



Australian Government
Department of the Environment

PDR: MC14-014157

Mr Graham Williamson
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Dear Mr Williamson

Thank you for your email of 05 July 2014 to the Minister for the Environment, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, concerning the usage of terms such as 'climate change' and 'attribution.' The Minister has passed your letter to me for reply.

The Australian Government accepts the science of climate change and takes its primary advice on climate science from the Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO. This advice aligns with information provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and national and international organisations such as the Australian Academy of Science, World Meteorological Organization, the Royal Society in the United Kingdom, and the National Academy of Sciences, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the United States of America.

The world's leading scientific organisations have found that the Earth's climate is changing and that humans are primarily responsible. This finding is informed by long term observations of air temperatures, the heat content of the ocean, and changes to glaciers, ice sheets and sea ice.

The IPCC is the leading international body for the assessment of climate change. The IPCC reviews the most recent research every 5-7 years to develop a comprehensive assessment of the scientific understanding of climate change. The Working Group I contribution to the IPCC *Fifth Assessment Report – Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis* was released on 27 September 2013 and shows that there is robust evidence that multiple components of the Earth's climate system are changing due to human activities.

You identified in your email that words and phrases such as 'climate change' and 'attribution' are defined differently in different documents, such as IPCC reports or the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Because the usage of many common terms can vary across individuals, groups, nationalities or scientific disciplines, the IPCC and other organisations often define terms in their documents. This ensures that the meaning of the term is consistent and understood throughout the document.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave Johnson', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Dave Johnson
Director, Science Partnerships
14 July 2014