

27 November 2009

Hon Dr Nick Smith  
Minister for Climate Change Issues  
Parliament Buildings  
WELLINGTON

cc Hon Dr Wayne Mapp  
Minister for Research, Science and Technology

### **Open Letter to Hon Nick Smith**

As you will recall, during question time in the House on Thursday 26 November 2009, I asked you whether you were willing to ask the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) to explain the adjustments that it has made to the raw data to produce a warming trend for New Zealand for 156 years of our history, when its own raw data show New Zealand's temperature to be stable. A note by the NZ Climate Science Coalition, *Are we feeling warmer yet?*, identifies the scale of these adjustments.

See: [http://nzclimatescience.net/images/PDFs/global\\_warming\\_nz2.pdf](http://nzclimatescience.net/images/PDFs/global_warming_nz2.pdf).

You responded that you would welcome the opportunity to invite the chief climate change scientist from NIWA to address members on this issue. I appreciate that response, as openness and independent scrutiny of scientific work is fundamental to good science.

Later on during question time you tabled a brief note on NIWA's analysis of temperature change, which gave as an example of temperature adjustment, the shift in location, in 1928, of the measurement site in Wellington from Thorndon to Kelburn, which involved a move from 3 to 125 metres above sea level, and thus to a cooler location.

The need for such adjustments is well known (as also for changes over time in the urban heat influence) but just acknowledging that such changes have been made to the data series does not at all advance our understanding of what exactly has been done to the raw data series, or lift our confidence that they have been done appropriately and consistently.

There is only one process that is appropriate for matters of science, and that is to release all data, together with a detailed account of what adjustments have been made, with an account of the reasons for doing so, and the computer codes that have been used to adjust and smooth the final published series, together with details of which measurements

have been discarded. All the data and the relevant computer codes should be available for scientific scrutiny.

The disturbing revelations from the hacked emails, documents and computer codes from the University of East Anglia Climate Research Unit, which are now in the public domain and which reveal a systematic attempt to manipulate the historical time series data, together with what appear to be arbitrary adjustments to the computer codes which produce the averaged and smoothed temperature data, make it all the more urgent that we have New Zealand's data scrutinised.

This is the only way to maintain public confidence in the historical temperature data for New Zealand. This is all the more important in that our data is a contribution to international temperature data which is relied on in the computer modelling analysing climate change.

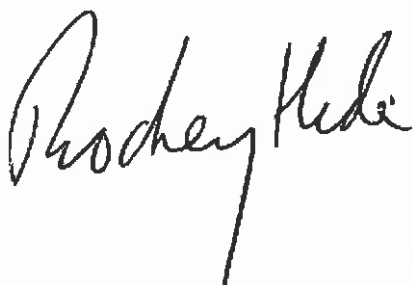
These computer projections are in turn a basis of moves to introduce globally binding ETS systems to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is widely understood that achieving these global emission targets will have a substantial negative impact on world economic growth and incomes, and thus on global poverty. These are issues, therefore, of the utmost importance.

I accept your invitation to discuss these issues with Dr Wratt, the chief climate change scientist from NIWA, and look forward to you confirming a date for this meeting.

But much more is needed.

I therefore ask you to make available to independent scientific scrutiny the full data on which the official time series of the *Mean annual temperature over New Zealand, from 1853 to 2008*, is based, together with full documentation of the adjustments that have been made.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rodney Hide". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, thin tail on the letter 'i'.

Hon Rodney Hide  
**ACT Party Leader**