

**THE BRISBANE INSTITUTE IS A BRISBANE PROSTITUTE:
a paid mouthpiece of mining and fossil fuel interests**

(warning: this article contains harsh language and bad jokes)

Here are a couple of key quotes from health leaders at the COP-17 climate conference in Durban, South Africa, 28 November to 11 December, 2011 :

"Climate Change poses an immediate and grave threat to human health and survival worldwide. Many are already affected. Emissions are rising steeply. Action is needed now - not later."
Dr. Hugh Montgomery, Climate and Health Council, UK

"If the world's governments agree to delay (climate) action for the rest of this decade...history will judge Durban as a moment of global political malpractice of criminal proportions. It would be the equivalent of diagnosing a patient with lung cancer and then telling them it's ok to continue smoking for nine more years. The health of billions of people is at stake." Joshua Karliner, International Coordinator, Health Care Without Harm

Here is a reference to a paper which was presented at Durban which is so important that I am placing it at the front (rather than the end) of this article:

An Ethical Analysis of the Climate Change Disinformation Campaign: Is This A New Kind of Assault on Humanity? <http://rockblogs.psu.edu/climate/2011/12/an-ethical-analysis-of-the-climate-change-disinformation-campaign-is-this-a-new-kind-of-assault-on-h.html>

The anatomy of global warming denialism

The article referenced above demonstrates how deniers of anthropogenic global warming (AGW) are in fact self serving, morally bankrupt sociopaths and that their behaviour is an assault on humanity. Now more than ever it is imperative we vigorously oppose the egregious lies perpetrated by the fossil fuel fraudsters and their lackeys. We cannot let them get away with it.

Professor Naomi Oreskes clearly showed from her voluminous research that there is a well orchestrated, well funded campaign of AGW denial, distortion and disinformation going on, the epicentre of which is the George C Marshall Institute in the United States (the originators of tobacco-cancer denialism). Our own Clive Hamilton examined this web of deceit and found it extends across and is coordinated between numerous right wing "think tanks" and astroturf groups around the world, the noisiest being the US conservative Tea Party group. (What exactly are the conservatives conserving anyway?) This is not "conspiracy theory". There is indisputable documentation of this corrosive network of AGW denialism, hell bent on perverting national and international policy.

The core of denialist "beliefs"¹ is not truth, is not science, is not evidence, is not fact and is not reason, even though they try to make their arguments sound plausible with pseudoscientific jargon and by cherry picking facts taken out of context. Their position is based on an unshakable sense of personal entitlement coupled with apoplectic hostility directed against anyone suggesting any change to their lifestyles. *How dare those greenies interfere with my God given right to unfettered consumption!* Hence they target their venom against environmentalists and against climate scientists (including death threats and intimidating bogus lawsuits²). Hence the proliferation of anonymous internet trolls and their ubiquitous cyberbullying whenever a scientist dares speak the truth about climate change in the media.

When Julia Gillard supported a price on carbon to encourage renewable energy development, she was villified as "Bob Brown's Bitch" at a rightwing astroturf rally attended by the execrable Tony Abbott in March 2011. Denialists continue to engage in criminal activities such as the email hacking of universities, which is reminiscent of the mobile phone hacking by the

Murdoch press. These connections are further highlighted by the the enthusiastic coverage the Murdoch media gave to those illegally hacked climate emails. Robert Manne's Quarterly Essay in September 2011 outlined the deceit and distortions perpetrated by the *Australian* newspaper under the criminally irresponsible Chris Mitchell.

If the denialists truly disbelieve the best peer reviewed scientific climate research, for which there is "only" 97% consensus, then we should say this to them: do not go to a scientifically trained doctor or a modern hospital the next time you fall ill, because medical diagnosis and treatment is also based on the best peer reviewed scientific research, for which there may be "only" 97% expert consensus but *never* 100% certainty.

But guess what? You can be certain that if any of those denialists have a heart attack or get cancer they will immediately seek out the best modern medical treatment. Why? Because they know it works. Because they know the science is the best option available. Because they know it is in their own best interest to listen to the science and to follow the scientific recommendations in order to save their egocentric carcasses.

The argument can be further extended to all the benefits in life that the denialists derive from the scientific method: the smart phones, computers, internet, modern transportation, electronic appliances and engineered infrastructure, which the denialists should completely abandon if they truly disbelieve the methods, conclusions and products of science. Yet they enthusiastically embrace the benefits of science, even while villifying scientists.

The above facts prove that the principal abiding motive, the one consistent pattern which permeates the mentality of climate change denialists is not scientific "scepticism" but is in fact the overweening relentless pursuit of their own personal benefit (and to hell with everyone else). The very definition of self serving sociopaths. If medical science benefits them, they believe it. If climate science interferes with their "right" to rapacious overconsumption and their self indulgent luxuries (such as their "right" to drive their SUVs up and down the beach on weekends³), they attack the climate scientists.

Nature however pays no heed to the figorant⁴ chatter of those figorant⁴ denialists. As time goes by, ever more overwhelming scientific evidence indisputably shows ever worsening trends of global warming, of extreme weather events, of glacial, permafrost and ice cap melting and of release of methane from the Arctic coast⁵ far worse than the IPCC projections. We are seeing the biological consequences of global warming: species migration to higher latitudes/altitudes, behavioural changes and mass extinctions. The coral reefs are dying *now*. Acidification of the oceans will lead to catastrophic collapse of marine ecosystems. Loss of mountain glacial meltwater will lead to failure of summer irrigation for crops that billions of people depend on. Expanding hot zones will mean the spread of tropical diseases. Extreme weather events will directly kill people and will lead to more crop failures (as has already occurred, but the future will be magnitudes worse). Sea level rises will threaten more than a hundred million people on the Indian subcontinent alone, quite apart from potentially destroying coastal cities worldwide. Unchecked global warming will lead to a planet that humans were not evolved to adapt to, will cause the death of billions of people around the world and threaten the very existence of civilisation (which requires a stable climate for agriculture). This is not exaggeration, this is not alarmist. It is the well considered objective conclusion of many top scientists around the world such as James Hansen and James Lovelock and many national academies of science such as the venerable Royal Society. Martin Rees, former president of the Royal Society, thought civilisation had a 50% chance of surviving this century and judging by what is going on today, he was optimistic. Paul Nurse, current president of the Royal Society, is actively engaged in promoting the scientific method and rebutting the denialists.

Meanwhile the economic delusionists continue to bleat that it will be too "expensive" to reduce carbon emissions, completely ignoring the billion fold greater costs (not to mention deaths) of *not* reducing carbon emissions. They know that most of the harm will not personally affect them in their lifetime. The harm will mainly befall Third World inhabitants and Australians of younger generations, hence using the legerdmain of dishonest accounting, the denialists and delusionists

simply ignore it.

There are hard deniers and there are soft deniers and in many respects the soft deniers are more duplicitous, disingenuous and devious, because even though they pretend to lend a sympathetic ear to the science, in practice they back the fossil fuel agenda. The hard deniers like "Lord" Monckton are clearly liars and fools. The soft deniers may not overtly dispute the fact of anthropogenic global warming but they claim that the effects will not be as bad as the scientists predict or that the benefits may exceed the disadvantages or that we can easily adapt to the changes. Based on what? Based on their own wishful thinking and hunches which they consider more reliable than any hard science? Nevermind the increasing evidence of runaway global warming far exceeding the IPCC projections.

The soft deniers are insidious Trojan horses and handpuppets of the fossil fuel corporations.

Observations of three Brisbane Institute sessions 2011

I will now describe some observations of the latter three Brisbane Institute presentations of 2011. I was keen to learn from experts (or those portrayed by the Institute as experts) and must confess I was temporarily sucked in (or suckered in) by the apparent reasonableness with which matters initially appeared to be conducted, however the prominently displayed *Santos* billboard by the stage should have rung alarm bells from the outset. No guesses as to who the major sponsor of these "public" meetings was. But never mind, I thought, let's hear them out. I was even gullible enough to pay \$20/- per session for the privilege of being brainwashed.

It will be impossible to comprehensively cover all aspects of these sessions, however I will describe the broad message the organisers and chairperson of the Brisbane Institute were attempting to deliver.

23 August 2011: Positive Energy Futures: What's the fracking fuss all about?

As you know, fracking is the process of injecting pressurised water containing chemical agents into coal seams (or oil shale) to fracture the rock and extract methane. The resultant toxic saline effluent is expelled on the surface. The very title of this session was designed to promote the idea that coal seam gas represented a positive energy future for us and for goodness sake, why were people making such a f*ing fuss about it? Their star speaker was Professor Michael Economides, who had been clearly handpicked by the fossil fuel propagandists. Economides was sold to us as an American energy and coal seam gas expert. He claimed to be a Democrat and environmentalist, but immediately launched into a diatribe decrying the mindless "hate" that "greenies" have against fossil fuels. He gave no reason why those loopy greenies might "hate" fossil fuels apart from what he regarded as irrational ideology. He also expressed dismay at how people were "wasting time" talking about global warming, when there were such huge profits to be made from extracting coal seam gas, our energy source for the future, which we simply could not ignore. He claimed that all our concerns about harvesting coal seam gas were unfounded.

Under normal circumstances it would be impolite and inappropriate to comment on the physical appearance of the speaker, however in this case it was utterly relevant. Economides was morbidly obese. He was virtually spherical in shape, as wide as he was high. As a physician I can definitely state that his body mass index was far in excess of 35. The term *morbidly obese* is a proper and formal medical diagnostic term to be found in all medical textbooks and journals.

How obese was he? He was:

So obese that when he steps on a scale, it screams "one at a time, please".

So obese that when his beeper goes off, people think he is backing up.

So obese that when he goes to the beach, Greenpeace shows up and tries to tow him back into the sea.

All right, perhaps I may have crossed the line with those cheap shots, however that does not detract one iota from the relevance of his morbid obesity. Why was it relevant? Because morbid obesity is a disease of overconsumption related to poor impulse control⁶ coupled with inadequate exercise and disregard for any consequences. Unrestrained appetite and unremitting sloth.

At the Brisbane Institute were witnessing the farcical spectacle of a morbidly obese man flown in from America to lecture us about the benefits of overconsumption, with reckless disregard for any consequences. A theatre of the absurd. He was instructing us to abuse our environment in the same way he was abusing his own body - by indulging in rapacious greed. He dismissed the importance (but not existence) of global warming (he was a "soft" denier) in response to my question and when asked by someone else about the possibility of fugitive emissions from coal seam gas projects, he denied that they existed or could be important.

In fact, a Cornell University study in 2011 showed that natural gas from shale fracking almost certainly causes more greenhouse emissions than the coal industry⁷ and there is every reason to expect that coal seam gas, which uses the same technology, is just as bad.

I am no expert on coal seam gas, but having previously attended a comprehensive multidisciplinary presentation at the University of Queensland organised by Dr. Peter Dart, with many expert speakers in soil science, geology, energy and agriculture, it is clear there are well founded and justifiable concerns about potential environmental damage to our food bowl based on the science. Particularly if CSG is upscaled to the many thousands of wells the government and gas companies are vying for in the pursuit of short term filthy lucre. It is not about "hating" fossil fuels. It is about being prudent and cautious. It is about showing a little respect for the wellbeing of our ecosphere (without which we cannot survive) and for the wellbeing of future generations. It is about placing long term need over short term greed.

Professor Economides purportedly had more than 200 scientific publications to his name. The Marshall Institute and the tobacco companies, with their deep pockets, had no difficulty hiring mouthpieces possessing alphabet soup qualifications to publicise their agenda. No doubt *Santos* had no trouble flying this chap over from America to do the same. The physicist Dr Vandana Shiva calls such paid mouthpieces "scientific prostitutes", whose assertions (eg tobacco cancer denial) are unrelated to their qualifications (eg nuclear physics).

Just as a highly qualified chef has no business lecturing us about the benefits of unrestrained gluttony with no regard for the consequences (no matter how many culinary awards he has); a highly qualified fossil fuel professor has no business lecturing us about the benefits of unrestrained CSG extraction with no regard for the consequences (no matter how many fossil fuel papers he has written).

18 October 2011: *Positive Energy Futures: Seriously, Renewable?*

It is clear from the sarcastic title of this next session that we were not meant to regard renewable energy as a serious option. Punctuation makes a huge difference to the meaning of a phrase and there is a world of difference between "Seriously Renewable!" and "Seriously, Renewable?"

Who was responsible for crafting the titles of these sessions and for steering the overall tone and message delivered? Surely the responsibility must lie with Karyn Brinkley, the CEO of the Brisbane Institute who chaired these meetings. Are we supposed to believe she is an independent and impartial agent, not influenced by her financial sponsors? There is truth to the saying, "he who pays the piper calls the tune".

Notwithstanding the advances in renewable energy technologies outlined by the speakers, in particular Professors Paul Meredith and Hal Gurgenci, the overwhelming message delivered by this session steered by Karyn Brinkley was that given the present state of our grid, we should cease and desist from any more renewable energy input. Our existing grid was based on nineteenth century coal fired technology and was simply not designed to cope with the fluctuating nature of renewable energy inputs, which are now causing problems including power surges, which could be damaging.

6 December 2011: *Positive Energy Futures: Save your energy!*

This session started with the observation that we had one billion dollars worth of assets locked up in surplus electricity generating equipment, which was only utilised during the highest of

peak electricity demands – which amounted to the equivalent of just four out of 365 days of the year. Everyone agreed this state of affairs was terribly wasteful and made no economic sense whatsoever, but no solution was offered by the panel other than declaring that everyone should reduce their consumption, particularly at peak times. We heard the usual discourse about changing lightbulbs and using domestic energy meters.

There is an obvious and beautifully elegant solution to the problem above and I was amazed none of the panel members mentioned it. Hence I brought it up during the Q&A session. Peak electricity demands occur on the hottest days of the year when airconditioners are being progressively switched on around the state. These hot periods are driven by intense sunlight. Quantitative studies have shown that the simultaneous occurrence of peak sunshine and peak demand offers us the golden opportunity to harness that peak solar energy to feed into the grid to meet or exceed the peak demands. In fact we would have to be crazy and stupid not to seize this tremendous prize just waiting to be harvested in our so-called "Sunshine State". It would free one billion dollars away from the "stranded assets" of fossil fuel powered peak demand electricity generators which sit idle 361 days of the year. It would not require any fossil fuel input. The "fuel" (sunshine) would cost us nothing in perpetuity and would be emissions free. This plan would of course require updating our grid for the twenty first century (which needs to be done anyway) to cope with large renewable energy inputs and the provision of sufficient solar power, probably a combination of solar thermal and solar photovoltaic (PV) sources. Of course such restructuring requires funding which could be obtained from the price on carbon. Furthermore, institution of a gross feed-in tariff would encourage the proliferation of solar PV throughout Queensland (proven highly effective by the German experience). This solution was not an original suggestion of mine⁸ but one I had learned about from energy experts⁹ who had done the energy and the economic calculations to validate it.

The panel's response to this well considered solution was mind bogglingly idiotic. I refer specifically to Kate Farrar, a business pundit, who regurgitated a vomitload of drivel I term "*the Plantation Owner's argument*". It was obviously a brainless kneejerk response she repeated ad nauseum whenever anyone mentioned renewable energy, judging by her well rehearsed delivery. Perhaps she had been coached by economic delusionists such as Warwick McCibbin¹⁰ who I have heard spew out the same rubbish in the past. In a nutshell, she stated that we should not "pick winners" and we should "let the free market decide" and she rattled off numbers indicating how the price of solar energy was way too high compared with the price of coal fired energy¹¹ and hence not affordable. Her "solution" was that we should do nothing and maintain business as usual (*which is exactly what the fossil fuel companies would like us to do*) and the market would somehow magically solve all our problems.

If the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again while expecting a different result, then she must have been a complete lunatic. This was someone who knew the price of everything but the value of nothing. I call such people BAUAUs (pronounced "bowows" – think of a yapping dog) which stands for *Business As Usual Acolytes and Underlings* .

Audience members get suckered in by their platitudinous soundbytes because, like all convincing lies, it contains some half truths. Private enterprise and the profit motive *can* spur greater productivity. Free and fair competition on a level playing field *can* reduce costs to consumers while improving the quality of goods and services. Consequent economic development *can* lead to better lives for people (up to a point) and lift millions out of poverty as in the case of China.

But scratch the surface of her argument and you immediately release the foul stench of rotting garbage. It is a simple fact that our market is anything but free and is hardly a level playing field. Our car industries receive massive government subsidies, without which they could never be competitive, but the economic ideologues do not bleat on about the free market then. What about the billions in subsidies given by European governments to their agricultural sectors, shutting out food imports from abroad? What about the Japanese government who heavily subsidise their rice

farmers and punitively tax rice imports? There is nothing intrinsically wrong about targeted subsidies and targeted taxes to protect sectors which are vital for national security, but let us not be hypocritical and pretend we have free and fair markets. On the other hand, inappropriate government handouts can be extremely damaging to society and can paralyse our prospects for the future. The most blatant is exemplified by the billions of dollars of government subsidies handed out to the (already immensely profitable) fossil fuel corporations - taxpayers money which in fact represents a big fat (hidden) tax on us which they never talk about. And what about America, the so called champion of free market capitalism which bailed out failed investment banks and mortgage firms with public money? Money which was then used to give bonuses to crooked board members? Socialise the losses and privatise the profits – that what their "free" market actually does. Our markets are about as free as the Democratic Republic of North Korea is democratic.

The BAUAUs only invoke the "free market" argument when it suits their own agenda (eg supporting their fossil fuel masters) but are strangely silent when grabbing taxpayer handouts behind the scenes. Perish the thought that any potential competitors (eg renewable energy) could receive any government subsidies, oh no, that would spell "economic disaster".

The BAUAUs assertion that we should not "pick winners" implies that our existing system is impartial and that somehow through the magic of the market place, the best and most efficient operators will flourish and the uncompetitive players will perish, like some kind of natural selection. Adam Smith's so-called "hidden hand", beloved of the Hayek/Friedman fundamentalists, which the Nobel prizewinning economist Joseph Stiglitz says does not actually exist. Using the examples of those government subsidies again, we know for a fact that our system *already does* pick winners; favourites which are often deeply inefficient and corrupt but just happen to have strong lobbying influence with government. The invasion of Iraq for their oil in 2003 was a classic example of the US government favouring their handpicked "winner" Halliburton¹², thus facilitating a gigantic economic windfall for Halliburton (which was given oil service contracts without tender) and other associated US corporations, but causing unimaginable suffering and death to ordinary Iraqis, not to mention the deaths of several thousand US soldiers. Privatise the profits and socialise the losses – that is how US "free market" capitalism works.

Government policies picking winners has *always* been the manner by which capitalist economies have risen, whether we consider the Western models from the time of the British and Dutch East India companies or the Asian models of the Japanese Zaibatsus, Korean Chaebols or emerging Chinese Corporations. America continues to support numerous "too big to fail" companies, exemplified by their obsolete "big three" car companies (GM, Ford, Chrysler).

The BAUAUs argue that market regulation (which is the mechanism by which "winners" are picked and may interfere with the "hidden hand") is bad, to which any thinking person can only respond, "bovine excrement!"

Firstly, citing Joseph Stiglitz again, it is clear that the dismantling of investment bank regulations by the free market ideologues (regulations which were put in place after the Great Depression) led directly to perversion of the US financial system and the Global Financial Crisis of 2008.¹³

Secondly it is a fact that proper regulation based on honest accounting works and had indeed been protecting America from another Great Depression till now. The strategy of choosing optimum public policy by balancing benefits against detriment is well proven. That is why we ban asbestos, even though it may be cheap. Only after choosing policy based on the benefit/risk principle should we weave economic incentives and disincentives around it, rather than having the tail wagging the dog as advocated by Kate Farrar, the tail whisperer.

I can speak with authority¹⁴ on the medical model of decision making, well proven to save lives, which in fact *requires* we pick "winners". If you had cancer and asked a doctor to recommend the best therapy and he said "we should not pick winners" and "we should let the market decide" and "let's go with the cheapest price on the market and not worry about efficacy or side effects", how would you respond? Any critically ill patient who wishes to survive will regard

"market price" as the least important consideration and will appreciate that the optimum therapy must be actively chosen by weighing up the benefits versus the risks of each option and not by worshipping at the altar of "hidden-hand" economics. To choose a cheap but nasty therapy with low efficacy and fatal side-effects is lunatic false economy, just as the BAUAUs approach to energy policy is lunatic false economy.

Thirdly, *not* picking winners and treating all options as equal (standing back and allowing all manner of activities, even destructive ones, to flourish in the market) is in fact detrimental. Government tolerance of unregulated deforestation in Indonesia and Brazil (in the name of short term profits) is one of the worst ecological planetary disasters today. The winners they ought to pick should be forest preservation with ecotourism and sustainable timber harvesting. Clear felling of primary forest should be banned. Another bugbear of mine, the bottled water industry, is not only utterly useless in countries with good quality tap water, but is downright harmful to our environment, considering the wasteful fossil fuel consumption and indiscriminate disposal of bottles. It should be banned.

The bottom line is this: the "let the market decide" and "we should not pick winners" argument is completely fraudulent, dishonest and repugnant. Decision making must utilise evidence and reason to establish the reality of our situation, following which we must fashion appropriate economic incentives and disincentives around those realities, in order to encourage activities which produce net benefit to society while discouraging activities which cause net harm. And yes, there is a cost to protecting our environment and our futures, it does not come for free, just as there is a cost to maintaining good health.

If this cost poses hardship to low income earners, we must use taxpayers money to compensate them. That is what a fair society does. Our subsidies should go to the working poor, not to the idle rich and certainly not to the fossil fuel companies. The US strategy of "compensating" the rich and penalising the poor, which rightwing Australians are so keen on emulating, is a recipe for social conflict, violence and revolution. Extreme social inequality was the underlying cause for the NAME (North Africa and Middle East) "Arab spring" revolutions of 2011. Occupy Wall Street? You ain't seen nothing yet.

Why do I call the BAUAUs argument the "*plantation owners argument*"? In its entirety, the BAUAU argument goes on to state that if we change our present system (which is working "well"), by adopting "radical" reforms (eg. more renewable energy, less fossil fuel energy) it will lead to economic disaster. Therefore we should continue BAU. Historically, where have we heard that argument before? The exact same argument was used by the plantation owners in the Confederate states of America before the civil war. Certainly the system was working "well" for the slave owners, because they had complete disregard for the suffering and death of the slaves who did all their work. To them, the slaves simply did not count. The plantation owners externalised harms caused by their economic system and used dishonest accounting, exactly what the AGW deniers are doing right now. They argued that the abolition of slavery would lead to economic disaster. After the civil war, the "radical" reform of abolition was adopted and America went on to become the economic powerhouse of the world. So much for predictions of economic disaster.

Kate Farrar may have been personally successful in exploiting our existing business system, but it is a perverse system and she is the worst sort of person to lecture us about planning our future¹⁵. According to the BI blurb, she volunteers to help the homeless in her spare time. One wonders what relevance that has for her inclusion as a panel member – perhaps the BI wish to imply she is a wonderful humanitarian who is above any criticism? Just because a plantation owner is "kind" to their slaves (throws them a few breadcrumbs from time to time and seldom beats them) does not justify their support for slavery.

The deceptive illusion of being "fair and balanced"

Let me state for the record that many of the invited BI speakers were certainly honourable high achieving people, amply qualified to comment on their topics. For example, Paul Meredith was a highly qualified scientist and passionate advocate of solar energy and Gerald Tooth had a laudable

track record of being remarkably effective in convincing the public to conserve water during the drought years, those habits enduring even till now.

The cunning strategy of the BI sessions was to juxtapose qualified speakers next to the scientific prostitutes and BAUAUs. This served to lend credibility to the latter and project the impression of being "fair and balanced" to all points of view (even the crazy ones)¹⁶.

This was identical to the *Australian* newspaper's devious strategy to lend credibility to global warming deniers by juxtaposing articles of idiotic denialist ideas (often written by an economic delusionist professors) next to articles by serious climate scientists, implying that both should be given equal weight and consideration in the manufactured "controversy" surrounding global warming. "Fair and balanced", just like Fox News, the principal cheerleader for the invasion of Iraq.

The order of speakers was also contrived to serve the overall message from the BI. For example, Wally Wight, the recognised Brisbane expert on Peak Oil, was lined up to speak just before those who advocated harvesting shale oil and coal seam gas. This facilitated the message: "Running out of oil? We should grab more fossil fuels!"

Perish the thought that Wally Wight should speak just before a solar energy expert.

The chairperson's dismissive refusal to allow any rejoinder to Kate Farrar's idiotic blather also reflected her bias. Had we run out of time for further discussion? Karyn Brinkley had no qualms about running well overtime the first "energy" session, even though half the audience had to leave due to closure of the cloak/bag room.

The final backstop argument of the AGW "soft" denialists and fossil fuel fraudsters, when all their other arguments have been exposed as nonsensically bogus, is this:

Yes, AGW is real, yes it will be disastrous. But even if Australia undertakes the economic "hardship" of restructuring to become emissions free, it will have a negligible effect on the world, considering the much larger greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from other countries. Hence we should not "go it alone", we should not bother. Much easier to harvest more fossil fuels. Let's party today and die tomorrow, just as the band kept playing on the Titanic.

This is my fourfold reply:

Firstly, we will *not* be going it alone. In fact we have been dragging our heels too long and we lag well behind Europe, California and British Columbia (the latter state instituted a carbon tax several years ago) and many other states and countries. China is now the largest producer of wind and solar PV resources and has begun to impose a tax on pollution in many of their major cities. New Zealand intends to source at least 90% of their electricity from renewable energy by 2025.

Secondly, imagine this scenario: James Packer says that the tax he pays is only a tiny fraction of Australia's total tax income. Hence he chooses not to pay any tax at all, because the nation will hardly notice it. This is technically true. However our appropriate response should be outrage that one of the richest members of society refuses to pay his fair share of tax. It would be appropriate to regard him as a freeloading self serving scumbag who should be tarred and feathered. Similarly, there are those who say that Australia's GHG emissions are only a small fraction of the world total, hence we should not bother to curb them because the world will hardly notice it. It would be appropriate to regard such people as freeloading self serving scumbags who should be tarred and feathered. I refer in particular to Tony "*global warming is crap*" Abbott, who is utterly, absolutely, totally unfit as a potential candidate for Prime Minister.

Thirdly, the only fair approach to adjusting GHG emissions is by considering per capita emissions, historical GHG contributions and by assessing who can most easily curb their emissions (invariably the richest people). Australians score highly on all three counts. We have the highest per capita emissions in the world, it is the Western economies that have historically contributed 85% of all GHGs to date (the CO₂ emitted from the 1800s is still lingering out there) and as one of the richest countries in the world we can far more easily curb our emissions than, say, Indian or African peasants living on the edge of survival. We are so wasteful we could easily cut our emissions by half tomorrow and still enjoy a quality of life the envy of the world. Germans have half the emissions of Americans and arguably enjoy a better lifestyle.

Fourthly, if the richest and worst emitters refuse to curb their emissions, then it will be

morally untenable to expect anyone else to do so. With the whole world then pursuing BAU, disaster will be absolutely guaranteed. Hence the *only* hope for humanity is for countries such as Australia to take the lead in emissions reduction. Australia *has* to do it, unless we are completely mad and suicidal. It is time to grow up and face our responsibilities and cease the infantile whining. I refer again to that useless slimeball and refugee vilifier Tony Abbott.

CONCLUSIONS:

We should regard AGW as nothing less than a terminal cancer threatening global civilisation. Faced with terminal cancer, the sane patient will not worry about the "price" of therapy and will only focus on the *best* therapy (the most effective therapy with the least side effects as determined by the scientific research). What is the point of having heaps of money in the bank if you are dead?

If we encounter lower or even negative economic growth during our transformation to renewable energy, so what? Once we have tackled climate change we will have an indefinite future to re-expand our economies (with newer and better renewable energy technologies). After World War Two, Germany and Japan transformed from devastated heaps of rubble to powerhouse economies in less than thirty years. If we do not tackle climate change now however, there will be no future for human civilisation. The human species will *not* go extinct in the way we are rendering so many other species extinct, but billions of people will die and the survivors will have nasty, brutish, short and poor lives. All because of the selfishness of this generation.

Gwynne Dyer, in his many books and interviews, looked at these issues and stated that transformation to 100% renewable energy will be a doddle, a walk in the park, a piece of cake. We have the technology, argument over. The major impediments are political inertia and corrosive obstructionism from the fossil fuel companies who employ scientific prostitutes and economic delusionists to advance their agenda and maintain public apathy and confusion.

Change is difficult especially for those presently living a comfortable life, however change is now upon us whether we like it or not. This should be our message to the AGW denialists: your names are on the record and will be duly noted by posterity. If you do not change your attitudes and your ways, your children and grandchildren will revile and curse you for your despicable selfishness and for your role in destroying their futures.

Is this an provocative essay? Have I caused offence by calling the Brisbane Institute a Brisbane Prostitute? If so, I would like to offer my humble apologies to any prostitutes who resent being compared to this reprehensible institute.

One more quote:

"Clean energy is essential to our addressing the carbon climate problem... research shows clearly that we must prime the pump on innovation now with increased funding for research and development, while putting incentives in place that allow the resulting new technologies to compete successfully in the marketplace." - words from that well known hardline greenie communist radical, Bill Gates.

Just because I advocate the primacy of rationality in shaping human affairs does not mean I am not passionate about what I believe, as you can obviously tell. We are engaged in nothing less than a struggle for the preservation human civilisation and unfortunately at present it is the self serving liars, fools and scumbags who are winning. It's no use crying out in the wilderness, "for God's sake, somebody do something!"

You, dear reader, are somebody.

Dr Geoffrey Chia is a Brisbane Cardiologist who is liberating himself from the coal fired electricity grid in 2012, thus drastically reducing his residential carbon emissions, while continuing to enjoy a high tech, high quality lifestyle. He is convenor of the group "Doctors and Scientists for Sustainability and Social Justice" www.d3sj.org who advocate that policy should be based on evidence, reason and fairness to achieve the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people on a long term basis. All members of the public who agree with those principles are invited to attend the meetings for *free* .

Footnotes:

1. What the AGW denialists claim to believe and what they actually believe are not the same thing. They claim to be "sceptical" of the peer reviewed climate science research, however they accept the peer reviewed scientific research of other fields when it suits them, even if the level of uncertainty in the other fields (eg medical therapy) may be the same or worse than that of the climate science. What is the explanation for such discrepancy? The only explanation, backed up by mountains of evidence, is that they are self serving scumbags, driven by greed and an overwhelming sense of entitlement.
2. Such as US Republican James Inhofe's bogus lawsuits launched against climate scientists.
3. This "right" of course far exceeds the right of Third World peasants to eat, far exceeds the right of future generations to a stable existence and far exceeds the right of other species on this planet to survive.
4. Fignorant is to ignorant as fugly is to ugly
5. <http://www.clubofrome.org/?p=3425>
6. Virtually no obese patients that I or any of my specialist colleagues see in clinic are ever found to have "hormonal" problems, even though we check detailed blood tests for all of them. Many obese patients claim they "*eat like a bird*" (one presumes they are referring to a tiny hummingbird and not a seven foot tall ostrich) but they still magically put on weight. A senior colleague of mine responds to such claims with the statement, "*there are no obese inmates of concentration camps*". Studies have shown that obese people consistently underestimate and underreport the amount of food they eat. One of the biggest problems of the obese is their denial that they have an impulse control problem.
7. <http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/April11/GasDrillingDirtier.html>
8. My solution, which I did not voice that day, would be to use natural ventilation augmented by fans and not to use airconditioners in Brisbane except in vital locations such as intensive care units. This approach would however require the heinous and unthinkable act of designing buildings with windows which can *actually open*, shaded by eaves to protect against influx of direct sunlight. We could call such a building a *Queenslander*, a novel construction which has obviously never been thought of before.
9. I first heard of this elegant proposal from Bill Brazier, then President of the Queensland Branch of the ANZ Solar Energy Society at our d3sj meeting in February 2007 and have since read other articles confirming how economically and environmentally reasonable, sensible and logical such a plan is (and hence completely unacceptable to the BI).
10. Not to be confused with William McKibben (better known as Bill McKibben), founder of 350.org, who advocates that we need to reduce atmospheric CO₂ to the level of 350ppm recommended by top climate scientist James Hansen and that economic measures must be guided by scientifically determined realities. Warwick McKibbin however believes that limp-wristed maneuverings fabricated by economic ideologies and platitudes will somehow save us. The fact is we cannot depend on the people who have caused our problems (the economic delusionists) to solve them.
11. Our existing energy prices are based on dishonest accounting where fossil fuel energy gets a "free ride" without having to pay for the harm it causes. Existing prices are based on lies and unrealities, leading to perverse outcomes.
12. Some may argue quite legitimately that Halliburton (through Dick Cheney) *was* the defacto US government at the time.
13. The underlying cause of the GFC was deregulation of the US investment banks, thus allowing the fraudsters to engage in skullduggery. The trigger for the GFC was Peak Oil, the price of crude reaching US\$147/- per barrel in July 2008
14. My alphabets? MBBS, MRCP, FRACP, FCSANZ
15. Richard Branson is a somewhat more successful businessperson than Kate Farrar. His latest book is titled, "*Screw Business as Usual*" which argues that we must overturn capitalism to take into account social and environmental values.
16. The very first forum Karyn Brinkley organised as BI CEO in January 2010 gave equal billing to the global warming denialists "Lord" Monckton and Ian Plimer against climate realists in a "debate", which the Courier Mail declared the denialists won (she also writes for the Courier Mail from time to time).