Submission to the Select Committee on Information Integrity on Climate Change and Energy

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Introduction and Executive Summary

The Select Committee's inquiry, established on July 30, 2025, seeks to investigate the prevalence and impacts of misinformation and disinformation in climate and energy policy.

The target is to identify presumptive funding for, and to prevent the dissemination of what it deems to be inaccurate information on the issue of climate change. The target is directed from the perspective of those who claim the science is settled and that human induced climate change is both dangerous and, unless urgent action is taken, certain.

The Inquiry seeks to discover what forces are behind contrary views and to determine how these views may be combatted and suppressed.

The dominant climate narrative in Australia is driven by institutions such as the Clean Energy Council (CEC), Climate Council, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO), Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC), Treasury, and Productivity Commission (PC). That narrative is sustained by alarmist rhetoric

using selective data. And the funding support for the installation of facilities designed to supplant coal and gas generation entails $16 billion annually in subsidies to renewable energy.

In contrast to this, there is no substantial funding support to those not pursuing what is, in Australia, the conventional government agenda.

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DoE) July 2025 report, which rebuts claims of human-induced extreme weather events, underscores the need to challenge alarmist narratives, signalling a shift toward evidence-based policy. The U.S. Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) as well as the Trump administration's One Big Beautiful Bill has cut funding for climate initiatives, which had been amplified by the Biden Administration's so-called Inflation Reduction Act.

This submission addresses, the integrity of scientific claims, and the distortion of public discourse, and advocates transparent, evidence-based policymaking that prioritizes economic prosperity and intellectual freedom. It draws attention to the government policy in the U.S. and elsewhere which is undoing measures that seek to replace coal and gas by renewables. It asks whether these nations, too, are in the thrall of policies based on misinformation and disinformation, and also what that inference embodied in the Senate Committee's Terms of Reference means for our U.S. alliance.

1. The Nature of Misinformation and Disinformation

1.1 Defining Misinformation and Disinformation

Misinformation refers to false or misleading information spread without malicious intent, while disinformation involves deliberate deception. Misinformation on climate issues is not limited to fringe voices but is embedded in institutional narratives propagated by the CEC, Climate Council, DCCEEW, CSIRO, AEMO, AEMC, Treasury and the PC as well as by subsidy-seeking influencers like RenewEconomy and the Dark Money financing these sources.

There is no substantial funding for skeptical perspectives.

1.2 Sources of Misinformation

Misinformation stems from a complex web of government, industry, and advocacy groups.

Misinformation about human-induced climate change

The Climate Council's reports, such a *Climate Cuts, Cover-Ups and Censorship* (2019), label dissent as denialism, stifling debate. Industry bodies like the CEC, alongside 'influencers' and some wealthy and politically active businessmen, benefit from these subsidies, creating a feedback loop of alarmism.

In contrast, the U.S. DoE's July 2025 report, incorporating skeptical perspectives, rebuts claims that human activity drives extreme weather events, attributing them to natural variability. Judith Curry, one of the authors, says, scientists must, "Embrace the complexity of climate science and acknowledge uncertainty and disagreement. Stop with the faux "consensus" enforcement and stop playing power politics with climate science. Constructively participate in the dialogue that DoE (is) attempting to foster, in the interests of returning objective physical science to the climate issue."

Andy Revkin's summary of the DoE report is that it finds:

- claims of increased frequency or intensity of hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and droughts are not supported by U.S. historical data;

- CO2-induced warming appears to be less damaging economically than commonly believed, and that aggressive mitigation policies could prove more detrimental than beneficial; and

- U.S. policy actions are expected to have undetectably small direct impacts on the global climate and any effects will emerge only with long delays.

The report is designed to offer guidance for the administration's newly-announced proposal to overturn the Obama-era Endangerment Finding that authorized the EPA to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act. That authorization was founded on the premise that increasing atmospheric concentrations of GHG "may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare". The Trump Administration regards this as being based upon demonstrably false premises. These include that emissions of CO2 may induce heatwaves, extreme drought and flooding, sea level rises, less food production and reduced water quality.

Many activist 'scientists' regard the DoE report as written by the "usual suspects" who have long challenged what they have espoused as the conventional science. But the five authors, John Christy, Judith Curry, Steven Koonin, Ross McKitrick and Roy Spencer, have considerable credentials in the climate science profession. Their paper challenges the narratives pushed by Australia's climate establishment. As it was commissioned and endorsed by the U.S. Government, it cannot be dismissed and have its contentions strangled by those who would use regulations on social media to silence such views in Australia.

Moreover, those wishing to label policy approaches like those of the DoE paper as misinformation and disinformation basically argue that the world's foremost host to scientific and technological excellence, the U.S., is in the thrall of malevolent forces in the development of its most important economic strategy – that concerning energy.

Could the Senate devise a more calculated insult to be hurled at this nation's protector? If the U.S. were to notice this inquiry by the Senate, an inquiry which can only be conducted with the support of the governing Labor party, the U.S. President would surely wonder if Australia wants the protection and support that only the U.S. can provide. At some stage, hopefully far into the future, Prime Minister Albanese will have to meet with President Trump and, should this inquiry be brought to his attention, he will have to answer some very difficult questions about why an ostensible ally depicts the President's signature policies as disinformation and misinformation.

The damaging naïve green left ideological predilections that underpin the Terms of Reference are compounded by a lack of awareness of the policies of the two great nations, India and China, that we regard as part of our region.

Although India and China have formally adopted Net Zero, their timetables for achieving this are 35-45 years into the future.

In the case of India, there is little in the way of policies to implement the replacement of fossil fuels by wind and solar (still less the mirage of green hydrogen). India has only 10 per cent of its electricity powered by wind and solar.

China, a major supplier of renewable energy equipment to the world, has about 18 per cent of its electricity powered by wind and solar. China's total generation output is equal to that of the next six biggest energy producers (U.S., India, Russia, Japan, Brazil and Canada). Unfortunately for the timing of those seeking to use this inquiry to promote wind and solar and destroy coal, China's solar boom crashed from 93 GW installed in May to just 11 GW in July after subsidies were removed. Moreover, China commissioned 21 GW of new coal power capacity in the first half of 2025, the highest in the last nine years.

In addition, support for suppressing CO2 emissions is receding in the global business community. The Net-Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA)—the world's largest climate coalition for financial institutions—has suspended its operations. Launched in 2021 to align banking portfolios with the pursuit of "net-zero emissions by 2050", it is now polling remaining members on whether to dismantle its membership structure. Most large U.S. institutions have already quit the body.

To protect affordability, reliability, and energy security, if elected, a Reform UK government is committed to cancelling UK government purchasing contracts for wind/solar power. Reform is on track to win the next UK election and the Conservative Party now shares many its policies.

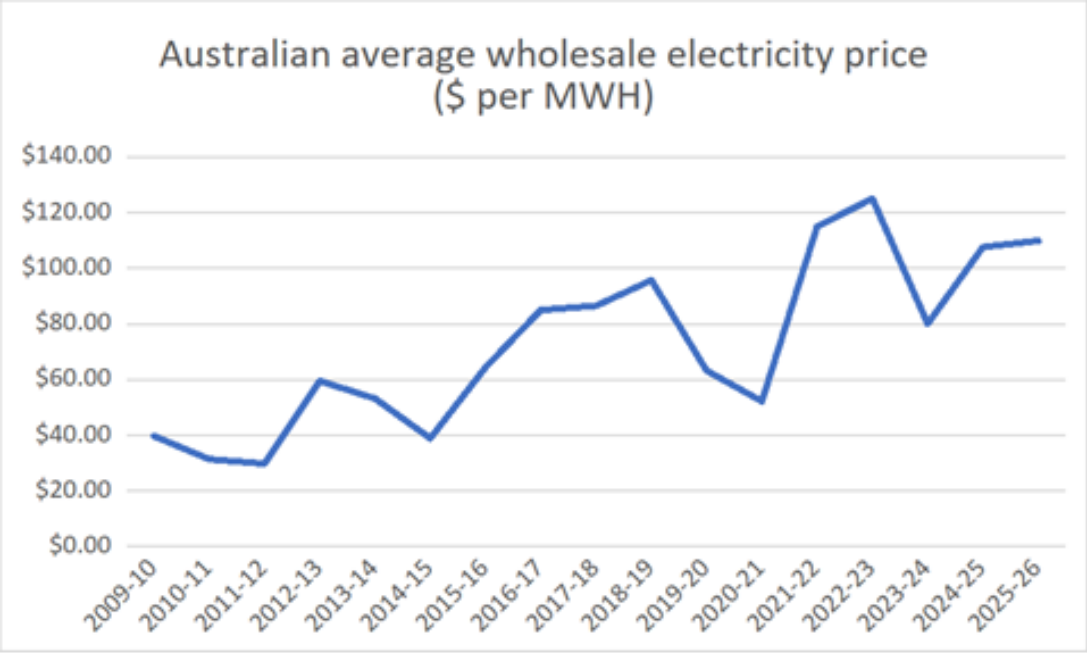
Misinformation about the costs of the "energy transition"

The real misinformation on climate and energy policy in Australia stems from government sources.

Thus, the CSIRO's GenCost report, produced with AEMO, claims renewables are the cheapest energy source, but uses outdated fuel price data to favour wind and solar, and assumes a costless incorporation of back-up and transmission facilities, without which renewables could not be deliverable .

In addition, the government promotes vastly understated costs of a wind/solar supply system. The well-respected Global Roam puts the requirements for back-up of such a system (by batteries) at 9,500 GWh. Using assumptions more favourable to wind supplies, Paul Miskelly in his submission (No. 42) to the Senate Committee on Energy Planning and Regulations addresses the estimates by AEMO in its Integrated Systems Plan of the storage required of 15 GWh. This is equivalent to 33.3 Geelong Big Batteries, which AEMO inaccurately claims will provide 6-8 days of storage. Miskelly, from examining weather patterns, estimates reliability requires 12,000 GWh of storage, equivalent to some 27,000 Geelong Big Batteries. Each battery costs $160 million, hence 27,000 would cost $4.3 trillion, or twice the nation's GDP!

The contention that displacing coal with wind/solar will lead to lower wholesale process is contrary to the evidence. Average electricity wholesale prices rose from less than $40 per MWh in 2009 (actually less than $30 in 2011) to their present $110 (See figure below).



Almost continuously over the past 20 years, governments and the political establishment generally have chanted the mantra that renewables are the cheapest form of energy and predicted the dawn of lower prices from the 'energy transition' away from fossil fuels.

Given the data, this is astonishing – and all the more so in view of the continued need of renewables for subsidies, and evidence of low electricity prices in countries where the wind/solar penetration (and subsidy level) is low.

The increase in Australian wholesale electricity prices is only part of the story. For households, the wholesale energy component represents about a third of total costs; for industry, it is higher and up to 70 per cent in the case of smelters.

Other components include the subsidies themselves, which directly add about 8 per cent to prices as well as indirectly being responsible for all the wholesale price increase. Energy subsidies are increasingly opaque as the Albanese government is shifting its main instruments to the Capacity Investment Scheme (CIS) and the Safeguard Mechanism.

The former is for direct purchases of wind/solar/batteries and following this year's election, its capitalisation was increased to $85 billion, which is to be spent between now and 2030. Because the government refuses to reveal the prices it pays for the power projects it selects, the subsidy equivalent is unclear but based on outcomes of the similar UK scheme, is likely to be over $7 billion a year.

For its part the Safeguard Mechanism requires the top 226 businesses to reduce their emissions by 30 per cent by 2030 or alternatively buy greenhouse credits. It costs business about $1 billion a year and although it is already causing business closures, government affiliates are preparing the ground for it to be expanded.

Transmission has traditionally comprised around 10 per cent of total costs. But this was when the cost was based on a network that shipped electricity produced in relatively compact areas, especially the Latrobe Valley, Bowen-Surat Basin in Queensland, the Sydney Basin, and Snowy. The forced replacement of concentrated forms of energy – coal, gas, and hydro – by wind and solar requires a totally different network.

Until recently, the total value of the transmission system on which costs were based was $23 billion. The renewables 'transition' is billed to increase that cost to $100 billion as a result of the need to gather the electricity from highly diffuse areas and send it along less intensively used transmission lines. And that $100 billion cost is likely to be a serious underestimate – VNI West, the spine linking projected renewable projects in Victoria, was first estimated to cost $3.4 billion and is now proceeding with a cost estimate of $11.4 billion.

Hence transmission costs will increase at least five-fold, an amount amplified by the additional facilitatory equipment like inverters and capacitors required by an intermittent energy-dominated grid.

The cost of distribution is also increased by the subsidies because the network is not designed for both importing electricity to users and exporting surplus electricity from rooftop facilities generated during the peak sunlight periods.

Roof-top solar accounts for 12.4 per cent of total supply, large-scale solar 7.2 per cent and wind 13.4 per cent. Roof top solar is supported by a subsidy of about 30 per cent. Grid solar and wind continue to benefit from Large-scale Generation Certificates (LGCs) though this is now, at about $12 per MWh, not as important as the CIS.

Wind in particular faces community pushback from groups that are attempting to prevent developments that impact on farmland and bring visual intrusion. One of the key initiatives of the government's recent Productivity Roundtable was to prevent appeals to new planned renewable energy zones, an initiative which, if successful, would of course detract from improving productivity. Robert Bryce argues that the UK Net Zero policy will be derailed not by the high prices it causes, nor by lack of support for the Labour Party's absurd ambition to have the UK become a "clean energy superpower". More potent is the growing opposition from rural landowners to new wind and solar facilities, which has brought the cancellation of nearly 50 applications during 2025. Similar Australian opposition to renewables has been seen in recent "Bush Summits" and has even inspired calls to "deregulate" approval mechanisms to curtail the effectiveness of such opposition.

Battery installations have seen a rapid uptake. The 185,798 units installed by the end of 2024, is an increase from 121,551 earlier in the year. By late 2024, 28.4 per cent of new rooftop solar systems included batteries, a sharp rise from 7 per cent in 2023. In July 2025 alone, 19,592 batteries were added under the Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme, with a total capacity of 357 MWh. This has been spurred by the federal battery rebate program, launched in July 2025, which offers ~30 per cent off installation costs. In addition, there are state schemes like Queensland's Battery Booster and the ACT's zero-interest loans.

Vast sums are also being spent on grid large-scale Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS). Q1 2025 saw $2.4 billion invested in six projects, adding 1.5 GW/5 GWh of capacity.

Batteries offer a smoothing out of the peaks and troughs of solar and wind generation and will offset daytime gluts that cause extreme price volatility with negative levels during the early afternoon.

Most Australians with their own roof can for, an outlay of under $50,000 in panels and batteries (with over $10,000 of this being a subsidy), be self-sufficient in electricity except for relatively rare occasions when there is little sun. To the household, a $40,000 outlay represents about $2,200 a year. This, at least in the unlikely event that current prices do not rise, is not much more than their present bills, though a market driven system would see much lower grid supplied electricity prices.

However, unless a very high fixed grid connection price is in place those households, as well as being directly subsidised by others, will be free-loading on the grid as a back-up. And there are limits to which a high connection cost can be set, limits that for many households are the cost of a diesel generator.

All this said, batteries, while able to even out normal daily use of sunlight, are never going to offer the insurance against windless and sunless days that a reliable grid requires. A highly diffused renewable based system would likely require a near duplication of its capacity in fast gas reserve generation as well as the massive increase in network costs.

On current policy settings a higher cost and less reliable electricity supply is assured. But the system's collapse is not inevitable. At present, 16 per cent of electricity demand is directed to the aluminium smelters, facilities that have been made internationally uncompetitive by government energy policies. A truly cynical government would be tempted to time the closure of these facilities – inevitable under current policies – to coincide with a convenient stage in the electoral cycle as this would be followed by a collapse in the market price before the next coal station closes and the price bounces back up. Naturally such an approach would accelerate the de-industrialisation set in train by current energy strategies.

Without a rethink of market design – prioritising reliability over ideology – Australia risks a grid that's neither cheap nor stable.

2. Promoting the Narrative of Dangerous Climate Change

2.1 Government Funding (2024–2025)

- **Global Climate Finance:**

  COP29 Agreement (2024): Governments agreed to a New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) of USD 300 billion annually by 2035 for developing countries, tripling the previous USD 100 billion goal. In 2022, OECD countries provided USD 115.9 billion in climate finance, with the EU and its member states contributing EUR 28.5 billion (USD 30 billion). This supports mitigation (e.g., renewable energy) and adaptation (e.g., early warning systems).

Green Climate Fund (GCF): Cumulative pledges reached USD 33.2 billion by 2024, with USD 13.5 billion in active portfolios for low-emission and climate-resilient projects in 120+ countries. In 2024, GCF approved USD 103.2 million for early warning systems in seven vulnerable countries.

Loss and Damage Fund (2023–2024): Pledges totalled USD 741 million by January 2025 from 27 countries, hosted by the World Bank, to address climate impacts in vulnerable nations.

Adaptation Fund and Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF): Cumulative contributions by 2023 were USD 830 million and USD 2.2 billion, respectively, for adaptation in developing countries.

Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF): Supports adaptation and technology transfer, with USD 250 million for private sector climate resilience projects.

- **U.S. Contributions:** The Biden administration pledged USD 11.4 billion annually by 2024, with USD 5.8 billion delivered in FY22 for mitigation and adaptation. For FY24, USD 3.8 billion was requested. Unspent elements of this funding have been cancelled. EPA Grants of USD 4.3 billion were awarded in 2024 to 25 projects across 30 states for reducing climate pollution (e.g., energy efficiency, renewable energy). EPA Chief Lee Zeldin cancelled USD 29 billion in grants, including USD 2 billion tied to a nonprofit, citing conflicts of interest.
- **EU contributions** According to De Telegraaf , Brussels used money from a billion-euro climate and environmental subsidy fund to secretly pay environmental NGOs to lobby members of the European Parliament to pass the European Commission's "European Green Deal, "

- **Canada's Partnering for Climate: CAD 315 million (USD 230 million)** allocated for 2021–2026, with **CAD 20 million** for women's rights and climate adaptation.

- **Australia-Specific:** While not explicitly quantified for climate advocacy, Australia's 2024 clean energy investment (wind, solar, batteries) was AUD 12.7 billion, indirectly supporting the climate change narrative through renewable deployment. All of this is supported by subsidies. Many businesses in receipt of this support assist green groups, like the green left Australia Institute.

Estimated Total (2024): Globally, public climate finance was approximately USD 120–150 billion in 2024, based on OECD's 2022 figure (USD 115.9 billion) and was expected growth to meet the UN's USD 300 billion "new collective quantified goal" by 2035. This includes mitigation (renewables, energy efficiency) and adaptation (resilience, early warning systems), which promote the narrative of dangerous climate change by funding solutions to its impacts.

2.2 Private Sector and Philanthropic Funding

- **Private Sector:**
  - **Global Climate Finance (2018–2022):** Private funding supplied over 50% of mitigation finance in emerging markets (excluding LDCs), totalling USD 589 billion in advanced economies in 2022, with a 15% CAGR from 2018. In Australia, private investment in wind, solar, and batteries was AUD 12.7 billion (USD 8.5 billion) in 2024, per the Clean Energy Council.
  - **Climate Tech Startups:** In 2024, startups like BeZero Carbon raised USD 70 million for carbon credit systems, and Polarium secured funding for smart lithium battery technology, reflecting private sector investment in climate solutions.
  - **Concessional Finance:** Only 11% of climate finance was concessional in 2023, with private sector contributions (market-rate debt/equity) dominating at USD 600–700 billion globally in 2022, supporting renewable energy and adaptation projects.

- **Philanthropy:**
  - **ClimateWorks Foundation (2024):** Philanthropic funding for climate mitigation slowed but was significant, with USD 2 trillion in global clean energy investment (public and private) in 2024, a portion from philanthropy. Exact figures for philanthropy are unavailable but likely USD 1–2 billion annually, focusing on mitigation, adaptation, and advocacy.
  - **Climate Justice Impact Fund for Africa (CJIFA):** Grants of USD 5,000–8,000 per organization supported grassroots climate action, with total funding likely in the low millions.
  - **Guiding Principles for Climate and Health:** Endorsed by 41 organizations in 2023, including The Rockefeller Foundation, mobilizing private and philanthropic funds for climate-health solutions (exact amounts unspecified).

Estimated Total (2024): Private and philanthropic funding for climate action globally is estimated at **USD 600–800 billion**, with Australia's share at USD 8.5 billion for wind, solar, and batteries. Philanthropy contributes a smaller but critical portion (~USD 1–2 billion globally). These funds promote the climate change narrative through investments in renewables, carbon markets, and resilience.

2.3 Funding of the case against the dangerous climate change narrative

Government Funding

- **Fossil Fuel Subsidies:** Globally, fossil fuel subsidies are said to have reached USD 1.3 trillion in 2022, with USD 47 billion annually (2020–2022) in international public funding for fossil fuels. In Australia, fossil fuel subsidies were estimated at AUD 11.6 billion (USD

7.8 billion) in 2023–2024, by the Australia Institute, but these were in fact tax remissions, importantly for Off Road vehicles (mostly mine and farm machinery) which are (rightly) not required to pay fuel levies for the upkeep of roads. Other funding is to maintain coal generators that have been made unprofitable and threaten to close as a result of the subsidies conferred on the favoured renewable energy sources. These are not real subsidies as the coal power stations are anchoring the reliability of the electricity grid.

- Direct opposition (e.g., denialism campaigns) is minimal but not zero, likely under USD 100 million globally, as most opposition is indirect through fossil fuel support.

Private Sector Funding

- **Fossil Fuel Industry:** In Australia, mining and energy companies (e.g., BHP, Santos) are said to spend millions on advocacy, with AUD 50–100 million estimated for 2024 based on lobbying disclosures. Few of these firms in fact question climate urgency, and indeed, many businesses, including Australia's largest firm, BHP, make it a condition of its on-going membership of lobby groups that they do not question the climate change narrative.
- **Think Tanks and Misinformation:** Organizations like the Heartland Institute (U.S.) and Institute of Public Affairs (Australia) are said to receive private donations (e.g., from fossil fuel companies) to promote skepticism but this is pure speculation. No specific data for 2024 exists, but annual funding for such groups globally has been inferred at USD 50–200 million, based on 2010s studies.

3. Recommendations

To address misinformation and restore integrity, the committee should:

1. **Require Transparent Data Sharing:** Mandate that DCCEEW, Treasury, and CSIRO publish detailed cost-benefit analyses of the $16 billion in renewable subsidies, including impacts on energy prices and GDP.
2. **Encourage Open Debate:** Protect skeptical voices from marginalization, inviting diverse experts to Senate inquiries.
3. **Audit Subsidies:** Commission the ANAO to review the subsidy ecosystem for cost-effectiveness.
4. **Strengthen Governance:** Reform the Net Zero governance structure to include public reporting, reducing misinformation through opacity.
5. **Acknowledge** that misinformation and disinformation related to climate change and energy is largely confined to those promoting the idea, within and outside of government, that dangerous climate change is occurring and is human-induced. Nonetheless the Senate should reiterate the principle of free speech and oppose any measures to suppress it on social or other media.