

Letter in The Australian, 4 October

Climate mayhem ahead

Every year there is a meeting of the conference of the parties to the UN climate change convention. Every year, leading up to the COP meeting, we are softened up by media releases from so-called experts warning us of the ever-increasing danger from uncontrolled burning of fossil fuels as we supposedly are turning our planet into a living hell.

This year is no exception. Self-styled climate scientists and politicians are meeting in South Korea to finalise a report, to be released on Saturday that talks of “climate mayhem” and “a swift and complete transformation not just of the global economy, but of society, too” (“Less meat, coal key to cooler planet”, 2/10). And the solution proffered to avert this claimed human-caused catastrophe: the global economy must become “carbon neutral” by 2050.

Real climatologists become aware early in their careers that the oceans are the thermal and inertial flywheels of the climate system. The heat of the atmosphere is equivalent to that in the top 4m of the oceans and the mass of the atmosphere is equivalent to that of the top 10m. It is changes in ocean circulation, a factor not represented in climate models, that lead to changes in our climate.

Why am I reminded of the fabled King Canute, who is reputed to have taken his chair down to the shore and proclaimed, “Even I cannot stop the tide coming in”? Why can’t the UN and its acolytes take a leaf from Canute’s book and accept that no matter the extent of social engineering the climate will continue to change, as it has done in the past and will continue to do into the future?

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