

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS ON IMPORTANCE OF NON-QUANTIFIABLE ANCILLARY BENEFITS TO POLICY MAKERS**

by Hon. Tom ROPER and John C. TOPPING Jr.

From our perspectives respectively as a former Minister in an Australian state government and as a former Staff Director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Air and Radiation and both more recently with an environmental NGO working with national and municipal policymakers to develop climate and air quality protection policies we would like to venture the following observations:

1. In the real world arena in which policy makers function there will almost invariably be large gaps in information on possible costs and benefits of various environmental protection options; in the circumstances policy makers must necessarily use their best judgements as to where the balance lies and what their constituents value most.
2. Some important values, e.g. protection of historic property, antiquities or endangered species can not be readily quantified but may nevertheless be crucial to a policy outcome.
3. Sometimes intergenerational concerns such as climate change are best addressed by a multi-purpose policy strategy, e.g. Mexico City's effort to develop a co-ordinated strategy for climate and air quality protection and St. Lucia's effort to become the world's first Renewable Energy Demonstration Country at the same time slashing greenhouse emissions and improving their balance of payments.
4. Policy making in a democracy is guided significantly by priorities of the citizenry; in a time of limited resources and time, the squeaky wheel is likely to be greased first; policy analysts, if they wish to have cost benefit approaches applied to environmental decisions, need to spend some time educating the public lest debate be driven by short-term "not in my back yard" concerns alone.
5. Air quality concerns are immediate and affect most significantly the young and the elderly, from a political standpoint some of the most vote- significant parts of the population; i.e. parents of asthmatics may value air quality greatly as may the elderly who are vulnerable to respiratory disease.
6. In formulating a climate protection strategy, whether it be adaptation or mitigation related, it is very helpful to build it into long term planning processes, e.g. land use and zoning, building codes, or transportation planning; these policies will be driven by multiple concerns - air quality management, traffic flow, desire for green space, public safety, energy efficiency and perhaps greenhouse emissions limitation.
7. Policy makers do not have the luxury of time to wait for detailed cost benefit analyses; they must use their best understanding of the various competing values; to some extent they may even emulate Edmund Burke in his speech to the Electors at Bristol in sensing that government exists not only for the living but also for the dead and for those yet to be born; a precautionary policy on climate change may protect posterity and some policymakers may look askance at economists who use such large discount rates that they write off those yet to be born.

**About the authors:**

Hon. Tom Roper is former Minister for Planning and Environment, State Treasurer and holder of several other ministerial portfolios in Victoria, Australia's second most populous state. He now serves as Project Leader of a Small Island States Green Energy initiative.

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