



In Memoriam Professor Robert M. Carter

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On 19 January 2016, Professor Bob Carter, Emeritus Fellow of the IPA passed away following a heart attack suffered the week before. He died peacefully in the company of his family. We have lost a great scientist and a very fine person.

I first met Bob soon after I started as Executive Director of the IPA in 2005. Bob was then a professor at James Cook University in Queensland. I don't have a science background and what struck me immediately about Bob was the way he could put the most complex scientific questions into understandable terms.

The other thing that hit me was his passion. He was passionate about science, about communicating science, and about the benefits that science could bring to humanity. As is so often the case, the most passionate people are the most enthusiastic and most cheerful, and Bob was no exception. Bob's passion, enthusiasm, and cheerfulness were infectious.

As I spent time with Bob over the years he'd often talk with me about how what was happening in



the science of 'global warming' (as it was then known) and then climate change was an adulteration of everything that science stood for. Bob would often talk to me about Galileo and his pursuit of the scientific method and scientific integrity. As he wrote in *Climate Change: The Facts 2014*:

Science should not be about emotion or politics, yet it is uncomfortably true that public discussion of the global warming issue has for many years been conducted far more in accordance with those criteria than it has been concerned with science per se.

That was how Bob, who started his academic career as an assistant lecturer in geology at the University of Otago in 1963, came to the question of climate change. And that was how Bob came to be one of the most influential voices in the public debate on climate change not only in Australia, but in the world.

Bob had an incredible record of contribution to science through his public communications and his outstanding academic record across the fields of geology, palaeontology, marine science, and of course climate change. His work was recognised in numerous awards and honours including as Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand, and through the Outstanding Research Career Award of the Geological Society of New Zealand.

The book by Bob, *Climate: The Counter Consensus* that came out in 2010 had a huge impact on me. As I said he had the gift of explaining complex things clearly and cogently and it was these qualities that made the book so important.

There's one statistic from the book that's always stayed with me— and which is a bit unfashionable to talk about and which you don't hear often these days:

99.55 per cent of the greenhouse effect has nothing to do with carbon dioxide emissions caused by humans.

This point that Bob made is like the 'Andrew Bolt question' that no politician ever wants to answer— exactly what difference will anything Australia does on climate change make to the world's temperature?

Bob wrote numerous research papers and other books on climate change and he spoke on dozens of occasions for the IPA around Australia at public events, parliamentary hearings, and IPA members' briefings. He was always incredibly generous with his time and in addition to everything Bob did with the IPA, he worked with many other organisations including with the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change, which is an international panel of some of the world's best climate change scientists.

The last time Bob spoke for the IPA was in October last year when he, Dr Jennifer Marohasy and Brett Hogan gave evidence at Parliament House in Canberra to the federal Coalition's Environment Committee.



What amused Bob and I at the time was how upset *The Guardian* newspaper was that Bob, Jennifer and Brett were giving politicians the alternative viewpoint to the 'accepted consensus'!

Bob was an immensely valued colleague and friend to us all at the IPA. He will be very sadly missed.