

# Exploding Some 17 Climate Myths

by Dr John McLean\*

## 1. Temperatures are continuing to rise – FALSE

According to the most reliable temperature data there's been virtually no warming over the last 20 years. Temperatures have gone up a bit with El Nino events and they've gone down a bit with La Nina events but the ups and downs more or less cancel out and there's been no warming to speak of. Further, assuming the main temperature data is correct, from 1950 to 2017 the average global temperature increased by 0.85°C. That's less than 1 degree in almost 70 years, or if you prefer, the equivalent of 1 degree in just over 82 years. For most people a sudden change of 1 degree would be too small to notice, let alone a change spread over their lifetime.

## 2. There's a lot of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere – FALSE

The amount is truly tiny. It's 400 parts in a million (or 1 in 2500). If you pay \$25,000 for a new car then 400 parts in a million comes to just \$10. If you slept for 7 hours last night then the same proportion is just 10 seconds. Tiny.

## 3. Correlation proves cause – FALSE

Correlation (i.e., when something rises and falls as something else does) doesn't prove which one causes the other one to change. The first might change the second, the second might change the first, something else might change them both, or it could be a coincidence. Milk prices have risen as murder rates have increased; taxi fares have gone up and so too has the use of mobile phones. Neither element is directly connected to the other but there's some kind of correlation. Mind you, if there's no correlation between the two things then it does show that they are probably not linked. The absence of warming over the last 20 years, when atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> has certainly increased, proves there's little or no connection between temperature and CO<sub>2</sub>.

## 4. CO<sub>2</sub> is a dangerous pollutant – FALSE

Labelling CO<sub>2</sub> a pollutant is as silly as calling water a pollutant because CO<sub>2</sub> is as essential for life as water is. Your breathing is automatically controlled by the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in your lungs. Plants grow by a process in the leaves called photosynthesis using CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere. Without plants for our food, or as food for the animals that we eat, we'd all starve.

5. Planet Earth will over-heat unless we do something – FALSE

The Earth's surface cools by radiation (think of an electric radiator giving off heat), by convection (hot air rising)—with that heat radiating out to space from above the greenhouse gases—and by evaporation (surface water or moisture). Greenhouse gases can only slightly block the first method, but heat will still be lost by the other two methods. The Earth is in no danger.

6. Climate models are accurate – FALSE

The latest IPCC report told us that 111 of 114 attempts to run climate models produced greater recent warming over 15 years than temperature recordings showed. Model-based predictions are currently much higher than the temperature data. (This is very important because the models are run with and without greenhouse gases and the difference is said to be the manmade warming. This is false, considering that the models are not accurate.)

7. The science is settled – FALSE

If the science was settled scientists would be able to explain why there's been no warming for the last 20 years, but they've been unable to. There was no warming from 1945 to 1977 and there are only guesses about the cause of that. They are also not sure how to include clouds in climate models but it's obvious that clouds have an impact on temperature. Climate models are just large computer programs that try to include everything that's known about climate. If there are gaps in knowledge then the models won't be correct, and there are definitely gaps because the science isn't settled.

8. There's scientific consensus that mankind has caused the warming – FALSE

The so-called surveys have been as phony as a \$3 note. They've suffered from ambiguously-worded questions, cherry-picking by the people running the surveys, and so on. Anyway, scientific issues are not decided by consensus but by how well a theory accounts for what's observed. One scientist with the right answer isn't overruled by 1,000 scientists with the wrong answer.

9. There's good evidence that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions cause warming – FALSE

IPCC reports, which are usually claimed to have evidence, in fact contain opinions of various people (whose income depends on maintaining the climate scare) and claims based on climate models that even the IPCC reports describe as wrong (see above); IPCC scientists say the evidence is "overwhelming" but they don't tell us what it is. As mentioned above, the absence of significant warming over the last 20 years while atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> was increasing shows that CO<sub>2</sub> doesn't cause warming.

10. Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> causes extreme weather – **FALSE**

Extreme weather has only been talked about for a few years and yet we've had 20 years with negligible or no warming, which suggests that nothing much happened in the first 15 years or so. Research into old weather records shows a few instances of more extreme weather, many instances of no change and a great majority of weather that was less extreme. What's happened is that the media and certain sections of the community have become paranoid about the weather. When I was a child we took storms and heatwaves in our stride and didn't make a fuss. Now it seems that if temperatures are five degrees above average the media gets into hysterics (but not if they are five degrees below average). For a good sense of context, scientists know that Australia and the USA have had droughts lasting decades and even centuries, long before CO<sub>2</sub> started its modern increase.

11. Reducing mankind's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will give us perfect weather – **FALSE**

As shown above, there's no apparent link between CO<sub>2</sub> and temperature or extreme weather. It makes no sense to claim that somehow the weather will be perfect if we reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Anyway, people are sure to disagree about the kind of weather they call perfect.

12. Global temperatures were stable before we started emitting CO<sub>2</sub> – **FALSE**

Temperatures have always varied. The bubbles of gas trapped in ice cores show that temperatures over the last 400,000 years (yes, hundreds of thousands) have varied quite widely. Temperatures in the Antarctic have been 10 degrees lower than today, and in the Arctic almost 20 degrees lower. The medieval warm period, from about 1050 to 1300, was very likely warmer than today. Europe had a Little Ice Age from about 1600 to 1850 that was colder than today. In the 1950s and 1960s we had few El Nino events (warm and dry) and a lot more La Nina events (cool and wet). In the late 1970s that flipped around for reasons scientists still don't understand and temperatures rose.

13. We need renewable energy – **FALSE**

CO<sub>2</sub> poses no threat so there is no need to close down reliable coal-fired power stations. Wind turbines and solar panels are expensive to build and costly to run because we subsidise them and because they need back-ups when they start and stop without warning. The wind can drop or blow too strongly, and solar panels never work at night. Reliable gas-fired generators must be kept spinning the whole time to cut in and keep the lights on. But why build a reliable back-up only for occasional use when we could run it all the time and save money?

14. Sea level rise is a big threat – **FALSE**

The average global sea level is rising at about 2 mm/year and has done so since about 1900. (2 mm/year means a rise equal to the distance across your hand in about 50 years.) That's a global average that which will probably be different for each country and different again for

each stretch of coastline. The ground underneath the measuring stations often moves up or down a bit and this makes it look like sea level is changing when it's not. Also, global average temperatures supposedly rose from about 1977 to 1997 but we didn't see a matching sudden rise in sea level so it seems that temperature probably doesn't have a big influence on it.

**15. Climate sceptics are paid to tell lies – FALSE**

There's almost no money available to people who are sceptical about the idea that mankind has a big impact on temperature, no money to pay for research and none for publicity. The big money, mainly from governments, goes to universities and organisations that do climate research based on the IPCC's opinions about manmade warming. Do you think that if the researchers didn't agree with the government view they'd get funding for more research?

**16. The experts must be right – FALSE**

Experts have been wrong in the past, sometimes for a century or more. Over the years many of the so-called experts have received a lot of money to research climate along the lines of the IPCC's opinions. They are hardly likely to admit that they might be wrong. And how do you know who the experts are? You were probably told by the mainstream media, which is very gullible on technical and scientific matters. Any decent expert will show evidence to support what he says but there's very little concrete evidence that CO<sub>2</sub> causes dangerous warming—some people say there's none.

**17. The mainstream media reports climate matters accurately - FALSE**

Very few journalists know much about climate or are equipped to sort fact from fiction. Most journalists play safe by repeating what they think the consensus is or by repeating without question the information they were given (which is poor journalism). The mainstream media is notorious for publishing scare stories because they attract a greater audience than "good news" stories, and wild climate claims supply a constant flow of alarming stories. The last thing the mainstream media wants is even one climate sceptic to be correct because that would mean the media has been wrong for more than 30 years.

\*The author, John McLean (PhD): has studied climate issues for about 13 years, is the author of four peer-reviewed papers on climate subjects, was an Expert Reviewer of the 2013 IPCC report, has an extensive computer background and his PhD was on an issue related to climate science.