

This is the text of a letter from Dr David Tranter, published in the local press before Professor Robert Carter gave his talk on 19 Feb 2009

Do the homework for climate change talk

There's an invitation by the local branch of the Royal Society of NSW to a talk by eminent geologist Professor Bob Carter on February 19.

The local branch of this distinguished society, formed several centuries ago in the UK, seems to be unaware of the work its parent body has done to “overview the current state of scientific understanding of climate change to help non-experts better understand some of the debates in this complex area of science” (royalsociety.org/page?id).

Among the most common “misleading arguments” listed by the Society that climate change has nothing to do with humans, and that carbon dioxide is not responsible for global warming.

It is therefore rather strange that the flier promoting Professor Carter's talk refers to him as a “well-known climate scientist”, moreso since his own web page (members.iinet.net.au/~glrmc) fails to list a single paper he has published in a reputable climate science journal on contemporary global warming.

One can, however, see that of the 28 papers he has published, 14 are in journals of geology, four are on mining and drilling, four on economics, one on archaeology and one on water quality.

What I have in common with Professor Carter is that neither of us has much expertise in climatology, in particular contemporary global warming.

In such circumstances it would be prudent if those with little expertise in this specialist field of study (including Professor Carter and myself) were guided by reliable sources, such [as] the UK Royal Society and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

If one had appendicitis, would one place their faith in a surgeon or an ear nose and throat specialist?

I would not wish to discourage anyone from attending Professor Carter's talk but I would encourage them, if they are interested in the truth rather than the rhetoric, to do a little prior homework on the internet.

DR DAVID TRANTER

[Note : The link to the Royal Society climate science overview in the above letter has been updated to point to (hopefully) the correct Royal Society web page.]

[Update : On 1 Jun 2010 the London Times reported that “*a small group of Fellows of the Royal Society have forced the UK's national academy of science into a possible retreat on climate change*”. See <http://royalsociety.org/climate-change/>.]