

Climate warriors tilt at the orthodoxy

Andrew L. Urban, The Australian, 4:47PM March 31, 2017

Climate science has failed public policy, respected and disenchanted climate scientist Judith Curry argued to the US Congress this week.

Dr Curry deconstructed the history of climate science to claim that the singular focus on research corralled by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change into man-made causes destroyed the usefulness of the science from the beginning. “Motivated by the mandate from the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to address dangerous human-caused climate change, the climate community has worked for more than 20 years to establish a scientific consensus on human-caused climate change, which has prematurely elevated a scientific hypothesis to a ruling theory,” she told House Science committee.

At the same hearing, Alabama’s State Climatologist John R. Christy proposed a levy to fund research into alternative hypotheses. “Since the IPCC activity is funded by US taxpayers, then I propose that 5 to 10 per cent of the funds be allocated to a group of well-credentialed scientists to produce an assessment that expresses legitimate, alternative hypotheses that have been marginalised, misrepresented or ignored in previous IPCC - reports,” Professor Christy said. “Such activities are often called red-team reports and are widely used in government and industry. In other words, our policymakers need to see the entire range of findings regarding climate change.”

Feeling an imposed consensus has become so entrenched, Dr Curry retired early in January from Georgia Tech, as emeritus professor of earth and atmospheric sciences. She is also president of Climate Forecast Applications Network. “A deciding factor was that I no longer know what to say to students and post-docs regarding how to navigate the craziness in the field of climate science,” she told the committee. “Research and other professional activities are professionally rewarded only if they are channelled in certain directions approved by a politicised academic establishment — funding, ease of getting your papers published, getting hired in prestigious positions, appointments to prestigious committees and boards, professional recognition, etc.

“How young scientists are to navigate all this is beyond me, and it often becomes a battle of scientific integrity versus career suicide.” She said the challenges to climate research have been made more difficult by scientists who played power politics with their expertise to silence scientific disagreement by denigrating those who did not agree with them. “Sound argument doesn’t need to denigrate its opponents,” Dr Curry said.

She slammed professional societies that wrote policy statements endorsing the consensus and advocating for specific policies.

Professor Christy’s said observed warming had been significantly less than predicted by models. “If one follows the scientific method ... the average model trend fails to represent the actual trend of the past 38 years by a highly significant amount,” he said. “As a result,

applying the traditional scientific method, one would accept this failure and not promote the model trends as something truthful about the recent past or the future.”

Rather, the scientist would return to the project and seek to understand why the failure - occurred.

Dr Curry said current global climate models “are not fit” for the purpose of attributing the causes of recent warming or for predicting global or regional climate change on timescales of decades to centuries, with any high level of confidence.