

Date published: Monday, February 4th, 2013
Latest update:

APPENDIX 13d

REVIEW OF PROGRAM BY ABC-RADIO'S *MEDIA WATCH* SHOW

This document is part of, and intended to be read in conjunction with,
all parts of and appendices to the document entitled *CSIROh!*

Declaration of association: I am the voluntary Project Leader of a non-profit organisation, The Galileo Movement. The founders invited Alan Jones to be the organisation's voluntary Patron.

Media Watch, Monday March 21st, 2011

Balancing a hot debate

http://www.abc.net.au/Media_Watch/transcripts/s3169309.htm

Analysis of statements on Media Watch:

Classification legend and measured totals:

Directly or implicitly denigrating those taking a sceptic position = 12

Contradicting empirical evidence and/or facts = 17

Citing '*scientists*' funded by government and/or in government positions = 7

Citing independent scientists = 0

For reasons explained below, this analysis is indicative, not exact.

My analysis omits comment about accurate statements by commercial radio presenters

that seem to be presented or implied by Media Watch as erroneous.

My analysis omits mention of the basic premises underlying Media Watch's presentation. Those premises are difficult to encapsulate. Yet viewing this Media Watch episode I conclude that it seeks to skillfully denigrate commercial radio station hosts skeptical of government's position and lends powerful yet unfounded implied support to reinforce scientists funded by government and/or contradicting empirical science.

Media Watch's Jonathan Holmes is accomplished at stating words in ways that cleverly convey an intent and message that is the opposite of his seemingly innocent script. Jonathan Holmes' sarcasm is well known. This is difficult to capture in an analysis of transcript words. The numbers above understate Media Watch's bias.

Annotated transcript:

(Annotations are bracketed in italics.)

But a great many people, all around the country, every day, listen to **stuff like this...**

"Gary Hardgrave: I mean CO2 is not a, is not a pollutant though is it? It's not pollution. It's just a natural process

Sen. Doug Cameron:...now look again you, you must be on these...

Gary Hardgrave: Well no I just go back, Year 6 primary School taught me that CO2 was required for photosynthesis, so which kept the trees growing ..."

(implying in his lead up that these facts are nonsense)

4BC Brisbane, Drive with Gary Hardgrave, 9th March, 2011

This week, we're going to look at a fascinating and rather **disturbing** phenomenon: the way a large number of commercial talkback radio presenters deal with the contentious topic of climate change. ~~From the outset that we're NOT~~ taking exception to things like this...

"Alan Jones: Do you understand, Julia, that you are the issue today because there are people now saying that your name is not Julia but JuLIAR and they are saying we've got a liar running the country."

2GB Sydney, The Alan Jones Breakfast Show, 25th February, 2011

Alan Jones, on Sydney's 2GB, taking on the Prime Minister over the carbon tax. It was a very tough interview, but Julia Gillard gave as good as she got - and when you go back on an election promise as **spectacularly** as she has, you have to expect a lot of flak. What we will be looking at is **stuff like this...**

"Jason Morrison: Now I have no doubt that the climate is a changing. Because I think it always changes. Just about every day it's different. Over time it changes but

as new evidence pops up it starts to cast further doubt over whether indeed it is us making that change happen.”

— *2UE Sydney, Breakfast with Jason Morrison, 14th February, 2011*

And this...

“Alan Jones: Nature produces nearly all of the carbon dioxide in the air. Human beings produce point 001 percent of the carbon dioxide in the air...”***

— *2GB Sydney, The Alan Jones Breakfast Show, 15th March, 2011*

That's one of Australia's highest rating radio hosts with a very odd figure. The fact is that almost 30% of the carbon dioxide in the air is there because of human activity in the past two hundred years - and that's thirty thousand times more than Alan Jones's point 001%

[Read Professor England's response to Media Watch's questions](#)

[Read Professor Ashley's response to Media Watch's questions](#)

[Read Professor Sherwood's response to Media Watch's questions](#)

Jones has plenty of sceptical company on AM radio.

We looked at the highest-rating commercial talk stations in each of the mainland state capitals, plus Sydney's 2UE.

Only Melbourne's 3AW and Adelaide's 5AA have no out-and-out climate-change sceptic among their daytime Monday to Friday presenters.

Sydney's 2GB has two out of four: breakfast host Alan Jones and afternoon host Chris Smith. [Chris loves a bit of science too](#)

“Chris Smith: Out of our journey of one kilometre there are just 12 mm left, about a half an inch, just over a centimetre, that is the carbon dioxide that global human activity puts into the atmosphere.”

— *MTR Melbourne, The Chris Smith Afternoon Show, 7th March, 2011*

[\(Denigrating honest logic and arithmetic\)](#)

Sydney's 2UE has three sceptics out of four - Jason Morrison, David Oldfield, and Michael Smith

Brisbane's 4BC - two out of four - morning host Greg Cary and drive host Gary Hardgrave.

Perth's 6PR - Drive host Howard Sattler. [He likes a bit of maths too.](#)

“Howard Sattler: 0.038% as a fraction of what is in the atmosphere – that's CO₂ –

that's the carbon we're talking about – 1/27th of 1%.”
– *6PR Perth, Drive with Howard Sattler, 14th March, 2011*

All of them, naturally, are vehemently opposed to the government's proposed carbon price - although few are quite so vehement as 2GB's Chris Smith, who seems intent on **personally leading the people's revolt.**

“Chris Smith: From Sydney there are now 23 buses paid up in full with paid up passengers, paid up protesters ready to get to Canberra. 23 buses chockers... we need to make this a message that they listen to, a message in their face on the lawn of Parliament House on March the 23rd... “
– *2GB Sydney, The Chris Smith Afternoon Show, 14th March, 2011*

Organising political demonstrations isn't perhaps the normal role of radio hosts. Still, there's no doubt there's genuine anger out there about the carbon tax. And channelling popular anger is what talk show hosts do best.

But one reason that people are so angry is that fewer and fewer believe that human-induced global warming is actually happening. And that's while the actual scientific evidence, as the government's adviser Professor Ross Garnaut said last week, **shows that it's happening more rapidly than the IPCC forecast just four years ago...**

“Ross Garnaut: ... and I call that an awful reality because it would be much better if the opposite were true.”
– *ABC Radio, PM, 10th March, 2011*

Well, **what does Ross Garnaut know?**

“Alan Jones: What do you make of this galoot Garnaut, the Federal Government's climate change head-kicker?

...“The overwhelming weight of scientific evidence is telling us climate change is happening’ – well of course it's happening ha ha course climate change is happening ya dunce, but is it being created by man-made carbon dioxide emissions? They don't want to face that question.”
– *2GB Sydney, The Alan Jones Breakfast Show, 18th March, 2011*

That question is **exactly what the scientific evidence is mostly about,** Alan. Ya dunce. But 4BC's Gary Hardgrave reckons that all that **orthodox science** is corrupt, worthless, bought.

“Gary Hardgrave: ...there's a whole raft of scientists out there who think all this global warming climate change stuff is being misrepresented, it's just a PR stunt by vested interests wanting more research dollars.”
– *4BC Brisbane, Drive with Gary Hardgrave, 9th March, 2011*

A whole raft eh? Like who? Let's ask Chris Smith. He's certainly got no time for the

people the Prime Minister listens to ...

“She said she knew who she’d rather have on her side, not Alan Jones, not Piers Akerman, not Andrew Bolt, but the CSIRO, The Australian Academy of Science, the Bureau of Meteorology, NASA, the National Atmospheric Administration, and every reputable climate change scientist in the world. Did you hear that?”

There was no mention of leading Australian scientists who question climate change including Professor Ian Plimer, Professor Bob Carter and Dr David Evans, among others. What, none of them are reputable now?”

— *2GB Sydney, The Chris Smith Afternoon Show, 17th March, 2011*

Ah, Professors Plimer and Carter. Well no one can accuse talkback radio of not mentioning them...

“Chris Smith: I wanna catch up with Ian Plimer. He’s a scientist who’s taken a close look at climate change ...”

— *2GB Sydney, The Chris Smith Afternoon Show, 11th March, 2011*

“Alan Jones: Well Professor Bob Carter is a geologist and environmental scientist and an emeritus fellow at the Institute for Public Affairs. He’s on the line. Professor Carter good morning”

— *2GB Sydney, The Alan Jones Breakfast Show, 15th March, 2011*

“Leon Byner: Ian Plimer, you, you would be regarded by the Federal Government as a climate change sceptic...”

— *5AA Adelaide, Leon Byner, 15th March, 2011*

“Gary Hardgrave: I was gonna say Bob Carter you knew this day was coming. The carbon tax was always gonna happen wasn’t it?”

— *4BC Brisbane, Drive with Gary Hardgrave, 28th February, 2011*

“Jason Morrison: Professor Ian Plimer. They smear him and call him a sceptic, he’s also a scientist ...

from the school of environment and earth science - yes science not politics - is with me this morning Professor g’day.”

— *2UE Sydney, Breakfast with Jason Morrison, 11th March, 2011*

“Chris Smith: Which brings me to Professor Robert Carter...”

— *2GB Sydney, The Chris Smith Afternoon Show, 1st March, 2011*

Well Professors Plimer and Carter **are both expert media performers**; they've both written books highly critical of climate change science. And both discuss the policy, as well as the science, of climate change. But is Bob Carter, as Chris Smith puts it.

“Chris Smith:...widely considered one of the world’s most respected authorities on

climate change.

— 2GB Sydney, *The Chris Smith Afternoon Show*, 1st March, 2011

Not by most climate scientists he isn't. Here's how Professor David Karoly, of the University of Melbourne's School of Earth Sciences, describes Bob Carter's book "Climate: The Counter-Consensus":

"it is a mixture of scientific facts with misinformation and misinterpretation, as well as outright errors, spun around a framework of personal opinion.

— Professor David Karoly, School of Earth Sciences, University of Melbourne, 21st March, 2011

[Read Professor Karoly's response to Media Watch's questions](#)

(David Karoly's response contains remarkable errors)

Oh well, he's a climate scientist, he would say that. Bob Carter, a marine geologist, routinely describes climate scientists as...

"Prof Bob Carter:...a very small cabal that actually don't study climate change, they study weather change...

but the expert group of scientists on climate change...

is the people you've just referred to, geologists"

— 6PR, Perth, *Mornings with Paul Murray*, 11th March, 2011

(By omission Media Watch fails to recognize Bob Carter as a palaeoclimatologist)

As for mining geologist Ian Plimer's book *Heaven and Earth*, it's been a best seller, but has been ferociously panned by his scientific peers...

"It is not "merely" atmospheric scientists that would have to be wrong for Plimer to be right. It would require a rewriting of biology, geology, physics, oceanography, astronomy and statistics."

— *The Australian*, book review by Michael Ashley, 9th May, 2009

(By omission, many reputable scientists support Ian Plimer's book)

[Read Michael Ashley's full review of Heaven and Earth](#)

Now I'm not suggesting that the good professors shouldn't be interviewed on the radio. But shouldn't one or two of the vast majority of qualified scientists who disagree with them occasionally be given a guernsey too? Well, yes they should. Commercial radio is supposedly governed by Codes of Practice enforceable by the regulator, ACMA. Code No 2 aims to

"promote accuracy and fairness in news and current affairs programs

— *Commercial Radio Australia, Codes of Practice and Guidelines*, 19 February, 2010

and it says licensees must ensure that

“reasonable efforts are made ...

to present significant viewpoints when dealing with controversial issues of public importance...

— *Commercial Radio Australia, Codes of Practice and Guidelines, 19 February, 2010*

[Read the Commercial Radio Australia, Codes of Practice and Guidelines, 2010](#)

Well, those efforts aren't being made.

This year, Fairfax Radio stations 2UE, 4BC, 3AW and 6PR have interviewed only four qualified climate scientists who accept the reality of man-made global warming.

(By omission, Media Watch fails to consider requests by radio stations that have been turned down by academic alarmists. Jonathan Holmes fails to even cite two statements by academic alarmists that Media Watch consulted and who said or implied that they are reluctant to appear on commercial radio.)

One has appeared on Melbourne's 3AW, the three others on the breakfast and morning programs on Perth's 6PR.

Not one orthodox climate scientist - not one - has been interviewed by any of the climate sceptics on Fairfax stations.

[Read Fairfax's response to Media Watch's questions](#)

As for 2GB, its management said it didn't have time to respond to our questions. ***(2GB, according to the response cited by Media Watch said it lacked time to provide a response within the tight time-frame imposed by Media Watch)*** But we've been able to find no evidence that Alan Jones or Chris Smith have interviewed any orthodox climate scientists this year.

[Read 2GB's response to Media Watch's questions](#)

We approached four eminent Australian climate scientists who do sometimes appear on radio and TV. Most told us that on the rare occasions they've been asked by commercial radio stations to debate climate science, they've agreed, (though Professor Will Steffen of the ANU's Climate Change Institute told us

“I sense a degree of burnout in the scientific community (in relation to engaging with media like talkback radio), and this is regrettable but completely understandable.”

— Professor Will Steffen, Executive Director, ANU Climate Change Institute, 18th March, 2011

[Read Professor Steffen's response to Media Watch's questions](#) Professor Andy Pitman of the Climate Change Research Centre at the University of New South Wales

explained why he now declines requests from radio sceptics.

“It would be like asking a cardiologist to respond to the well known theory that humans do not have a heart and cardiologists only claim we have a heart so they can make lots of money claiming to operate on them.”

— Professor Andy Pitman, Climate Change Research Centre, UNSW, 17th March, 2011

Dr Pitman says he thinks it's a serious issue:

“I happen to believe that the commercial media sector should have a standard equivalent to the ABC - a requirement for accuracy, balance, rigor. I might comment that this is likely to happen the week after hell freezes over”

— Professor Andy Pitman, Climate Change Research Centre, UNSW, 17th March, 2011

[Read Professor Pitman's response to Media Watch's questions](#)

Well you're wrong there, Dr Pitman. As we've seen, there are requirements for accuracy and diversity of view in Code of Practice No 2. The problem is, the regulator won't or can't enforce the Code unless someone complains it's being flouted. And, says ACMA...

“The ACMA does not have any current code 2.2 or 2.3 complaints or investigations into these programs on their coverage of global warming science...”

— Response from ACMA, 18th March, 2011

[Read ACMA's response to Media Watch's questions](#)

Well, in my view, it shouldn't need a government regulator to tell influential radio hosts to provide at least a modicum of balance on a subject as crucial as this. The stations should do it themselves. Perhaps that will happen the week after hell freezes over.

That's it for now. For those scientists' replies in full, and some of the evidence for statements we've made in the program, visit our website later tonight.

Until next week, goodnight.

End of transcript:

*** Statement by Alan Jones:

Consider the statement attributed by Media Watch to Alan Jones, quote: “*Alan Jones: Nature produces nearly all of the carbon dioxide in the air. Human beings produce point 001 percent of the carbon dioxide in the air...*”

Alan Jones' first sentence is true and correct. His second sentence is an obvious error since he has consistently stated that human production of CO₂ is 0.001 percent of Earth's air... Thus the second sentence would seem to be an honest error by Alan Jones.

Alan Jones authoritatively tackles many highly controversial and challenging topics. In a tight early morning format he quickly gets to the heart of tough issues. It seems his listeners value that skill. It seems that ACMA's Chairman Chris Chapman admires Alan Jones' record of just two errors over many years. The ACMA Chairman rightly seems to see that as quite an achievement. Listen here and decide for yourself:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-06-15/shock-jock-guilty-of-accuracy-breaches/4073322>

Secondly, the error by Alan Jones is meaningless and of no consequence. That's because in reality the level of CO₂ in Earth's air is controlled entirely by Nature regardless of human production. The level of CO₂ in air is independent of human production of CO₂. This is confirmed by examination of measurements of CO₂ levels cited and relied upon by the UN IPCC.

Many scientists agree with and endorse Alan Jones' logical illustrative depiction of CO₂ levels for his listeners. These include UN IPCC *Review Editor* David Karoly who confirmed and endorsed Alan Jones' explanation to his radio listeners during their discussion broadcast on May 25th, 2011.

Nonetheless, empirical scientific measurements lead to a different conclusion. Humans cannot affect CO₂ level. It's controlled by simple ocean-atmosphere interactions. This is explained in Appendix 4.

Alan Jones did not understate the contribution of human CO₂ production to the atmosphere. He overstated it. As do many people, including UN IPCC academics and many real climate scientists. Nature proves otherwise.

Another calculation is provided by Geoff Brown using methods from various scientists here:

<http://theclimatescepticsparty.blogspot.com.au/2012/10/alan-jones-and-facts-about-co2.html>

He concludes that Alan Jones' statement was in error in that Alan Jones overstated the human contribution to atmospheric CO₂ levels. Alan Jones' figure though was far closer to reality than was David Karoly's figure as cited by Media Watch.

Thirdly, has Media Watch ever held Tim Flannery accountable for his many false statements misrepresenting climate and science or for his many contradictions and failed doomsday forecasts?

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/opinion/climate-of-dissent-being-punished/story-e6frfifx-1226500249819>

Analysis and Comments:

Media Watch sarcastically seems to imply talkback radio hosts are misrepresenting arithmetic. Yet their arithmetic is essentially correct and reasonable as a way of

meaningfully conveying simple yet seemingly complex figures to a wide audience. It's telling and noteworthy that Jonathan Holmes uses sarcasm to imply ridicule rather than direct refutation.

Jonathan Holmes' article could easily be seen as his attempt to reinforce the unscientific myth that human CO₂ caused Earth's latest global atmospheric warming by implying that talkback radio hosts have got it wrong. Yet empirical science and logical scientific reasoning supports the talkback radio hosts' position. They likely arrived at the position using empirical scientific data and reasoning. In doing so they join thousands of scientists worldwide.

It seems clear from discussions at various rallies around Australia that talkback radio listeners are relying on AM radio to discuss empirical science. Many listeners have given up on the bias they perceive on the ABC and in the Fairfax press and the apathy demonstrated by commercial TV networks' news reports.

Consider the academics consulted by Media Watch. Media Watch does not disclose the funding of academics it cites.

Matthew England is a mathematician who works on computerised numerical models and contributes to the UN IPCC. The organisation of which he is a co-Director receives federal government funding. Additionally he's on the Science Advisory Panel to Tim Flannery's Climate Commission. For that he's paid directly by the federal government. His statement cited by Media Watch starts with a vague general statement, moves on to convey unfounded precision and then contradicts empirical science to assert an unfounded quantity implied to be reliable. Yet it is implausible, unfounded and contradicts empirical science and laws of science. He omits to declare his conflict of financial interests.

Steven Sherwood is Matthew England's co-Director and benefits indirectly from federal government funding. His statement about volcanic sources of CO₂ contradicts eminent scientists in other fields and appears to make concrete a measure that is noted by many scientists to be difficult to estimate and highly variable.

Michael Ashley supports Matthew England's flawed and unscientific logic contradicting empirical science and laws of science. His statement is based it seems on the flawed and false assumption that CO₂ sinks are saturated when science and Nature reveal they are temperature dependent. Atmospheric CO₂ levels are determined by balancing oceanic CO₂ and partial pressure of atmospheric CO₂.

It is likely academic Michael Ashley benefits at least directly from federal government funding.

David Karoly has repeatedly misrepresented climate science in broadcasts across Australia through ABC TV and radio networks. Andy Pitman's background is in computer modelling. Will Steffen is a chemical engineer. Government funds all. Nowhere does Media Watch mention this.

Why does Media Watch imply by assumption that their work can be relied upon when in reality the work of David Karoly, Will Steffen, Andy Pitman and Matthew England on climate is highly dubious and hotly contested by eminent scientists who work in the real world of science worldwide?

Why does the ABC repeatedly accept and spread false statements by alarmist academics funded by government? What are the ABC's motive and intent?

Why were Ian Plimer and Bob Carter apparently not given an opportunity to comment? Why were they not given an opportunity to respond to their critics?

It's encouraging that so many commercial broadcasters have done their homework and seen through the climate con.

It raises an obvious question: how can so many talkback radio hosts sneered at by Jonathan Holmes get it right yet the ABC funded by federal government repeatedly get it so wrong? Why are the large investigative journalistic resources of the ABC seemingly impotent?

Why is Chris Smith ridiculed for supporting a people's revolt? If he avoided doing his job supporting his listeners the truth would not have emerged. Or is Media Watch ridiculing Chris Smith because he is effective?

Why does Media Watch imply that by being in apparently independent agreement, so many commercial radio station hosts have got it wrong? Yet in reality they got it right? The hosts' are rightly upset about the misrepresentation of science by the political and unscientific campaign pushing human CO2 as a cause of climate change.

Why is Media Watch implying that Fairfax radio stations are not balanced without commenting that Fairfax newspapers are widely regarded as biased to the other side? Could it be that commercial radio is serving the needs of a large group of Australians currently disregarded by ABC TV and radio networks heavily skewed to promoting unfounded climate alarm? Could it be that commercial radio is fulfilling a need created by the ABC's bias?

A summary of Media Watch's uninformed position is the question Jonathan Holmes asks, quote: "*what does Ross Garnaut know?*" Indeed, if Media Watch and the ABC had done its due diligence, the Australian public would know that on the topic of climate economist Ross Garnaut knows little about climate and seriously misrepresents science, climate, humanity and Nature. It's a pity that Jonathan Holmes had not investigated the questionable environmental credentials of Ross Garnaut as unearthed by ABC-TV's '7:30 Report'. Please refer to my letter to Ross Garnaut referenced elsewhere in this report. <http://www.conscious.com.au/documents/GarnautMarch2011.pdf>