

**GERARD HENDERSON'S MEDIA WATCH DOG – ISSUE NO. 93
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NEW FEATURE – (UNANSWERED) CORRESPONDENCE : THANKS TO TIM FLANNERY

MWD's Correspondence Section has been most popular. So much so that a decision has been made to run correspondence – even when no one answers Nancy's co-owner's original epistle. Here we go: On 1 March 2011, Gerard Henderson emailed Tim Flannery in the following terms:

Tim

Congratulations on your appointment as Chief Commissioner of the Independent Climate Commission. I wanted to follow up one point concerning your appearance on *Q&A* on Monday 21 February. During the exchange on *Q&A*, Senator Barnaby Joyce made the following comment:

Well...you've got to match predictions up with what people have said. Now, I've heard Mr Flannery before say that Brisbane was going to run out of water. Well, we certainly didn't – that didn't happen.

As you will recall, you did not respond to Senator Joyce's comment. It is unclear whether you refrained from responding or whether it was not possible for you to inject yourself into the debate at this point. My query is this: What do you say in response to the comment that you predicted that, without drastic measures, Brisbane would run out of water?

Best wishes

Gerard Henderson

So far, alas, Dr Flannery has not responded. This could be because the Independent climate Commission's Chief Commissioner is oh-so-busy emitting carbon as he travels in Australia and overseas attending meetings or flogging his (non-electronic) book. Or it could turn on the fact that he does not have a suitable answer.

If Dr Flannery gets in touch, *MWD* will ask whether he will stand by his article "Australia: Not Such a Lucky Country" in the *New Scientist* on 16 June 2007 – which commenced as follows:

Over the past 50 years southern Australia has lost about 20 per cent of its rainfall, and one cause is almost certainly global warming. Similar losses have been experienced in eastern Australia, and although the science is less certain it is probable that global warming is behind these losses too. But by far the most dangerous trend is the decline in the flow of Australian rivers: it has fallen by around 70 per cent in recent decades, so dams no longer fill even when it does rain. Growing evidence suggests that hotter soils, caused directly by global warming, have increased evaporation and transpiration and that the change is permanent. I believe the first thing Australians need to do is to stop worrying about "the drought" – which is transient – and start talking about the new climate.

When Nancy emerged from her kennel this morning, the official water catchment storage figures for Australia's major east coast cities were as follows:

Brisbane: 90 per cent capacity

Sydney: 74 per cent capacity

Melbourne: 53 per cent capacity

Hobart: 100 per cent capacity.

MWD would like to send Professor Flannery a letter about this to see whether he still maintains that dams in Australia will no longer fill. But it is polite to first await any reply to the first query.

We'll keep you posted.