

EVIDENCE THAT 'CLIMATE CHANGE' OR 'AGW' IS JUST ONE PART OF AGENDA 21

Graham Williamson
October 2015

Senator Ian Macdonald Confirms Climate Change as Part of Agenda 21

"I understand that Australia has been criticised for lagging behind in its efforts to meet its goals under the agenda 21 program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Do you agree that Australia is lagging behind?"

Senator Ian Macdonald [addresses Parliament](#), 22nd February 1994

AGENDA 21, SUSTAINABILITY, & CLIMATE CHANGE

[According to the United Nations](#), 'climate change' or AGW, is an absolutely integral part of the UN Agenda 21/Sustainable Development program, having been [thoroughly integrated into sustainability strategies](#). The integration and interdependence of Agenda21/sustainability and 'climate change' was [confirmed in the IPCC's 4th report in 2003](#), and again in [Chapter 20 of the IPCC AR5 WGII report](#). [The Australian government admits](#) making a "strong national response to meet our obligations under this international agreement" (Agenda 21). So what does Agenda 21 say about 'climate change'?

Agenda 21 and 'Climate Change'

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>

9.8.

Governments at the appropriate level, with the cooperation of the relevant United Nations bodies and, as appropriate, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and the private sector, should:

- a. Promote research related to the natural processes affecting and being affected by the atmosphere, as well as the critical linkages between sustainable development and atmospheric changes, including impacts on human health, ecosystems, economic sectors and society;*
- b. Ensure a more balanced geographical coverage of the Global Climate Observing System and its components, including the Global Atmosphere Watch, by facilitating, inter alia, the establishment and operation of additional systematic observation stations, and by contributing to the development, utilization and accessibility of these databases;*
- c. Promote cooperation in:*
 - i. The development of early detection systems concerning changes and fluctuations in the atmosphere;*
 - ii. The establishment and improvement of capabilities to predict such changes and fluctuations and to assess the resulting environmental and socio-economic impacts;*
- d. Cooperate in research to develop methodologies and identify threshold levels of atmospheric pollutants, as well as atmospheric levels of greenhouse gas concentrations, that would cause dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system and the environment as a whole, and the associated rates of change that would not allow ecosystems to adapt naturally;*

9.11.

The basic and ultimate objective of this programme area is to reduce adverse effects on the atmosphere from the energy sector by promoting policies or programmes, as appropriate, to increase the contribution of environmentally sound and cost-effective energy systems, particularly new and renewable ones, through less polluting and more efficient energy production, transmission, distribution

and use. This objective should reflect the need for equity, adequate energy supplies and increasing energy consumption in developing countries, and should take into consideration the situations of countries that are highly dependent on income generated from the production, processing and export, and/or consumption of fossil fuels and associated energy-intensive products and/or the use of fossil fuels for which countries have serious difficulties in switching to alternatives, and the situations of countries highly vulnerable to adverse effects of climate change.

17.97.

There are many uncertainties about climate change and particularly about sealevel rise. Small increases in sealevel have the potential of causing significant damage to small islands and low-lying coasts. Response strategies should be based on sound data. A long-term cooperative research commitment is needed to provide the data required for global climate models and to reduce uncertainty. Meanwhile, precautionary measures should be undertaken to diminish the risks and effects, particularly on small islands and on low-lying and coastal areas of the world.

17.125.

Small island developing States have all the environmental problems and challenges of the coastal zone concentrated in a limited land area. They are considered extremely vulnerable to global warming and sealevel rise, with certain small low-lying islands facing the increasing threat of the loss of their entire national territories. Most tropical islands are also now experiencing the more immediate impacts of increasing frequency of cyclones, storms and hurricanes associated with climate change. These are causing major set-backs to their socio-economic development.

18.82.

There is uncertainty with respect to the prediction of climate change at the global level. Although the uncertainties increase greatly at the regional, national and local levels, it is at the national level that the most important decisions would need to be made. Higher temperatures and decreased precipitation would lead to decreased water-supplies and increased water demands; they might cause deterioration in the quality of freshwater bodies, putting strains on the already fragile balance between supply and demand in many countries. Even where precipitation might increase, there is no guarantee that it would occur at the time of year when it could be used; in addition, there might be a likelihood of increased flooding. Any rise in sealevel will often cause the intrusion of salt water into estuaries, small islands and coastal aquifers and the flooding of low-lying coastal areas; this puts low-lying countries at great risk.

18.83.

The Ministerial Declaration of the Second World Climate Conference states that "the potential impact of such climate change could pose an environmental threat of an up to now unknown magnitude ... and could even threaten survival in some small island States and in low-lying coastal, arid and semi-arid areas". 3/ The Conference recognized that among the most important impacts of climate change were its effects on the hydrologic cycle and on water management systems and, through these, on socio-economic systems. Increase in incidence of extremes, such as floods and droughts, would cause increased frequency and severity of disasters. The Conference therefore called for a strengthening of the necessary research and monitoring programmes and the exchange of relevant data and information, these actions to be undertaken at the national, regional and international levels

18.85.

All States, according to their capacity and available resources, and through bilateral or multilateral cooperation, including the United Nations and other relevant organizations as appropriate, could implement the following activities:

a. Monitor the hydrologic regime, including soil moisture, groundwater balance, penetration and transpiration of water-quality, and related climate factors, especially in the regions and countries most likely to suffer from the adverse effects of climate change and where the localities vulnerable to these effects should therefore be defined;

b. Develop and apply techniques and methodologies for assessing the potential adverse effects of climate change, through changes in temperature, precipitation and sealevel rise, on freshwater resources and the flood risk;

c. Initiate case-studies to establish whether there are linkages between climate changes and the current occurrences of droughts and floods in certain regions;

18.87.

Monitoring of climate change and its impact on freshwater bodies must be closely integrated with national and international programmes for monitoring the environment, in particular those concerned with the atmosphere, as discussed under other sections of Agenda 21, and the hydrosphere, as discussed under programme area B above. The analysis of data for indication of climate change as a basis for developing remedial measures is a complex task. Extensive research is necessary in this area and due account has to be taken of the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the World Climate Programme, the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP) and other relevant international programmes.

33.5.

For dealing with environmental issues, special efforts will be required. Global and local environmental issues are interrelated. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity address two of the most important global issues.

What Do Australian Experts Say?

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) president was one of the speakers at the [ICLEI Oceania recognition breakfast at the ALGA National General Assembly of Local Government](#), and the [ALGA Submission to the Productivity Commission on the issues paper: *Barriers to effective climate change adaptation*](#) in 2011:

“For more than twenty years many local governments have pursued a range of policies and activities to address climate change in the context of Ecological Sustainable Development (ESD) following the adoption of Local Agenda 21 framework arising out of the 1992 United Nations Summit in Rio”

Former Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment in the Howard government, **Senator the Hon Ian Macdonald**, in a public symposium forum in Brisbane on 4th April 1998 organised by Logan United Citizens Association and Concerned Residents Action Group, and entitled **“*Ecological Sustainable Development and Local Agenda 21*”**, [outlined the influence of the Commonwealth upon implementation of AG21](#) at the local level and the [funding provided by the Commonwealth](#):

“The concept of sustainable development has been with us now since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, and action has been guided at the international level by Local Agenda 21. At the national level,

action has been guided by the 1992 National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development, endorsed by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments as well as the Australian Local Government Association..... Commonwealth policies are a catalyst for the development of these dynamic partnerships. The Commonwealth has several initiatives designed to support and provide a catalyst for the development of Local Agenda 21 in Australia....The Environment Resource Officer (ERO) Scheme is operated by the Department of Environment to work in partnership with Local Government. The Scheme funds part of the cost of a dedicated environment officer in a peak Local Government organisation in each State to work with Councils to maximise positive environmental outcomes....Last year we also funded a National Environment Resource Officer to be based in Environs Australia...This ERO scheme is one of the main ways the Commonwealth communicates with and provides information on Commonwealth environmental policies and programmes to Local Government....The Commonwealth has recently changed the work plans of the Environment Resource Officer in response to this upsurge in interest following the Newcastle conference. Promoting and assisting councils to develop and implement Local Agenda 21 is a significant part of the Environment Resource Officer's work plans for the current financial year...In addition, a major task of the National Environment Resource Officer is to provide advice on national themes and options for promoting Local Agenda 21 to councils. This includes developing implementation strategies.....**To add impetus to Local Agenda 21 the Commonwealth has recently commissioned the development of a new how-to-do it manual for Local Councils which is due for release mid year.** This manual will go about assisting Local Government and local communities to forge and build local partnerships for sustainability.....The manual will draw on and incorporate the wealth of experience in developing and implementing Local Agenda 21 which has taken place around Australia and throughout the world since the 1992 Earth Summit....The manual will provide a series of practical steps for those Councils who do wish to implement and become involved in and undertake a Local Agenda 21."

Senator Ian Macdonald's concerns about Australia's slow adoption of AG21 go back to 22nd February 1994 [when he asked in Parliament](#):

"I understand that Australia has been criticised for lagging behind in its efforts to meet its goals under the agenda 21 program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Do you agree that Australia is lagging behind?"

Although noting Agenda 21 had gone way beyond environmental issues and become the "**world's greenprint for change**", [Gwydir Council admitted during their Committee Meeting on 20th Feb 2013](#), that Agenda 21 had "*encouraged conspiracy theories about the real agenda.*" But the Council pointed out that Agenda 21 had, "*for 21 years, been very influential in developing public policies that directly impact upon every level of government*", including regulations pertaining to ecologically sustainable development. [As the Council pointed out](#):

"Many of the subsequent matters introduced to encourage a sustainable society, such as the carbon tax, are the outcome of the Australian Government's attempt to introduce the objectives of Agenda 21."