

Andrew Bolt says warming science is a sorry state of affairs

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NO wonder sceptics now outnumber warmists.

Check the dirty trick the CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology tried last week. Can anyone now trust these global warming alarmists? The two government-funded bodies should apologise for the State of the Climate report they issued last week to scare us into believing. "Observations and climate modelling paint a consistent picture of ongoing, long-term climate change interacting with underlying natural variability," it warned.

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We'd be flooded by rising seas and torched by more days of terrible fire danger. Key parts of the country were running short of rain, State of the Climate then claimed, presenting statistics so dodgy that I had to laugh.

The good news is that, outside the ABC, State of the Climate didn't get the big media run you'd have expected only a few years ago.

Maybe that's because it's hard to worry about man-made global warming when Victoria has just suffered an unusually cold October. Or when the world just harvested its biggest grain crop on record. But maybe it's also because Australians have wised up. Last month, even a Climate Institute survey admitted only 30 per cent now believed the world was warming and humans were mostly to blame.

Many Australians may feel the CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology should be ashamed to put out another report spruiking global warming without once saying sorry for their dud predictions of the past. In 2008, for instance, when southeastern Australia was in drought, the bureau's then head of climate analysis, David Jones, warned that "perhaps we should call it our new climate". "There is a debate in the climate community, after ... close to 12 years of drought, whether this is something permanent." The year before, he wrote to the University of East Anglia: "Climate change here is now running so rampant that we don't need meteorological data to see it. Almost every one of our cities is on the verge of running out of water and our largest irrigation system (the Murray Darling Basin) is on the verge of collapse."

The CSIRO in 2009 also pushed this "permanent drought" scare.



Victoria's desalination plant remains in mothballs, a monument to our stupidity. Picture: Jake Nowakowski

As the gullible Age newspaper reported: "A three-year collaboration between the Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO has confirmed what many scientists long suspected: that the 13-year drought is not just a natural dry stretch but a shift related to climate change." The bureau's Bertrand Timbal was quoted: "It's reasonable to say that a lot of the current drought of the last 12 to 13 years is due to ongoing global warming. In the minds of a lot of people, the rainfall we had in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s was a benchmark ... But we are just not going to have that sort of good rain again as long as the system is warming up."

This "permanent drought" was the consensus of scientists and activists.

Most famously, Tim Flannery, now head of the Climate Council, warned in 2007: "Even the rain that falls will not fill our dams and our river systems." Melbourne Water, in charge of the city's supplies, agreed, and ruled out building another cheap dam because "unfortunately, we cannot rely on this kind of rainfall like we used to". And this "permanent drought" scare cost us billions.

Labor state governments across the country built not dams but hugely expensive desalination plants to prepare for a future without rain.



A permanent drought scare has cost us billions. Picture: Simon Cross

But the rains did return. The dams did fill: today, Sydney, Adelaide and Canberra's are nearly full, and Melbourne and Brisbane's are three-quarters full. Result: the desalination plants of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane remain in mothballs, monuments to our stupidity.

Yet the CSIRO and the bureau — which helped to spread this costly panic — don't say sorry in this report.

True, they do at least expose another dud warming scare — the claim pushed by Al Gore that hurricanes and cyclones would get bigger and come more often. Remember how the Greens shamelessly called Cyclone Yasi in 2011 a "tragedy of climate change"?

Completely false. State of the Climate admits there's actually been "a statistically significant downward trend in the number of tropical cyclones in the Australian region". Nor is there convincing evidence that cyclones have got stronger: "The statistical significance of any observed trend in tropical cyclone intensity is overshadowed by large uncertainties due to the short satellite record and high variability." But then the bureau and the CSIRO in State of the Climate go back to torturing statistics to keep us scared that global warming will end the rain.

Spot the obvious trick in this key passage: "In particular, May-July rainfall has reduced by around 19 per cent since 1970 in the southwest of Australia. "There has been a decline of around 11 per cent since the mid-1990s in April-October rainfall in the continental southeast. "Southeast Australia has had below-average rainfall in 16 of the April-October periods since 1997."

See the con?

See how the report picks random and inconsistent dates — 1970 and 1997 and “mid 1990s” — as a starting point to track declines in rainfall caused by human emissions?
See how this decline is curiously seen only in patches of the country, and then only in inconsistent periods — “May-July” and “April-October”?



Despite the Bureau of Meteorology’s claim that the Murray-Darling basin was being threatened by drought, the area has recently been experiencing very heavy rains. Picture: The Australian

These are classic signs of cherry picking: deliberately looking for some place and period among all the conflicting data to produce the “evidence” you want. That con is easily exposed.

Just go to the bureau’s website and click on “Climate change and variability” at the bottom of the homepage. You’ll see the bureau actually has rainfall totals for each state and region that go back not just to 1970 or 1997 or the “mid 1990s” but 1900. Now compare what the State of the Climate report claims with what that complete data shows.

For instance, State of the Climate claims there’s been an “average reduction in rainfall across parts of southern Australia”. In fact, the complete data shows that rainfall in recent years is around average, and probably higher than it was over the first 45 years of last century, before we got nearly three decades of famously great rains.

Do the same check for southeast Australia. State of the Climate claims it’s “had below-average rainfall in 16 of the April-October periods since 1997”. But the bureau’s complete

data shows rainfall over the past 10 years seems little lower than it was over the first 45 years of last century.

True, there has been less rain in Australia's southwest, but across Australia our total rainfall over the past century has gone up. Swings and roundabouts — and no “permanent drought”.

Oh, and check out the Murray-Darling Basin. In 2007, the bureau claimed this critical agricultural area was “on the verge of collapse” because of a permanent drought. Yet rainfall since then has been, if anything, higher on average than for the first 45 years of last century.

So shouldn't the Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO just say sorry?