

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio  
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012  
19 October

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

**TOPIC:** PROFESSOR CHUBB COMMENTS

**REFERENCE:** Written Questions – Senator Colbeck

**QUESTION No.:** SI-95

1. Does Professor Chubb accept that there are reputable climate scientists who have different views to him and to the Government about the extent to which humans are influencing climate change?
2. Does Professor Chubb stand by his comments made earlier this year that “science is improved by robust but civilised debate” and “I think we've got to get balance into (the climate change) debate, and civility”?
3. If so, how does that tally with his own remarks that prominent climate change sceptic Lord Christopher Monckton is a “deplorable” person and “just needs to be exposed for what he is”?
4. Have the comments made on 22 June 2011 by the Herald Sun columnist, Jill Singer, about the prospect of climate skeptics being gassed to death been drawn to Professor Chubb’s attention at any time?
5. And, if so, has Professor Chubb made any public comments about those remarks?

**ANSWER**

The Chief Scientist has provided the following comments:

1. The lines of evidence on climate change have converged to support a high degree of confidence that climate is changing and that human activity is a primary cause of the warming trend. A very substantial majority of active climate scientists agree with this basic position according to a number of studies. But even the highest estimate of that majority (97-98%) is not 100%. Obviously there are some who disagree. My ‘views’ respect that the overwhelming majority arrived at that view after intense scrutiny over many years.

There is a discussion amongst scientists about the precise extent, as there is about the impact. In the meantime, and as research continues to improve our understanding, more than 30 Academies of Science and many scientific associations around the world, representing probably thousands of scientists accept the high level of probability of human contribution to global warming and have encouraged action on the problem.

One of the most recent (May 2011) came from a multidisciplinary working group consisting of glaciologists, climate scientists, meteorologists, hydrologists, physicists, chemists, mountaineers, and lawyers convened by the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Science. Their declaration reads in part:

*“We call on all people and nations to recognize the serious and potentially irreversible impacts of global warming caused by the anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants, and by changes in forests, wetlands, grasslands, and other land uses. We appeal to all nations to develop and implement, without delay, effective and fair policies to reduce the causes and impacts of climate change on communities and ecosystems, including mountain glaciers and their watersheds, aware that we all live in the same home. By acting now, in a spirit of common but differentiated responsibility we accept our duty to one another and to the stewardship of the planet blessed with the gift of life ”*

2. Yes.
3. I am not sure that I called him a 'deplorable person.' I note that you attributed only 'deplorable' to me. I expect that I labeled some of his utterances 'deplorable'. For example, I thought, and think, that his depiction of Ross Garnaut's work against a swastika and his related Heil Hitler comments were deplorable. I note that Lord Monckton unreservedly apologised, even though his presentation was prepared in advance - so maybe he did, too. I also thought his comments about scientists being frauds and the like, and that scientists should be jailed, were deplorable. And I think comments like that should be exposed for what they are.
4. No.
5. Not applicable.