

Transcript

Title: Peter Graham - Soft Infrastructure

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Year: 2018

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Our next speaker is Dr. [INAUDIBLE] Graham, who is Professor in Smart Low Carbon Cities at the Swinburne Center for Open Transitions. And [INAUDIBLE] is going to speak about the connection between reducing carbon emissions and integrative plans.

Thanks very much. I'm going to just stand up too. It's very inspirational to [INAUDIBLE] said how many hours getting here from western Australia starting about 30 minutes [INAUDIBLE].

I'd like to start with a little bit of a story. And the reason why I've put [INAUDIBLE] here is because I've spent 20 years trying to work out ways of addressing these in a different way [INAUDIBLE] to academia.

And the story is about-- it's a very common story. It's about-- and I experienced it very recently. We're a group of top souls getting together to design a research grant proposal to try and improve [INAUDIBLE]. And it's a government grant. This doesn't just happen in Australia. This happens all over the world. It's a government grant. And the question comes up, how are going to bring up climate change?

Should we say it? Should we be explicit about it? Or should we try and hide it in some sort of strategic self-censorship? And more and more often, it's becoming a ladder. And that is extremely worrying.

So with that in mind, [INAUDIBLE] contributing author [INAUDIBLE] this is a [INAUDIBLE]. [INAUDIBLE] one of the four special report that came out last week. I just wanted to indulge you-- and I know that you are the choir-- in a rereading of some of the urgency that we face.

But first of all, the decline of [INAUDIBLE] we have achieved in Paris aren't nearly stringent enough or ambitious enough to [INAUDIBLE] to 1.5 degrees. There's a lot of work to do.

Australia itself is going in the wrong direction. And there is major negative consequences, I'm sure you all know, if we are [INAUDIBLE] global warming.

70% to 90% of coral reefs are going to be in decline at one point [INAUDIBLE] already at one. Economic growth in the southern hemisphere, particularly in tropical and subtropical countries, is severely at risk when we're in between 1.5 and 2 degrees of global warming.

And the most vulnerable people in society are worst affected by these sorts of changes. Inequality, which [INAUDIBLE] at a time to try and solve becomes hard to solve when we've got more aggressive extremes in climate and more extreme changes in migration forced by changes in land use and also extreme weather and so on.

So there's a lot at stake. The good news, which came out of the report last week, is that there are major benefits in aggressive mitigation and adaptation actions. The work that I've done previously, [INAUDIBLE] mitigation scenarios and demonstrated that there's a massive return on investment for countries which commit to ambitious climate change targets and really make them happen. There's a lot to gain.

There's a lot of [INAUDIBLE] government goals as well. So you can [INAUDIBLE] climate action and sustainable development in ways which [INAUDIBLE] and positive for all of the other [INAUDIBLE]. We talk about health as well as productivity and so on.

So there's a lot of positives. And--

[INAUDIBLE], right?

Yes. [INAUDIBLE]. I feel like [INAUDIBLE] positive.

So when we come to look at cities, what have we got? We've got all the technology that we need. But in terms of the theme of tonight, infrastructure which divides, my argument is that the soft infrastructure is the infrastructure that divides. That's the processes by which public decisions are made. It's the lack of urban policy frameworks which enable the kind of mitigation and [INAUDIBLE] that we all [INAUDIBLE].

And I really like the idea of academic [INAUDIBLE] self defense. That's an extreme idea, and I think that it would be very good if we could think of ourselves as in an urgent campaign. And next time we're thinking about how we put arguments of research and funding into government, [INAUDIBLE] ambitious and courageous as well. Thank you.

Thank you, [INAUDIBLE].

[APPLAUSE]

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