

by STRATEGY

Did you know that the Museum will be celebrating its 200th birthday in 2027? It seems a long way off, but we have used this anniversary to focus our minds on how we would like the Museum to be in 2027 and what we need to do to get there.

Thinking ahead also forces us to wonder what the world might be like then, and how we can do our bit to move us in a positive direction. The biggest issue of all is global warming. For the Museum's part, we've set a goal of being entirely carbon neutral and all our energy and water needs being met from sustainable sources.

CRINGE

A bigger issue is what we as Australia will do. I am extremely concerned about the excessive politicisation of the carbon debate in Australia and the ongoing media attention to the shrinking number of increasingly shrill climate change deniers. We long ago stopped publicising those 'experts' who claim that smoking doesn't cause cancer or that HIV doesn't cause AIDS. It is time the media stopped giving air to those few who say that human-added CO₂ is not causing global warming, or that it's not real.

And let's get past the cringe of saying that Australia should only follow other developed countries in taking action on climate change. We are eternally proud of leadership in sport – let's also be proud of doing something towards securing a habitable world for future generations.

RESIGNATION

I'm also detecting a subtle but worrying shift in climate change related science. There is a sense of resignation among many scientists that the battle to halt or manage global warming is already lost, as a result of vigorous lobbying by fossil fuel industries and inaction by the world's governments. Now, research emphasis is on predicting and understanding the impacts of global warming. We can all do our part to keep the debate firmly based on scientific principles. Indeed today I met a wonderful woman who is running a personal campaign to keep the minds of her grandchildren open to rational and evidence-based thinking, and who is strongly committed to science communication and education.

If we had more people like this grandmother, I suspect that the climate change deniers, and the media that give them oxygen, would have a tougher time. Let's all work towards Australia being a leader in implementing strategies to reduce CO₂ levels, not a reluctant follower. That would really give us something to celebrate for our 200th birthday!

FRANK HOWARTH

Director of the Australian Museum

