



The Hon David Bradbury MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR LINDSAY

03 August 2011

Complete response to questions raised by the Daily Telegraph in relation to climate change impacts on human health

Questions:

1. Mr Bradbury accuses Stuart Ayres of scaremongering. Would he then agree that his side of the argument – that inaction will lead to more disease etc – is also scaremongering? Why or why not?
2. What is the basis of these claims?
3. Why does Mr Bradbury deem it necessary to publicly address the issue of climate change and the price on carbon?
4. To what extent will climate change affect the spread of disease, according to Mr Bradbury?

Response:

A range of scientific and public bodies have highlighted the impacts of climate change on human health including the potential spread of diseases normally found in warmer regions to areas in which they are not currently present. These include the World Health Organisation, the Australian Medical Association, the Public Health Association Australia and the IPCC.

There are also numerous reports from scientists such as Dr Anthony McMichael from the Australian National University which show the impacts of climate change on human health.

We also note that the NSW Government currently has the following advice on its website:

Advice currently on NSW Office of Environment and Heritage: (<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/climatechange/health.htm>)

Climate change is expected to have a number of human health impacts, on balance mostly adverse. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, such impacts include:

- heat related mortality and morbidity and
- mortality and morbidity related to extreme weather events.
- in addition to these direct heat impacts, climate change is also expected to have a range of indirect health impacts, including:
 - increases in water and food borne disease
 - changes in seasonality of vector borne diseases
 - increases in health impacts of air pollution (ground level ozone and particles)
 - population shifts and associated impacts on human health
 - the health impacts of climate change will have spatial as well as social/economic dimensions

You may also wish to view:

Australian Medical Association: <http://ama.com.au/node/2120>

- A study by the AMA which outlines impacts of climate change on human health

2008 Garnaut Review – Chapter 6 http://www.rossgarnaut.com.au/Documents/GCCR%20final%20report%20pdf/Garnaut_Chapter6.pdf

The main health risks in Australia include:

- impacts of severe weather events (floods, storms, cyclones, bushfires)
- impacts of temperature extremes, including heatwaves
- vector-borne infectious diseases (for example, dengue virus and Ross River virus)
- food-borne infectious diseases (including those due to Salmonella and ampylobacter)
- water-borne infectious diseases and health risks from poor water quality
- diminished food production and higher prices, with nutritional consequences
- increases in air pollution (for example, from bushfire smoke)
- changes in production of aeroallergens (spores, pollens), potentially exacerbating asthma and other allergic respiratory diseases
- mental health consequences and the emotional cost of social, economic and demographic dislocation (for example, in parts of rural Australia, and through disruptions to traditional ways of living in remote Indigenous communities).

Climate Change Health Check 2020, prepared by Dr Graeme Horton, Professor Tony McMichael Doctors for the Environment Australia and endorsed by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

<http://www.climateinstitute.org.au/images/health%20and%20climate%20change%20report.pdf>

WHO 2003 – Climate Change and human health and responses by Anthony J McMichael