



Climate Change – An Inconvenient Truth?



Climate change. Global warming. There seems to be significant and growing press coverage around this issue, which some of us have been trying to mainstream since the initial discussions on Kyoto. With growing media coverage, there is growing awareness. Community awareness, which in turn drives political votes. Politicians are changing tunes. Everyone seems to be singing the same song. Well, over 90% of the Australian community now believes that there should be more done towards the environment. Strong percentages, and everyone likes strong percentages.

Why the sudden change? The Stern Report? In case you have not heard, Sir. Nicholas Stern recently headed a review of the issue for the UK government, and concluded that there was need for urgent and immediate action to avoid significant costs climate change may bring about - over 15 to 20 percent of global gross domestic product. Or, was it a recent documentary film, by Al Gore, who was the next president of the United States, as he calls himself. The film is called An Inconvenient Truth, and if you haven't seen it yet, it's a must for every engineer.

I have covered Al Gore's pursuits on climate change in previous columns, as well as having interviewed his business partner David Blood, former global head of Goldman Sacks. Indeed, I first noted Al Gore, the former US Vice President's interest in the environment when I read his 1992 book Earth in the Balance. The film is a documentary of his power point presentation on climate change that he has presented over a thousand times, trying to convince governments, business and community around the world that what was once an inconvenient truth is indeed fact. I was privileged to see the live presentation recently thanks to Insurance Australia Group and VicSuper.

One of the points covered, amongst an immense array of information, is the analysis of over 928 scientific papers by Dr. Naomi Oreskes from the University of California that had been published in peer reviewed journals from 1993 to 2003. The percentage that disagreed with the consensus position that climate change was as a result of the human induced greenhouse effect was zero. No longer should it be an inconvenient truth.

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