

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Climate Contribution](#)
Subject: Submission 4037
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To Whom it May Concern,

Below follows my submission to this discussion. I discuss three points; income inequality, awareness efforts, and denial vs skepticism:

Income Inequality and Climate Change

I've noticed that the austerity measures outlined in the emissions target handbook given at the meetings treats all households as equal, but **not all households are equally wealthy**. And what about businesses? Income inequality is a massive problem in New Zealand, and efforts to mitigate climate change must recognize the link between this inequality and the funds available to carry it out. The super wealthy in our society could afford to lose a lot of what they have and still enjoy lives of luxury beyond what the vast majority of could dream. We need to call them to account!

<http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/monitoring/household-income-report/2014/key-findings.doc>

Awareness Efforts

Part of the difficulty in getting positive action for climate change policy is reaching a national consensus, but ironically, this will not happen without government support. The vast majority of people are not interested, and those who can afford to launch nationwide awareness campaigns tend to be those with vested business interests. Therefore, we *need* the government to sponsor an advertisement campaign advising people of the facts about climate change, and where they can go to get information - asking them in a bi-partisan fashion, to vote for the parties with the policies that most effectively address this *real* issue.

We need billboards, fliers, advertisements on prime-time television, and an informative, unbiased website providing a repository of accessible information (which links to the hard data), for the public to investigate. **There are ways to get this information to everyone very quickly. But I have never seen an advertisement for generating public awareness on this issue.**

As mentioned at the meetings, climate change itself must be beyond politics because *peoples' opinions don't actually matter in terms of the facts*. Yes, how we solve the problem might be more open, but the nature of the problem is not a debatable issue

anymore, except perhaps by other scientists with significant amounts of peer-reviewed data behind them. Needless to say the education system needs to include these facts as well; but we don't have time to wait for the younger generations to grow up - we have a world to prepare for them!

It is true that many may object to this use of government funds, but it'll be a small price to pay for the savings to our environment in the future. Even if this generates negative backlash from deniers, a persistent ad campaign will further open up the nationwide discussion. There are still, however; things we can do to mitigate the backlash, as I will discuss below.

Income Inequality and Awareness Efforts

Generally speaking those with middle to lower incomes are generally less interested in issues that do not affect them directly - this makes sense because they have enough concerns already with just being able to put food on the table. Therefore, with regards to climate change policy, if we suddenly tell them that the cost to households could be upwards of \$1200/year they will almost certainly revolt (a noted criticism of the presentation of cost in the handbook). However, it is also true that many among the richest 20% in our society could afford to pay upwards of \$10000 a year (even some significantly more) and be no worse for the wear. The issue of inequality is by far one of the biggest limiting factors in our ability to finance efforts that would benefit everyone in a realistic time-frame - we can't wait for the so-called 'trickle down effect' to deliver the money we need. The rich must be held to account. This is the kind of message that will get the other 80% of society, who are not so financially stable, to accept some austerity, knowing those in the best position to contribute, are paying their fair share.

In other words - far too many people can only afford to care about their own ability to make ends meet. Promise those who are already struggling that they will only benefit from these measures, and they will jump on board!

Giving voice to deniers

My last point, is that there is a difference between informed scientific skepticism and outright denial of the issues surrounding climate change. Reactions like those at Auckland's meeting to deniers, while definitely disappointing in some respects, highlight the absurdity of the vast majority of objections to climate science. It is imperative that we do not give voice to deniers, unless they first demonstrate a commitment to honest inquiry. They must refer to demonstrably reliable data, or otherwise justify why their mode of inquiry is superior that of the vast majority of the scientific community, before we give them any air time. Theirs is a position of confusion, and the last thing we want to do is spread more confusion.

This issue is explained better in this open letter to the United States government by a collection of prominent climate scientists and science communicators.

http://www.csicop.org/news/show/deniers_are_not_skeptics

(END)

Thank you for your time and efforts!

Regards,

David Leo Boulton

D.O.B. [REDACTED]

Ph. [REDACTED]

Occupation(s): Bachelor of Science Student at The University of Auckland/IT
Professional/English-Language Teacher