Climate choice: stable or disrupted climate

What The Science Says:
Continued greenhouse gas emissions at or above current rates would cause further warming and induce many changes in the global climate system during the 21st century that would very likely be larger than those observed during the 20th century. (source: IPCC 2007)

Climate Myth: CO2 limits won't cool the planet
"[CO2 limits] will not make a difference for 1000 years. So this is a government which is proposing to put at risk our manufacturing industry, to penalise struggling families, to make a tough situation worse for millions of households right around Australia. And for what? To make not a scrap of difference to the environment any time in the next 1000 years." (Tony Abbott)

Skeptics have argued that if reductions in CO2 will not cool the planet for hundreds of years, then it is not prudent to cut emissions and put any burden on a fossil-fuel-driven economy. But does this make sense?

A choice between sustained temperature increase and doing nothing is not, unfortunately, the choice we are facing. The real choice we face is between decreasing CO2 emissions (in which case temperatures will still warm a bit more and then stabilize), and letting CO2 emissions go and and on (in which case temperatures will continue to rise and rise). In the future, when technologically and economically feasible, it may be possible to withdraw carbon from the atmosphere, perhaps with increasing tree growth or chemical "scrubbing". But this is just a goal for the future.

According the IPCC, from the Summary for Policy Makers:

- Continued greenhouse gas emissions at or above current rates would cause further warming and induce many changes in the global climate system during the 21st century that would very likely be larger than those observed during the 20th century.
- Anthropogenic warming and sea level rise would continue for centuries due to the time scales associated with climate processes and feedbacks, even if greenhouse gas concentrations were to be stabilised.

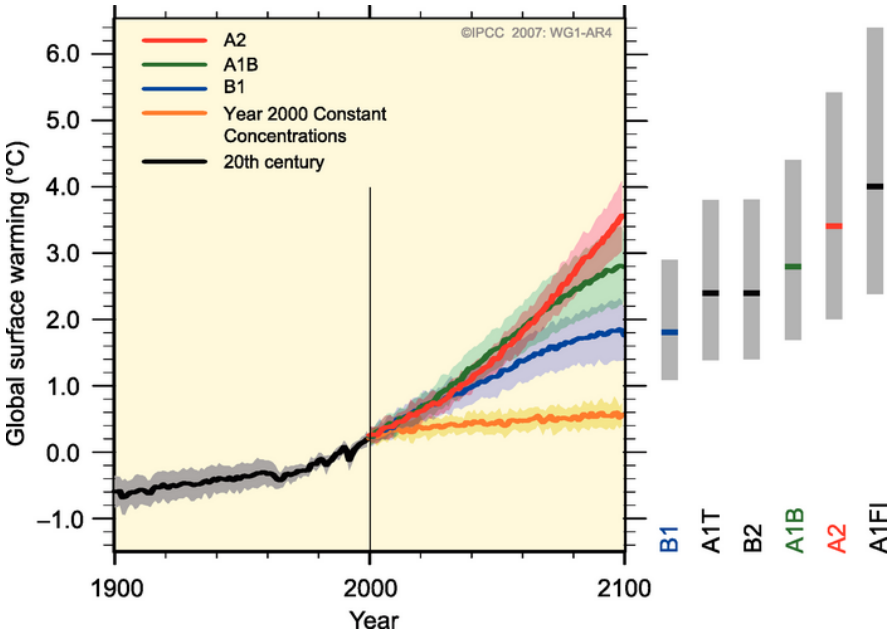

Figure: Global surface temperature projections for IPCC Scenarios. Shading denotes the ±1 standard deviation range of individual model annual averages. The orange line is constant CO2 concentrations at year 2000 values. The grey bars at right indicate the best estimate (solid line within each bar) and the likely range. (Source: IPCC). Emissions scenarios

This is one skeptic argument where one must wonder if some of those who wish to prevent action on climate change really understand what the argument is about.

Basic rebuttal written by grypo

Update July 2015:

Here is a related lecture-video from Denial101x - Making Sense of Climate Science Denial

[*see video at* ***this link.***]

Skeptical Science explains the science of global warming and examines climate misinformation through the lens of peer-reviewed research. The website won the Australian Museum 2011 Eureka Prize for the Advancement of Climate Change Knowledge. Members of the Skeptical Science team have authored peer-reviewed papers, a college textbook on climate change and the book Climate Change Denial: Heads in the Sand. Skeptical Science content has been used in university courses, textbooks, government reports on climate change, television documentaries and numerous books.