate it.
 - A cadre of accountants will specialise in auditing it.
 - Large profits will accrue to merchant banks, traders and loophole seekers.
 - The media (not the auditors) will have fun uncovering the corruption.
 - Costs will rise for all energy, food and building materials.
 - Productive farms and grazing land will be covered in forests of woody weed eucalypts.
 - Feral pests and weeds will flourish in these neglected badlands.
 - Bush fires will regularly destroy these neglected scrubs and forests.
 - Motorists will be forced to use the flood of ethanol produced in subsidised plants.
 - Food prices will rise steeply.
 - Energy intensive industries will relocate to more sensible countries.
 - Queensland will be designated a low income area by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
 - Surface temperature will fall as the next (*probably cooler*) sun cycle kicks in.
 - Politicians will point proudly to the falling temperature as evidence of the great success of their policies.
 - Cold and homeless people will infiltrate the badlands, poaching wildlife for food and wood for home heating.
 - As the cold intensifies, the lone coal power station still operating will be blamed for causing Global Cooling.
32. To create real economic destruction and hardship, in the vain hope that a policy of carbon rationing will affect the earth's vast and ever changing climate, is a poor choice.

***It is time someone shouted loudly:
"Hey, the Emperor has no Clothes".***

33. Finally, on a personal note, I am writing this, at 5am in my downstairs office at Rosevale. I keep feeding logs of wood into my wood burning stove, in a futile attempt to warm even the inside of our house. This morning, I have managed to get the temperature to 19 deg while just outside the door, and for miles in all directions, nature insists on a temperature of 5 degrees on the hills and maybe one degree in the valleys. I and the shivering lambs and everyone else must wait for the welcome sun to warm everything. Then suddenly, it will be too hot inside, the fire will be closed down and the doors opened to allow fresh air in. Yet many politicians and other delusionists still insist that it is my

puny fire, writ large, not that huge nuclear fire in the sky that controls surface temperature on the earth.

My tiny world here, multiplied by many millions, is the real world. Every human has the same feeling of man's impotence when he comes face to face at his own back door with one of nature's heat waves, sand storms, bush fires, droughts, floods, frosts, snow storms, blizzards, hurricanes, volcanoes, earthquakes or tsunamis.

Why do we all believe that the bigger world is somehow different from the small reality we see around us every day?

34. Here is another small reality check suggesting that the sun may indeed be a strong influence on surface temperature trends. I have a friend, Helmut Lang, who breeds sheep in the foothills of the Rockies in British Columbia. His comment this morning was (his native tongue is German):

"I remember the 23 March of 1966 (spring). I was out for the first time after winter to walk in to the bush. It was the first time I could feel the sun on my skin. This year (2007), the sun was strong on 23 January (mid winter), way stronger than at the end of March in 1966. I would say twice as strong."

Helmut, the observant sheepman, is supported by Professor Sami Solanki, director of the Max Planck Institute for solar research in Germany. Dr Solanki headed a team of scientists in 2004 who reconstructed the sun's activity since the last Ice Age. One of their conclusions: *"The sun has been at its strongest over the past 60 years and may now be affecting global temperatures"*.

35. For those who would like to read just one of the many articles on the sun's dominant influence on earth's temperature, I suggest this article (follow link): www.canada.com/nationalpost/financialpost/comment/story.html?id=597d0677-2a05-47b4-b34f-b84068db11f4&p=4

36. If climate is indeed changing (and that is the normal condition on earth), what can we do? Adapt, adapt, adapt.

Every person on earth today is the last in a long line of survivors. Every one of them survived by adapting to whatever nature threw at them. Being adaptable and innovative allowed them to survive ice sheets that covered continents, blizzards that buried the mammoths, floods of Biblical proportions, volcanoes more violent than Krakatau, storms bigger than Katrina, seas that drowned Atlantis, earthquakes that leveled Jericho, droughts that created the Sahara, plagues, locusts and wars for living space. They were not shackled by an irrational fear of carbon – theirs was always a battle FOR carbon (for protein and energy).

37. ***In closing***, the strong recommendation from The Carbon Sense Coalition to the Government of Queensland (the State where Carbon is now King) is to:

“Look before you leap”.

We believe that the draft policy proposal “Climate Smart, 2050” should be withdrawn and replaced with a policy that reflects good science, maximises the value of Queensland’s natural resources, does not needlessly destroy useful skills plant and infrastructure (including electric stoves and hot water systems) and serves the long term interests of all Queenslanders.

This policy should also resist the demands of vested interests for special deals for things such as ethanol production, gas utilisation, farm forestry or emissions trading. All carbon businesses should compete for investment funds and consumer support on an equal basis. Governments are there not to deliver windfalls to sectional interests but to represent ordinary tax paying consumers.

We would be happy to participate in helping to draw up such a policy.

Viv Forbes
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22 June 2007

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Appendix: “Carbon Sense”, an expanded discussion of many of the above general points.
“Carbon Sense”:
<http://carbon-sense.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/06/cs.pdf>

All members of the Carbon Sense Coalition, and other supporters unwilling to have their names publicised, have seen this document. I acknowledge their support and assistance with information, references, comments and suggestions.

PS. It is a little known fact that the famed Murphy once entered politics on a reformist policy. This era resulted in Murphy’s Law of Policy Change:

“The Unintended effect of Policy Change is always bigger than the Intended effect.”