

# Let's cool it in heat of great debate

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**HUNDREDS of prominent scientists this week attended a conference in New York hosted by the US Heartland Institute.**

The scientists rejected claims that we are seeing catastrophic human-induced global warming.

They concluded that the earth may be undergoing a period of modest warming but that it and cooling are constant features of the earth's climate. There was agreement that present global temperatures are not abnormal.

The debate on global warming has displaced the struggle about whether socialism or capitalism was the best approach to running an economy.

Radicals once sought to replace private enterprise with state control. Now they want the removal of coal, oil and gas to justify a new and more comprehensive form of state control.

As with the march of socialism, even politicians sceptical about the claims of an impending catastrophe are being forced to go along with measures promoted by the radicals.

Taxes and regulations to reduce carbon emissions are being steadily introduced while governments pray that their effect will be minor.

The all-embracing of measures being touted, for example in the Garnaut report, involve everyone in the world being allocated the same amount of carbon dioxide and this being steadily reduced.

For Australia, average emissions would be reduced to a fifth of their existing levels, from around 16 tonnes per person of carbon dioxide equivalent to less than 3 tonnes.

Victorians would be particularly badly placed because of our reliance on the Latrobe Valley's fabulous deposits of brown coal for cheap electricity generation.

Nobody knows how an economy could operate with standards of living like Australia's while adopting the sorts of measures proposed.

Carbon dioxide emissions are the automatic outcome of driving cars, generating electricity, smelting metals, making concrete and just about every other activity.

To reduce carbon dioxide emissions to a fifth of present levels would require, at the very least, replacement of coal by nuclear - something the present government has refused even to contemplate.

It would require an almost complete ban on car use.

It would certainly be the end of any holidays overseas or on the Gold Coast - and air-conditioning and central heating too.

Victorians have pioneered the use of low-quality brown coal as feedstock for power stations that produce some of the cheapest electricity in the world. This has been the backbone of our economy and it is impossible to envisage how we could be competitive with the rest of the world without it.

Not only would the emission control proposals cause a trebling of electricity costs to households - especially without nuclear - but Victoria would lose its low-cost energy advantage.

We would see the departure of aluminium smelting, metal production, the chemical industry, and car manufacturing.

Costs of services like retailing would rise considerably.

Before further dangerous excursions into energy-control policies, governments need to take note of the grave doubts of so many of the world's eminent scientists at the Heartland Institute conference.

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