

Peter Ridd 012924

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Introduction

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Peter: It's actually the duty. It's the evolutionary function of old people to look after the young people. You take the hits so that the grandchildren, uh, can be okay. So go out, get yourself fired, make a big stink about it.

Tom: My guest today is Peter Ridd

Peter: I've been a scientist more or less all my life. I worked on the Great Barrier Reef since 1984. I'm a physicist by training. Uh, and essentially I've been showing over the last couple of decades that the Great Barrier Reef is in wonderful shape and it's not the basket case that you read in the media.

The Great Barrier Reef: A Brief Overview

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Peter: We're going to talk about the Great Barrier Reef and why it's so great. A very brief summary. The Great Barrier Reef is huge. It's, you know, almost as long as, um, California.

It has 3000 individual reefs. Um, most are a sort of a mile or two across. And of those 3, 000 reefs, not a single one has been lost. They all have great coral on them. So that's a pretty good start. [00:01:00] Um, the measurements of the amount of coral on the, on the reefs has shown that we're actually, uh, at record highs at the moment.

In, since records began in 1984 or 5, we've never had more coral. Because corals themselves actually measure their own growth rate, you can actually, they're like, they have rings, some of the corals. Uh, like tree rings, you can actually measure the growth rates going back centuries. And it hasn't changed. If in anything, it's got slightly, uh, faster growth rates over the centuries.

And what is absolutely indisputable is that corals grow much faster in warmer water. That's been known since forever, basically. But reefs are highly variable systems, so they get smashed by, um, cyclones. We call, uh, we, you, you call them hurricanes.

## The Resilience and Health of the Reef

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Peter: They'll lose a lot of coral, uh, they'll have plagues of starfish, they'll lose a lot of coral, but then they regrow and everything comes good and it's just a natural part of the cycle.

But you can see this is great for the people who want to talk about the doom of the reef because there's always somewhere on the reef that's being, uh, [00:02:00] hammered by something rather than losing coral, but it comes back. And this is the thing that if it keeps on coming back, you know, you've got a very Uh, vigorous, healthy system.

So it's a bit like a bushfire. We have lots of bushfires in Australia. Looks terrible when they've been wiped out, but they come back and actually they need it. It's, it's part of being the Great Barrier Reef. It has to be obliterated, unfortunately. It's horrible when it happens, uh, every few decades.

## The Impact of Climate Change and Pollution on the Reef

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Peter: Now, what you may not have heard in other parts of the world is that the Great Barrier Reef is not just being killed by climate change, it's also being killed by supposedly pollution.

Uh, from farms, but actually the, uh, because the Great Barrier Reef is flushed from the Pacific Ocean very, very rapidly, um, pesticides are essentially not present in the water at all. Mud from farms, which is supposedly smothering the reef, has no impact at all and neither does farm nutrients. So that's a summary.

## The Physical Structure and Location of the Reef

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Peter: Um, we'll just need to see what the reef is. This is the reef off the northeastern coast of, uh, [00:03:00] Australia, that's the state of Queensland. And the Great Barrier Reef is a long way from the coast. So it's, you know, 20 to 100 miles off the coast, uh, in general. And there's 3, 000 individual reefs. Here's just a, I don't know, 50 of them.

You can see each of these. is an individual reef. It's just absolutely exquisite, actually, uh, the, um, the form of this thing. And if you go back, um, 18, 000 years when the sea level was lower, all these individual reefs, this is one little patch of reefs, because they're

these flat topped Essentially hills about 100 meters high, a bit less than that.

Um, if you go back, uh, uh, uh, 20, 000 years, these were just a plain of flat top hills. And then when the sea level rose, there was a whole lot of flat top islands, and now they're all being covered, and they're just a bunch of flat top coral reefs. The biggest system in the world by far. Here's a, a picture of one of the reefs.

Uh, and actually this one's quite interesting because it's, it's quite common [00:04:00] actually that you'll see that we've got lots of coral around the front of the reef, you've got all this sand, carbonate sand from smashed coral and coral that's actually been eaten by, um, a little fish actually, uh, parrotfish and things eat a lot of the coral and they make sand.

Um, but this is a dead area on the top of the reef and, uh, people, especially marine biologists, often mistake this as being killed. But actually, well, it has been killed. It got killed by sea level fall that has happened over the last, uh, four or five thousand years. And because these are now exposed at low tides, a lot of corals don't like being exposed.

That's killed it. We get sea level rise, that'll all come back. We get a meter of sea level rise.

### Coral Growth Rates and the Impact of Temperature

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Peter: All right, I think this is the most important bit of data. It comes from the Australian Institute of Marine Science. It measures the amount of coral on about 100 of the 3, 000 of the reef. So the coral cover, if you have a coral cover of 0.

3, it means 30 percent of the reef is actually covered in [00:05:00] coral. Now there's other organisms on the reef. It's sand, lots of sand. So 30 percent is actually a pretty good number, but the important thing is changes. Um, if you go back to 1984, well, we hit a low point about 10 years ago. This was after a few big Hurricane cyclones and a lot of starfish plagues, but we've now got twice as much coral on the whole reef, uh, today than we had back in 2010, and that's pretty good.

Now these red dots, uh, indicate, uh, dates when there was massive coral bleaching when the whole world was told it's the end of the world for the reef sort of thing. And you can see that we had these four big ones, supposedly. In that time, the reef basically more or less doubled the amount of coral. So that tells you a whole lot about what bleaching does.

to the reef. All these headlines you're seeing basically don't add up to a hill of beans. All right. Now that was the whole reef. This is just about 10 percent of the reef. It's a section called the Capricorn Bunkers. [00:06:00] And what I want you to see from this is just look how much it fluctuates. So we had up to 60 percent of the, the, the coral.

of the coral reefs was covered by coral, down to 20 percent, then up, then down. These are cyclones, craniothorns, starfish, plagues. If you go down to an individual reef, so this is just one of the 3, 000 reefs, One Tree Island Reef, uh, when monitoring started, in this case in 1992, well, only 5 percent of that reef had coral on it.

It was a terrible reef. In fact, I know some people who were telling me at this time, the reef is looking really, really bad. But within a decade, it was almost 100 percent coral cover. So by 19, by 20, uh, by the year 2000, almost full. And then it crashed again after a couple of big cyclones and now it's come back and looking good.

So this is the important thing. The reef is a massively, massively changing system. It's not like a forest in, you know, Canada or the Western part of the U S. Where, you know, it stays pretty much [00:07:00] the same from year to year. You might get a bushfire in some parts, but this is a system that changes. And of course, when it's looking really, really bad, they'll take a camera out there and say, Oh, it's looking really, really bad.

It's the end of the reef. We've lost 50 percent of our coral. Okay. Or, or more. Now, as I mentioned before, coral growth rates can be measured on the big, um, the big, what we call the priorities corals. Because they have growth rings like tree rings, so you drill a hole in it, you can, some of these corals are hundreds and hundreds of years old, and you can actually monitor, well, see what the growth rate was going back.

Now the, um, the color bars here are uncertainty intervals, so big uncertainty here, but essentially what you're seeing here is that there's really no change and certainly no fall in the growth rate over the last, for centuries. This is good news, too. So all this carbon dioxide is not having any detrimental effect.

Now, you might think, well, maybe there is an increasing growth rate there and [00:08:00] you'd actually expect it because corals like it hot. If you actually, and this has been known, as I said, this is just, where do you go in the U. S. to see corals? You go to Florida, don't you? And the further south you go, the better the corals.

Now there are corals right up in the north. There's actually corals in Scotland for goodness sake. Scotland is a very, very cold place. But

they grow really, really slow, so they can't build a carbonate platform. Well, we're in the Southern Hemisphere, so we're sort of back to front. This is the annual temperature of the water, and this is the growth rate of the, uh, the corals.

Southern Great Barrier Reef is cold for us, right? Northern Great Barrier Reef is warmer. The Torres Strait is right at the top of Australia, near Papua New Guinea, even growing even faster. And if you go to the Coral Triangle, Thailand, Papua New Guinea, and the rest of it, Corals are growing even faster. So this is sort of, we have corals right in the south of Australia, but they grow so slowly like the [00:09:00] Scottish corals that they, they can't form reefs.

### The Alleged Impact of Farming on the Reef

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Peter: Now, as I mentioned before, all our farmers are being told they're killing the reef. You've seen all this stuff with the Dutch farmers. They're supposedly destroying the planet with nitrogen, while our farmers are supposedly killing the reef by pollution from fertilizer and mud and pesticides. And it comes down the rivers from the coast and out onto the reef.

But the point is that There are these massive ocean currents, the North Caledonian Jet, the um, uh, North Vanuatu Jet, the East Australia Current, if you watch the film Saving, um, no sorry, um, Nemo, that's the one that Nemo went on. There's these massive ocean currents that flush in and out of the reef and there is basically no pollution on the Great Barrier Reef.

There is a tiny bit really close to the coast. But the reef is a long way from the coast. So this might be a bit too much detail. This is trying to look at the nitrogen. This is the stuff that the Dutch farmers have been in trouble about. So this is a [00:10:00] cross section. Uh, this is the sea floor. This is offshore in the Coral Sea or the, the Pacific Ocean.

This is one of these reef platforms. And then the water gets shallower and this is the land and the river coming in. And this is the nitrogen flux, the amount of fertilizer basically comes in and it's normalized to. The amount that comes in from rainfall. So rain actually has a lot of nitrogen in it, which makes growth, right?

Now, there's only twice as much comes in from all the rivers, and only a small amount of that comes from the farms, right? There's 200 units that come in from the Coral Sea, that comes in and out from the Coral Sea, and there's 200 units that are cycling across the seabed from various So what you're saying here is, yeah, all right, you can increase this by a little bit because of what the farmers might have

done, But it just doesn't matter because of these huge numbers and flushing that are coming.

And, um, you can do the same sort of thing with other nutrients too. And where's the mud? The [00:11:00] mud is supposedly just, I was reading in the Guardian just this morning, we had a cyclone that actually went across here, right here. Uh, four or five days ago and erosion on the farms. It's going out onto the Great Barrier Reef.

But here's a picture of the Great Barrier Reef. And this is a typical picture of what the Great Barrier Reef looks like. Where is the mud, right? You can go out and I work with geologists for, you know, a lot of my career. And you can go out onto these reefs and you can take a sample of this beautiful white sand, which is made of mostly, um, uh, ground up coral.

There is no mud on the reef, right? It's just not there, right? Oh, there's tiny amounts, of course, there's tiny amounts, but it's completely insignificant. So farmers are not having any effect on the reef, but I can tell you they are being absolutely victimized by All levels of government at the moment. And I just wish I could get our farmers.

To hop in their tractor and take the thousand [00:12:00] mile journey down to Canberra, well, two thousand mile journey down to Canberra and, uh, have a bit of a, a session like the French farmers and the Dutch farmers and the German farmers are doing. So I think I might leave it at that with that wonderful picture of that wonderful thing we have, the Great Barrier Reef, it's in wonderful condition.,

#### The Future of the Reef and the Role of Young People

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Tom: Do you think we have reached a peak hysteria about the Great Barrier Reef?

Peter: Yep, I think we have. We're getting the word out, um, more and more. I see it pop up occasionally in the, in world media that they'll actually say, Oh, the reef seems to be at record amounts of coral. Now, of course they're making excuses, some fairly pathetic excuses for that, but we are slowly getting the word out.

But I think there's a general distrust of a lot of the hyperbole and the catastrophism. Not just about the reef, of course, it's, it's everything and people are saying, uh, I don't buy it. I mean, I think you mentioned the, that Rasmussen poll in the, uh, in the United States, where 60 percent of Americans think that climate change has become a, I can't remember the word, a [00:13:00] religion designed to control us.

Now that's not because they're all expert on, you know, climate change and radiative transfer and, and the science. They just smell that, uh, come on guys, this is just too much. Everything, you know, you have a bit of rain and it's climate change, you crash your car, it's climate change, you name it, it's climate change.

We don't believe you. So I think we have reached peak hysteria and I think people are smelling rats left, right and center. Uh, you can certainly see it in Europe at the moment. Yeah.

Tom: I think elsewhere I saw that you said that the end of doom science might be near and maybe young people are

Peter: waking up.

Yeah, I think they are. Um, there's just so many things, uh, that the young people are not stupid, actually. And they're not so different, even though they've been completely brainwashed. Like, I mean, these guys have been utterly brainwashed, but they know they've been brainwashed. All right. You talk to them and say, yeah, yeah, we know we're being brainwashed.

And we can see through it, though a lot of my [00:14:00] mates might not be able to see through that is what they'll say. I'll give you another example, and I know this is a little bit different to the scientific issues, but it's part of this brainwashing. We had this referendum in Australia about what was called the voice, which was to essentially have an Aboriginal Parliament, an Indigenous People's Parliament, that would, you know, be a separate thing just for Indigenous people.

A very, very divisive thing. And of course, In schools, everybody's been told you've got to, you've got to vote for this. Now, it's true that the young people voted more for that than the older people, but they were still in a majority voted against that, despite this 100% Um, you know, pile on, um, indoctrination that they've been subjected to, they can see through it.

And I suspect we're going to see in the next five to 10 years, it's going to be the young people who are going to turn this and say, nah, we don't accept all of this. And they could actually swing too far the other way. We'll see what happens. Have you [00:15:00] seen

Tom: just the recent polling that I saw about, uh, young men are turning more conservative, but young women are turning more woke?

Peter: What do you think of that? Yes, uh, and I've seen that even in a, uh, a poll here about, it wasn't, it wasn't, it was about a specific issue, actually. It's another one of these, uh, non science

issues about, We have a, our foundation days called Australia Day. It's when the first fleet arrived, arrived from, from England to set up Australia in 1788.

And when you look at the polls, the men are very, very in favor of Australia day. So are the women actually, but not quite so, you know, crazily, uh, in favor of Australia day, um, as the women. So there is a difference there, which is quite interesting. Uh, what are you seeing

Tom: in the media right now in Australia?

Is it Sky News still that's willing to have people like you to speak,

Peter: uh, speak to you? Sky News and the Australian, and there are a couple of newspapers, but we certainly do struggle. Um, the Australian Broadcasting [00:16:00] Corporation, which is equivalent to the BBC, is absolutely hopeless, but not quite so hopeless as the BBC.

Uh, but, no, it is a struggle, um, but, you know, we get around it nowadays, don't we, with social media. Yeah. Um,

Tom: when we have a chance here, do you want to give give just an elevator speech about what happened with you and James Cook just for the people who haven't heard that

The Firing from James Cook University and the Fight for Quality Science

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Peter: story yet? Oh, okay. Yeah. So I was fired from my university, which I've been, which I actually went as an undergraduate, did my postgraduate.

I spent my whole life at this university, but I was fired for basically saying that there was huge quality assurance problems with the science of the Great Barrier Reef. And, uh, because of that. A lot of the work that was coming out from a lot of my colleagues actually was untrustworthy because there was no quality assurance systems.

And anyway, I was fired for that. We took it to the High Court, which is equivalent to the Supreme Court in, uh, in the United States. And we actually won on the principle that they had no right to tell me to, that I [00:17:00] couldn't say that, but they still said that they were allowed to fire me because they told me to be quiet about the unlawful activity which they'd undertaken and somehow or other they were still able to keep you quiet about their unlawful activity, even though they weren't actually allowed to do the unlawful activity in the first place.



So you work that out. The law is a funny thing. Anyway, I'm free now. Uh, and I can talk about the reef to my heart's content. I work for the Institute of Public Affairs. in an unpaid position to spread the word about the reef, but also science in general, because the great, the problem with the Great Barrier Reef is just a one little area where science, science isn't failing us, but the science institutions are failing us and giving us bad science.

We've seen this in so many things, climate change, even on the COVID thing. But I'm actually documented many other things as well. Actually,

Tom: let's talk about all the different places where we can find more of your work. I discovered lots of them over the last day or two. You have your own YouTube channel, for example, or Reef Rebels, right? [00:18:00]

Peter: Yeah, Reef Rebels. So I did a sequence of about 10, if you want to, if you want to blow by blow description in about 10 minute videos, uh, go to the Reef Rebels, um, YouTube channel and go on the ones of the Reef, but I'm also doing a series called broken and brilliant and broken science, where I look at certain issues and show how, you know, because science is wonderful.

Proper science is just brilliant, but broken science is, yeah. Well, I won't use the word evil, but it has the same effect as that. It's really, really bad. And so I look at some areas where we've got really wonderful science, but it's been let down by the broken science.

Tom: Okay. And then there's your 2020 book, Reef Heresy,

Peter: right?

Yeah, there's the Reef Heresy book, but we're also bringing out in about two weeks actually, uh, uh, uh, I'm going to do this every few years, uh, A State of the Great Barrier Reef 2024. It's going to be a sort of like a 50 page version with lots and lots. It's a, it's a scientific document, but can be read by the layman, lots of, um, uh, references.

So that [00:19:00] will come out in two weeks. It'll be on all those things and it will give a, a good summary of the Great Barrier Reef that I went over in about, you know, five minutes at the beginning of this

Tom: podcast. All right, and I will include a bunch of these links in the show description so people can click on them.

Because another one is, uh, Plato GBR, right? That website of yours.

Peter: Yeah, that's been up there for a while. I don't do a lot with that. I just put the information up on the roof. It doesn't change. You know, it changes a little bit from year to year, but the roof's been wonderful since forever. So website doesn't change very much, but it's also a resource where people can look at.

It's actually a bit of a summary of the book that I wrote on the Great Barrier Reef

Tom: heresy. All right. And then you're doing guest appearances on a lot of different podcasts, maybe like this one, right? When I just, uh, searched for them, I found quite

Peter: a few. Yeah, I guess I'm a bit of a social media type. I, I, if somebody, it doesn't matter who they are.

If a school kid, uh, contacts me and they want to do something, I will do it. Even if they have an audience of two. In fact, I'm more happy to do that to an audience. to two [00:20:00] school children, uh, than I am to, you know, a thousand old crusty buggers like myself, who probably were preaching to the converted. So that's where the future does lie and we shouldn't give up hope on the younger generation.

Believe me, they have not lost their brains.

Tom: Excellent.

The Replication Crisis in Science and the Importance of Reliable Research

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Tom: Um, how about the replication crisis in general with science? Uh, that's a huge problem still,

Peter: isn't it? Yes. Well, this is one of the things that sort of got me into the position where I was fired because the replication crisis is where about 50 percent of the newly published science literature is actually You know, either completely wrong or serious flaws, and you can read about this everywhere now.

In 2013, it was a bit of an eye opener, and, you know, John Ioannidis and his work, and when I found out about this, I really got pretty depressed about all my scientific col I'm actually working in a profession that, that's actually one of the worst unreli most unreliable, um, professions on Earth. [00:21:00] 50% You know, fault rate.

That's how bad is that? Uh, and at that stage, I was having difficulty

getting a lot of my work published. The journals wouldn't accept it if I was saying, well, you know, the evidence is suggesting this even stuff where I was the undoubted expert. We had more. We invented the instruments for measuring, uh, sediment on coral reefs, right?

We did all the work. We had more measurements of that than all the other groups put together. We actually even sold the other groups the instrumentation to measure it. But I couldn't get it. Uh, sometimes my work published on that type of stuff because what I was saying was the sediment isn't getting out to the roof.

It's having no effect.

### The Replication Crisis in Science

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Peter: And I started to realize, well, we've got some really institutional problems here. And rather than actually just talking about the science, you've got to talk about the processes that have made science so untrustworthy. And this is what the replication crisis is about. It's not on Great Barrier Reef, it's right through medicine, it's right through [00:22:00] everything, actually.

And this is where all of us should always talk about the replication crisis whenever we can.

Tom: So, you've been around long enough in the scientific world to see, you remember back when it worked better than it is now? Maybe, I think maybe 20 years ago you started seeing a problem, or how did that play out?

Peter: Look, I think we've had a problem, um, for a very long time.

### The Problem with Peer Review

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Peter: Peer review is, is part of the problem. I mean, can you imagine a better system for making group think than the system of peer review? where for my work to get published, I have to give it to my peers who probably disagree with me, right? Well, they'll very likely disagree with me, um, if they work for one of these institutions and they are the gatekeepers for whether I can get my work published.

I mean, that's just, that's how you'd program in groupthink if you had to. Now, remember, peer review is a relatively modern phenomenon. If you go back to the work of [00:23:00] Einstein in 1905, that wasn't peer reviewed. None of that was peer reviewed. It really only started to come in in the 1960s and, well, 50s, 60s and the rest of it, that

that came in.

## The Decline of Scientific Debate

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Peter: So I think we've had a problem for a very long time, but when I look at the Great Barrier Reef, if I look at the 1980s and 90s, where there was a genuine debate going on about the reef, right, there was the geologist saying, look, it's fine. I was a physicist and also saying it's fine. And there was the biologists on the other side.

What happened is that one by one, we were picked off, right? I mean, I did well to survive as long as I did because a whole bunch of others were picked off, not in the same dramatic way, but they were picked off in the sense that their contracts were not renewed, they couldn't get funding, etc, etc, etc. Or when they left, they were never replaced by a similar person.

And what happened is a group of biologists, Mostly biologists who are often very, very emotional about the reef took over and they excluded any of the other other people. So yes, for the reef, things were much better 25 years [00:24:00] ago. But you can actually trace the problems that we have right across science.

Um, you know, right back a very long way. Think of, you know, the DDT scandal, you know, the, was it the Silent Dawn, Rachel Carson and the Silent Spring, the banning of DDT, right? That was a complete scientific disaster. And it was based on. really bad science. Now we're talking in the 1960s there, so this is not a recent phenomenon that we're looking at.

So do you think it is

## The Role of Social Media in Science

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Tom: a little bit better when people are putting these crazy claims up on social media and then people, all sorts of people can look at it and rip it apart in 24 hours? I'm encouraged by

Peter: that actually. Look, I, we would be in a absolutely diabolical shape without social media. Now I know that it's not as good as, you know, if you can get into one of the, the, the large media networks like Fox News and all the rest of it.

There is enough of that Sky News here, Fox News in the US where you can [00:25:00] see it on sort of, sort of mainstream media. But we would be in an absolutely terrible situation, um, if we didn't have

social media. So. It actually makes you wonder about what other things have happened in our recent past where a large elite group have essentially taken over.

I don't think it was as bad in the 60s and 70s, but it makes you wonder what was happening then that was not getting out. I can give you examples back in the 1930s where the media was acting as a group, for example, in the United Kingdom. Um, the, the, up to the, the, the Second World War, 1939, all, almost all the media outlets were for appeasement.

They were talking to the, you know, the Prime Minister's office about appeasement. Don't let the word get out. Don't anger, you know, Mr. Hitler and all the rest of it. So they were all, you know, pushing in one direction. It wasn't the right direction. And you wonder whether this hasn't happened a lot, and it's only because we've been released [00:26:00] by social media.

Despite the problems with us being censored quite often, that we're now actually hammering away actually quite successfully on some of these big ticket issues where the elites or what I call the, the, uh, the nobility, the people who are trying to tell us what to do, um, we can actually chip away at those people.

#### The Duty of Older Scientists

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Tom: And you have said elsewhere that it's actually a duty for older people to speak publicly and push back against this stuff, right, against

Peter: the lies? Yeah, look, I feel really strongly for this. If, um, if somebody's, you know, I got into trouble, how old was I? Probably 57 or so at the time. Um, you know, I've got superannuation, my house is paid off and, you know, I can retire if I really want to, sort of thing.

If you're in a position like that and you can see bad stuff happening, And if you've got children or grandchildren, then you have a duty, and I'm quite serious, you have a duty to make an arsehole of yourself and, [00:27:00] you know, cause a flop. And if you get fired, well, so be it, right? Because the young people do not have that option.

They've got children going through school, right? That it would destroy their career if they do it. So you have a duty to do it. It's actually the duty. It's the evolutionary function of old people to look after the young people. You take the hits so that the grandchildren, uh, can be okay. So go out, get yourself fired, make a big stink about it.

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## Emotion vs Objectivity in Science

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Tom: about the whole problem of, uh, mixing maybe emotion and ideology with science and some of these, uh, reef people are going out and crying when they see bleaching. What can we do about that? We need to be more like, uh, Mr. Spock, right, uh, from, I heard you say that on a different podcast.

Peter: Uh, Emotionless.

Yeah, Mr. Spock is the, is a, an excellent scientist. He'd be an absolute rubbish politician and you might not want him as a father, but he's completely [00:28:00] objective. Now look, it's. It's pretty inevitable that a lot of people are going to be emotional about the Great Barrier Reef, because it's so beautiful. You know, you can't, you can't dispute that.

It's, it's unsurprising that people get emotional when they see a bushfire tear through a forest and there's all these, you know, fried koalas that, you know, you're going to get emotional about some of those things. That's why we have systems in science, right? The whole, the whole way that science is come about is that we, we, we've got to be objective.

We, we separate the emotion from the objectivity. We put in systems where, well, this is your data. Give it to somebody who may be a little less emotionally attached than you are and let's analyze it. So you need to put in place the systems. Now we don't have any quality assurance systems at all in most of science, right?

If, if science was making cars like Toyota, 50 percent of Toyotas would come off the production line, they wouldn't even start, [00:29:00] the engine wouldn't even go, that's how bad they'd be, right? We don't have quality assurance systems, so you need to put those in place, right? They do it in industry, they do it in lots of medical stuff, in fact, um, they fail in other areas, but they do that.

So, to avoid the emotion, you accept it's going to be there. But you put in place, uh, lots and lots of checking. You stop the groupthink forming, because there's nothing worse than a whole bunch of emotional scientists getting themselves into a teary, teary, teary tisbury. And you see it happening, right? Stop the groupthink, that's the first thing you need to do.

## The Need for New Scientific Institutions

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Peter: Uh, do you think we

Tom: actually need brand new institutions to do this? Or somehow we need red team, blue team type of stuff going on in real life, don't we?

Peter: We need red team, blue teams. We probably need new institutions. Um, look, I, I proposed a little while ago that we need a, what was it called? A, a center for science quality assurance.

And, you know, [00:30:00] I now know that all that would happen is that the scientific nobility would just take over that quality assurance system. And it would be, it would just become part of the group thing.

## The Role of Politicians in Science

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Peter: What we have to do now, and this sounds, what I think we have to do now, and this might sound crazy is we've got to trust that politicians.

There are some politicians that realize that science is really badly broken. Not many of them, maybe only 30%, but they, well, that's, that's a good number, right? What we have to do to get the red team, blue team is that we need a budget line, you know, state of Queensland where I am, there needs to be a budget line, uh, ministry of environment.

We're going to hammer the farmers again and stop them putting nitrogen on their, their farms. Let's have a red team, blue team argument. I've got a million or 5 million to employ a red team, right? And I'm going to do it as a politician because we cannot trust the scientific institutions. At all. You go to the Ministry of Science, you go to the universities, they can't be [00:31:00] trusted.

We can only trust some of the politicians to be able to select the scientists to do a proper red team audit of it. And then force the blue team to answer, right? See, at the moment, I'm a red team. All by myself, I'm a red team. Well, what does the blue team do to me, little red team? They just ignore you.

That's what they'll do. And they do that brilliantly. But if this is a red team that's been appointed by the minister of whatever, this is what these, these, you know, and I can get quite a few scientists like

me, this is what the red team has said. You now must answer it. And we're going to put this out in the media, what your answers are.

Suddenly we have a debate and I guarantee you, if you think the climate change thing might be a little bit of a scam compared with the reef. That science is really, really solid, really, really, there has after all been an increase in temperature in the last, well, 50 years, whereas in the case of the Great Barrier Reef, there's been an increase in coral.

So, you know, how does that work? So if I could get a proper [00:32:00] argument. It would be pretty well the end, um, at least it would make an enormous difference. Would

Tom: Malcolm Roberts be on that list in Australia of politicians that would

Peter: do that? Oh, Malcolm Roberts. Wonderful. Yeah. He's, he'd be on the top of the list, but we've got others.

We've got them in the mainstream parties too. Uh, Senator Matt Canavan is, you know, uh, really tremendous in North Queensland where I am. All right. Because we're sort of, we're away from the, we're pretty sensible up here. We're very sensible up here on these things. Almost every single politician up here, even the Labour ones actually, have got a, they're the, the so called left wing ones, they've got a pretty good idea that the roof is in, in good shape.

So yeah, there's plenty of politicians up here.

Tom: Interesting. So the people and the politicians that live in your area, they're not buying that the whole Great Barrier Reef scam?

Peter: Yeah, that's right. So, you know, I mentioned this, uh, referendum we had on whether we should have an Aboriginal only parliament, [00:33:00] basically apartheid in Australia.

Are we going to vote for apartheid? Well, in North Queensland, Not many people voted for that. There was some polling booths up here where it went down 90%, right, like 90 percent of people voted against it, whereas in the inner city, some of the polling booths would have been the other way around 90 percent for it.

So you're seeing this incredible polarization between the country and the inner city bubble who have absolutely no idea. Where stuff comes from, we're up here in the country, we produce the coal, we produce the aluminium, we produce the iron ore up here, we produce everything basically for Australia virtually.

Um, so we know that we have to be practical, whereas the people in the



city have become totally impractical and that's the big divide in Australia and America now. It's between the people who make stuff and the people who have no idea. Is

Tom: there any dynamic for a Great Barrier Reef tourism that there, some people want to say you better come and see it now because it's dying?

Or maybe that'll cause [00:34:00] people to not want to come and see it because it's dying?

Peter: It's both actually. There is actually last chance tourism, you know, you talk to these tourist operators and or even some of the tourists themselves. I go out on some of these boats occasionally and they'll say, Oh yeah, I thought I'd come out now because you know, it's not going to be there.

And you know, I was really surprised how good it was looking. Yeah, of course you are because you've been told a pack of lies. You, you poor people. Um, but there's also no doubt that a lot of people are not coming. Because, well, it's lost all its coral. It just, you know, in the Guardian, they'll read, Oh, there's been another cyclone, all the coral's been lost.

Well, it's just not true. Um, so the, the tourist industry up here, is it really in a difficult position? Because they'd like to say, actually, this is mostly a crock of rubbish that people are talking. The reef's in good state. Um, but they have to be careful because they need a permit from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to go out to the reef and take the tourists to the reef.

And if they say, ah, you know, [00:35:00] climate change is rubbish, the, uh, the corals grow better and better in hot water. Well, that could be the end of their permit because the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is, you know, top of the list saying, oh, the reef is, it's all doomed. So, this is one of the problems we've got.

The, the scientific nobility and the nobility in general. How to control everything so people have got to just say what they're supposed to say. And that's again why the older people gotta stand up, because they're the only ones who can do it. If you're leaving the tourist industry, now's the time to stand up and say, I was basically blackmailed to say all this stuff, now I disagree.

Uh,

The Future of Climate Skepticism

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Tom: if you're having a conversation with a new person who, uh, hasn't really heard anything about climate skepticism, I heard you say elsewhere that you start by talking about the Holocene climate optimum. And Jennifer Marahasi, uh, says, uh, let's agree that the climate is changing. Do you have any other advice on how to start a new conversation on the right foot there?

Peter: I, I think that to me, and, uh, it would be [00:36:00] interesting to try to poll people on what is the most effective opening line that, you know, most people have no idea that the climate was hotter. Certainly in Europe anyway, and Northern America, you know, in the 13, 1100s, 1200s, or in the Roman period, certainly not the, you know, when Egyptians were building pyramids, they, they don't know about that.

And that's a real eye opener for them, in my experience, I used to give, um, Every year, the Townsville Grammar School used to come to James Cook University and they asked me, this was really good, to give the skeptics argument for climate change, and I'd give a 20 minute talk, and I'd be able to bring everybody, you know, a little bit towards me.

So those people, I used to ask them right at the beginning, are you a true believer? Are you a believer, but you know, you're a bit sceptical, or are you, uh, you know, you're not a believer, but you're not quite sure, or are you a true, you know, you don't believe any of it. And I'd be able to bring almost [00:37:00] everybody one step, almost, you know, towards the sceptical argument.

And I certainly used to push, well, did you know that it was much hotter? And we have no idea why it was hotter. We have no idea. Uh, why it was hotter in those days. It certainly wasn't carbon dioxide. Um, I also, I also pushed this Great Barrier Reef thing that, you know, if the Great, you've been told the Great Barrier Reef is so bad and yet it's so good, what else are you being lied at here?

Because actually there's a lot of people who question the climate change stuff. Uh, so that's what I personally use, though that might not work for most other people.

## The Impact of Climate Alarmism on Society

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Tom: I just read on Twitter that there was some poor four year old kid that didn't want to turn on the lights when he went to the bathroom because he thought it was going to cause some sort of damage to the earth.

And uh, you mentioned elsewhere that it's kind of like a Harry Potter

Dementor thing that the alarmists are just sucking the joy out of life and scaring people. Any

Peter: comments on [00:38:00] that? I, I compare them with Dementors as often as I can, actually, because they really just, as you say, they just, they suck everything out of life.

You know, you, you go out there and What's that? I forgot the, the, the Harry, in the Harry Potter book, they drain every happy thought, every good feeling out of you. And children are not, don't want to have a balloon at their parties because if it pops and runs down the river and into the, a turtle will eat it and the turtle's going to die.

Oh my goodness. We're not going to have balloons at a children's birthday party. What an evil, horrible thing to do to children. I mean, how can you possibly do that to children? They've got enough problems and there are enough proper problems in the world without doing that sort of thing to them. These people should be utterly ashamed of what they're doing, actually.

Do you have any comments at

Tom: all on Stein versus Mann?

Peter: Well, the main thing is, isn't it great that we're actually having a court case? Because that's [00:39:00] a red team, blue team going on there, right? We're actually seeing Stein as the red team and Mann as the other team. And it's been heard in front of a court.

We had a similar thing here in Australia just recently about a gas pipeline. Uh, so we, we, we make lots of gas in Australia and there's a big gas pipeline that was coming ashore and it was coming across an area of where the indigenous people, the Aboriginal people own that land and it was stopped.

Because supposedly the gas pipeline coming ashore in about 20 or 30 meters water depth was damaging some sacred site that was known from some song line. Now this is a, you know, they have these song lines where they, their history is in a song supposedly from 20, 000 years ago, for goodness sake, right?

And this scientist supposedly identified Some water hole out that you once was offshore that was in a song anyway, it was absolute complete rubbish It went to court and the the [00:40:00] the judge has absolutely Torn apart the scientist who made these Completely absurd claim it was utter devastation. I actually feel sorry for him.

He was actually One of my students, um, or a co student, uh, supervisor thing. Um, he's just, his career's destroyed,

unfortunately, but he was in this system and he got carried away. We need more court cases. So, you know, more strength to, uh, Mark Stein on that one. Okay, let's

Tom: see. Any other points you want to make before we wrap up?

We covered a lot of ground in 40 minutes

Peter: here. No, I think the crucial thing is the Great Barrier Reef has got record amounts of coral. That won't stay like that. It's going to come down. You know, we just need a few big cyclones or a crown thorn starfish plague and they'll be at it again. Um, but in my view, the Great Barrier Reef is actually the best example of complete scientific institutional, uh, corruption that we've got.

It's actually a good place to [00:41:00] start because with climate change thing, there is this little problem for us. The temperature is gently warming at the moment. If it was going down, the other side would have more to explain. Well, that's the situation I'm at with the Great Barrier Reef. The coral's gone up.

It hasn't gone down. That's got to be a good thing. And

Tom: you did say that if we happen to get a meter of sea level rise over the next few hundred years, that would be good for the reef.

Peter: Oh, it would be terrific for the reef, because all these tops of reefs which have been killed, because the sea level has fallen over the last 5, 000 years and killed the tops of the reef.

They will actually be covered with coral and then we'll have this massive explosion of coral. That's what we'll have. But unfortunately the sea level is not rising fast enough so we're not going to get that explosion of coral for that. But by the way, that is completely, most of the biologists have no idea about that.

No idea whatsoever.

Tom: You do think there are alarmists working on the Great Barrier Reef [00:42:00] that specialize in this area and they really are freaking out about bleaching? Because they don't realize that it happened in the past? Is that possible?

Peter: Or what? Yeah, because the groupthink has taken over. As I said, there are a bunch, there are a bunch, like a bunch of teenage tismas.

So, their brain has just gone out the window. Um, and Yes, they really believe it. You, you, you've got to, you know, the thing that I often get annoyed at is when people essentially say, You're an evil person

for being a skeptic. You're actually evil rather than, I might be wrong, but I don't think I'm evil on that.

The other side don't think they're evil in the sense that they know that what they're saying is untrue. Now, some of them do for sure, right? But the most of them don't. They really believe that the reef is in trouble. They really believe that bleaching only just started in, what, 1998. Even though there's records going back forever.

Uh, and in my report, I've actually got a picture of [00:43:00] lithograph from 18, I forget, 72 or something showing, uh, bleach and going back. And as we know now, it kills almost no coral. But those people really believe it. Uh, but that's because the group think it's taken over and the emotion was taken over. So they're not, they're not evil.

We just need to bring the red team in and sort them out. I mean, is

Tom: there any room at all right now for a 25 year old to go in there and do research with the rest of them and say the things that you're saying, or

Peter: not a chance, not a chance, absolutely no chance whatsoever. The shop is utterly closed. Uh, that's why all that can happen is from the outside.

It's why we need, we do need new institutions, because you cannot go, well, if you, if there was a government that said for the Australian Institute of Marine Science, We're going to, to make somebody like me the director of that, and this is what we want you to start researching. We're going to fire a whole lot of people, we're going to bring a whole [00:44:00] lot of people in.

You could do that. Uh, I guess you could do that. University's much, much harder to do because they're more independent, but the, but the government run scientific organizations, they could probably be sorted out, but you'd need to be brave, you'd need to have a Donald Trump type figure. But I can see that happening, actually, even in Australia.

Um, I can see that as a possibility in the next few years.

Tom: thank you very much, Peter Redd. This is a very, uh, enlightening stuff for me. Appreciate it. No problems. My pleasure. Talk to you next time.