

## **Climate change not the world's greatest concern (Letter published in AFR, 7 Nov 2016)**

The closure of the Victorian coal-generated Hazelwood power station has prompted suggestions to make the change more acceptable ("A future in coal for some", November 5-6). These include importing more electricity from NSW, accessing sources having less usage of carbon, increasing usage of renewable energy (if Chief Scientist's review approves), creating jobs by increasing government spending in Latrobe Valley, even finding possible purchasers, and explaining that higher electricity prices are necessary for reducing carbon emissions by 2100.

But other developments suggest a need for a broader review of the latter policy and a slowdown in the reduction rate of carbon emissions. Relevant is the United Nations latest annual poll surveying people's greatest concerns across the world. This shows that, of the 16 concerns surveyed, action taken on climate change is the least. Yet existing spending on climate change objectives now runs at about \$1.5 trillion a year worldwide and about \$4 billion a year in Australia. Reductions of such spending by governments would increase funding available for other UN concerns, with education being the greatest.

Various commentators on climate change have also detected serious deficiencies in analyses by existing agencies, such as CSIRO, Bureau of Meteorology, and the Chief Scientist. That supposed experts exaggerate their causes is well-documented but they must not be exempt from review. The appointment of Garth Paltridge, a former CSIRO climate expert, to the 25-member Advisory Council of the British Global Warming Policy Foundation shows numerous experts who could undertake such a review.

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