

Earth continues to warm strongly: Climate Commission

The Climate Commission has been concerned about misleading information in the media in recent weeks stating that the Earth is not warming. Consequently, it has released a briefing paper that corrects the confusion and confirms that the Earth continues to warm at an alarming rate.



Credit: Siobhan Duffy/scienceimage

Climate Commissioner, Professor Will Steffen, the author of the briefing paper, stated, 'The most common error is looking at either a short timeframe, or just one indicator of warming.

'What climate scientists do is look at the big picture and the long term to understand what is going on. When we put together all of the evidence, the heating ocean, air and land over the last 50 years, we can clearly see that Earth has been warming strongly.

'As scientists have been saying for many years, the Earth is warming rapidly. Human activities, in particular the burning of fossil fuels, have triggered this warming.

'If we fail to address it, there will be even more serious implications for humanity than the impacts we are seeing already.'

The briefing paper makes the following core points:

1. The Earth continues to warm strongly. Scientists assess this based on long term observations of the heat content of the ocean, the air temperature (an indicator of the heat content of the atmosphere), and the amount of heat absorbed by the land, glaciers, ice sheets, and sea ice.
2. Understanding changes in climate requires data over long time periods, at least 30 years and preferably much

longer.

3. The best measure of global warming is ocean heat content as it absorbs nearly 90 per cent of additional heat trapped by greenhouse gases. Global ocean heat content has increased substantially over the last 40 years, and the strongly upward trend has continued through the most recent decade up to the present.
4. Singling out short term trends in air temperature to imply that global warming is not occurring is incorrect and misleading.

‘For whatever reason some commentators choose to cherry-pick data, presenting it in a highly selective way to make their case. That has seriously misrepresented what is actually happening, and such behaviour just isn’t good science.’

The independent [Climate Commission](#) was established to provide an open and trusted source of information on climate change science and solutions. The Commission brings together internationally renowned climate scientists with policy and business leaders.

Source: Climate Commission

From ECOS online <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC13051>