

Date published: Monday, February 4th, 2012
Latest update:

APPENDIX 13f

REVIEW OF PROGRAM BY ABC-TV'S CATALYST SHOW

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

Categorisation of program transcript statements from ABC-TV's Catalyst program *Science Under Siege* broadcast Thursday, September 8th, 2011

Transcript and video are available here:

<http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/3313559.htm>

Broadcast barely a month before parliament's vote on the carbon dioxide tax.

Legend showing categories used in my analysis:

ABC endorsing or implicitly endorsing cutting human CO₂ as causation of global warming = 4

ABC statement sceptical of, or implying scepticism that, human CO₂ caused global warming = 0

Statements from supposed experts advocating or portrayed as supportive of cutting human CO₂ = 12

Statements from supposed experts demonstrating neutrality. = 0

Statements from supposed experts opposing action to cut human CO₂ = 3

Meaningless or unscientific claim driving misrepresentations = 2

Statement from ABC attributing or implying scientific authority to a position or omitting and/or misrepresenting reference to strong sceptical point = 12

Annotated transcript of ABC-TV's Catalyst program broadcast

Based on my analysis, my conclusion is that the ABC took sceptic statements out of context and used statements by taxpayer-funded advocates of the government's position without checking their underlying science or credentials. Catalyst's script was disparaging toward skeptics.

Consider the people ABC-TV uses to speak for science. Firstly, the implied portrayal of a political staffer as a scientist knowledgeable on climate is a new low even for the ABC. Refer to link below on Anna-Maria Arabia.

Secondly, ABC-TV cites a marine biologist Ove Hoegh-Guldberg. He's funded by government, Greenpeace and WWF in the context implied to be a climate scientist. See Appendix 9.

That same marine biologist has previously broadcast misrepresentations about climate science and about science in his own field of marine biology:

http://www.conscious.com.au/_documents/academic%20experts/ABC%20transcripta.pdf

In his personal written responses to my requests he has repeatedly failed to provide with empirical evidence and logical scientific reasoning to support his unfounded claim that human CO₂ caused global warming.

The ABC gives the final say to that academic advocate for unfounded alarmism contradicting empirical science. That's the last message for the audience to remember.

Thirdly, ABC-TV cites comments by the Chief Scientist who has no empirical evidence or logical scientific reasoning as evidence of human causation of global warming.

The ABC is correct in concluding that the climate debate is harming science's credibility. Yet the ABC reverses reality. Academic advocates funded by government while misrepresenting science and climate are destroying science's credibility. That is clear in the broader community.

There seems a deliberate or unconscious assumption that the science is as academic advocates decree and that skeptics are misguided and possibly corrupt. Whether the program is deliberate propaganda or a self-fulfilling confirmation of cultural bias within the ABC is debatable. Given its nature, it seems likely that the bias is premeditated.

Within the transcript provided below italicized comments are my notes and comments.

TRANSCRIPT

Comments

Scientific institutions are working to combat a rising wave of attacks on the integrity of scientists and their work. A range of scientific endeavours, including nanotechnology, immunisation and atmospheric physics, are the target of misinformation campaigns that have lead to unwarranted abuse and even death threats. Mark Horstman highlights the damage being done to the public's trust in science and the impact these attacks have on the personal lives of hard working and conscientious scientists.

NARRATION Up in the atmosphere, the levels of carbon dioxide are at their highest in at least eight-hundred thousand years. But down in wintry Canberra, we're still arguing about whether it matters.

Man A No more government-funded fraudulent science reports.

Protesters Yeah!

NARRATION At this anti-Carbon Tax rally in front of Parliament House, the science of global warming is ridiculed.

Dr Art Raiche, retired CSIRO scientist Perhaps CSIRO should follow the advice of our beloved Prime Minister - don't write crap, it can't be that hard. (Art Raiche not acknowledged as former CSIRO Chief Research Scientist)

Protesters Yeah!

Man C Carbon dioxide, we can't charge tax to God. He's the one that put it here.

Woman Carbon dioxide is not a pollutant. And they ...

Mark Horstman Why not?

Woman Why not? Because we need it to breathe, the plants need it to breathe.

Mark Horstman This protest movement takes a lack of understanding about how carbon emissions warm the atmosphere, and amplifies it into a campaign to throw the whole government out at the next election.

Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg What we're seeing today is a distortion of science. We're seeing the damage that it can have, it can topple opposition leaders, it can topple even prime ministers.

Man D It doesn't matter about the science because it's turned into a religion.

(Yet this sceptic's complaint about the destruction of science turned into religion is presented as a statement that could easily be falsely misconstrued as skeptics dismissing science when this sceptic is actually protecting science.)

Professor Ian Chubb And it takes more than me to stand up for this. I think all scientists have to say, 'Hang on a second here. We will not be shouted down by the loudest voice or the biggest headline.'

Angry Anderson There is something insidiously evil going on ...

Protesters Yeah!

Angry Anderson ... behind this mask of a carbon tax.

Protesters Yeah!

NARRATION The carbon tax debate is a lightning rod for a broadside not just on climate science, but on science generally, which concerns the scientific community enough to launch its own campaign.

Anna-Maria Arabia The Respect the Science campaign aims to help people understand how science is done, and really understand um, the peer review process - so how ideas are formulated, how they're tested and re-tested.

NARRATION Anna-Maria Arabia heads Science and Technology Australia, the peak body for sixty-two scientific societies, with a collective membership of more than sixty-eight thousand scientists.

http://blogs.news.com.au/heraldsun/andrewbolt/index.php/heraldsun/comments/a_stain_on_all_scientists/

(Based on its presentation of Anna-Maria Arabia, the ABC stoops to allow reasonable viewers to assume that a political advocate is a scientist knowledgeable on climate.)

Anna-Maria Arabia Scientists are quite concerned about the way their profession is being devalued and as individuals how they feel they are under attack.

Man E I think they're intimidated by us.

Mark Horstman Why would they be intimidated

Man E Ah, because I think they sense that we're, we're, we're probably onto something.

NARRATION Marine biologist Ove Hoegh-Guldberg is no stranger to climate controversy. A decade ago, his work on coral bleaching warned that a two degree rise in sea temperature could wipe out the Barrier Reef. At a recent visit to Indooroopilly State High School, Ove wants to clear up some of the confusion surrounding the science of global warming.

Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg If you want to prove your hypothesis that it's not happening, you can go and pick those little bits out and ignore the rest. But science doesn't work that way. Good science is all about looking at the complete picture and making a balanced assessment of the change. The trust in science that produces

agriculture, medicine, you know, engineering, bridges and so on, that we trust, that's the same science that produces our perspective on climate and on its impacts.

Mark Horstman Such trust has been lost here. At the heart of this protest is the notion that the people here can see through the carbon lies, because they know better than most of the world's climate scientists. But science is based on evidence, not popular opinion. What next - let's take a vote on whether the earth is round?

(ABC has completely missed and/or misrepresented the protestors' key point: the corruption of science pushing a political agenda)

NARRATION At a similar rally in Sydney earlier this year, that's exactly what Lord Monckton proposed should happen with climate science.

Lord Christopher Monckton They got the sums wrong.

Protester Yes they sure did!

Lord Christopher Monckton And what we are going to do is get the sums right. And the way we're going to do it is through the ballot box.

(ABC again takes this statement out of context and reverses what was meant by Viscount Monckton. I was MC for the event. In context he clearly said we need public pressure to restore scientific accuracy and punish government corrupting science through the ballot box. The ABC misrepresents a call for civilized democratic action.)

Protesters Yeah!

NARRATION And then this chilling call to arms.

(What is chilling about applying the law peacefully and respectfully?)

Lord Christopher Monckton To the bogus scientists who have used the bogus science that invented this bogus scare, I say, we are coming after you, we are going to prosecute you, and we are going to lock you up.

Protesters Yeah!

Professor Ian Chubb We're back to the Middle Ages aren't we? I mean, that's what they tried to do to Galileo, I mean, this is an extraordinary position for my country to be in. I always thought that we would be willing to have an argument, for sure. But sometimes I think ah, you know, how low can we go?

Anna-Maria Arabia I personally received a death threat, um, that was quite explicit about how my life would end. Um, not particularly pleasant things to receive when you're really just getting on with your job.

Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg Are we a sub-class of people who deserve this? I don't think so. You know, you sit there, and you're, you're doing your email and this thing sort of comes up on the screen. 'You [beep] communist, [beep] die, you must die.' The violence in the messages were just, you know ... I don't, I'm not a sissy, okay? [Laughs]

Um, it's shocking. It's just something I didn't think was going to be part of the science career. So they have a little zone, it's sort of crucial....

NARRATION But it doesn't deter Ove from his message about the power of science to guide solutions.

Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg This is the big challenge, and your generation's got to sort it out.

Male student A lot of the current debate, it's too political. It's hindering like action on like, the real problem, which is long-term sustainability.

Man D The way I see it, when we went to school as kids, it was the communists, you know, all those horrible communists were going to get us. You know, we have to have something to scare people about. Now they're teaching kids in school about this climate change thing.

Female student It's a new concept really, you know, the whole idea of global warming. Adults are probably still trying to get their head around it, start new discussions, new debates, new ideas. I guess for us, we've learnt about it, we've sort of grown up with this whole debate.

Man F For a layperson like myself, it appears as though the people that are promoting carbon dioxide as a very, very nasty thing are overwhelmingly strong and passionate in their view, and not allowing the other side to present a contrary view.

Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg Well there's actually you know, an opinion - spin on one hand, and then there's you know, peer-reviewed science on the other. They're very different. But the public I think has got that, you know, that's been hard for them to understand, and I'm not surprised that many people are a little confused about where science fits.

Other Catalyst and ABC programs similarly distort science

The misrepresentations fabricated by Catalyst above are not new. From Appendix 7, quote:

"Over the years BOM reports spawn ABC broadcasts misrepresenting climate. eg, the *Catalyst* program entitled *The Drought Vortex* (September 18th, 2003) reportedly used information from Dr. David Jones of the Bureau of Meteorology, Dr James Risbey of Monash University, Melbourne, and Kevin Hennessy of the CSIRO Atmospheric Division.

<http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/s948858.htm>

Note the quiet downplaying of qualifiers such as *if* and *could* overpowered by strong yet false implied statements of human causation contradicting empirical science. Note the

ending focusing on supposed *greenhouse gases* and contradicting empirical science. The message is subtle yet clear despite contradicting empirical science and lacking logical scientific causal reasoning: human CO₂ is loosely implied to have caused the drought, fires and other events that *will* supposedly plague our fearful guilt-ridden future.

It's not science. Instead, the ABC peddles conjecture and implied claims often based on unvalidated computerised numerical models and word-smithing giving the illusion of unfounded certainty and scientific credibility. It's pseudo-science. When peddled by the ABC it becomes taxpayer-funded advocacy and at times becomes propaganda."

End of quote.