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'Being There’ or ‘Being Ross Garnaut’?
The changing fortunes of a policy entrepreneur

Few people, inside or outside government, have had a greater impact on public policy in Australia than Professor Ross Garnaut. The author a number of major reports for government, he has helped to shape the public policy response to both Australia’s growing economic relationship with northeast Asia as well as the even more contentious challenge of climate change. It is not necessary to agree with his analysis of either of these issues, or his recommendations, to recognize that Garnaut has done more than most people in this country to define the terms, if not the outcome, of these debates. Whether one describes Garnaut as a ‘public intellectual’ or a ‘policy entrepreneur’, he has exerted a powerful influence over Australian public policy over two very different issue areas.

Why did Garnaut’s reports on economic ‘engagement’ and climate change have such very different receptions? Why was *Australia and the Northeast Asian Ascendancy* (ANAA) greeted with widespread acclaim and largely adopted as the basis of bipartisan policy in the years that followed, whereas the *Garnaut Climate Change Review* (GCCR 2008) and his follow-up report, the *Garnaut Review 2011* (GR 2011), have proved much more contentious? Even though elements of GCCR 2008 and GR 2011 have been adopted by the Gillard government in the form of a carbon tax, such policies have proved highly contentious and been opposed vehemently by the Liberal-National Party coalition under the leadership of Tony Abbott (2011).

We start to explain this puzzle by drawing initially on John Kingdon’s ‘Multiple Streams’ model of the policy process. It is a good starting point when trying and to identify some of the factors which facilitate or obstruct the influence and impact of ‘policy entrepreneurs’. However, we also argue we need to look at the wider domestic and international political context that allows some individuals, or organizations, to influence the policy agenda. When the political context is not conducive, even possession of what are widely accepted to be ‘the facts’ may not prove sufficient to win the policy debate. We illustrate this claim by looking at the
specific political dynamics that obtained when Garnaut’s reports on economic
engagement and climate change were produced. Our comparison across time allows
us to consider whether it is policy entrepreneurship, the issue itself or the political
and institutional context that is decisive.

Our title draws on two Hollywood films to posit different dynamics of
structure and agency. In Being There, a simple-minded gardener walks into the real
world in the clothes of his wealthy deceased benefactor. Through a series of
accidents, this man is mistaken as Chauncey Gardiner - an upper class, educated and
penetratingly insightful businessman. A further series of misinterpretations in this
satire sees him elevated as economic policy advisor to the US President. Conversely,
Being John Malkovich is theatre of the absurd whereby the central character, an out-
of-work puppeteer, discovers a portal into the mind and bodily experience of
Malkovich. Although the intended illogicality of the plot could be taken as a
metaphor of the multiple streams non-linear policy processes, of greater relevance to
this paper is the primacy given to celebrity (or expertise). ‘Being Ross Garnaut’
casts the policy entrepreneur as central whereas ‘Being There’ puts entrepreneurship
into the configurative context of issues and interests.

Policy Entrepreneurs

The phrase ‘policy entrepreneur’ has entered the popular lexicon, but the idea
has yet to be systematically integrated into theories of policy change (Mintrom and
Norman 2009: 650). John Kingdon was one of the first scholars to coin the term,
‘policy entrepreneur’, and it can be usefully distinguished from ‘public intellectual’.
In brief, public intellectuals (PI) are people who will ‘opine on a wide array of
issues, are generalists rather than specialists, concern themselves with matters of
interest to the public at large, and do not keep their views to themselves’ (Etzioni
2006: 1). Alternatively, policy entrepreneurship “refers to the actions, behaviour and
qualities of dynamic policy actors in pursuit of policy change” (Mackenzie, 2004:
368). Consequently, there can be considerable overlap between the idea of policy
entrepreneur and public intellectual, and neither term is stable.
One key difference between the two ideas is the focus on ‘the public’. The PI is more likely to be based in, or speaking from, civil society or outside the formal institutions of governance, quite often a university, and is someone who is able “to find or cultivate a broad audience” (Howe 2006: 36). By contrast, the policy entrepreneur is just as likely to be working within the architecture of the state, sometimes behind-the-scenes and not necessarily seeking to be engaged with public discourse. Instead, they target decision making elites in political parties, government, corporate offices or the key players and interests in policy communities. Moreover, a ‘policy entrepreneur’ is likely to stick to their general area of expertise when engaging the policy process and/or public debate and not opine on all matters of public concern. A second difference is that policy entrepreneurship can originate from organisations such as a qango or think-tank (Stone 2007), from policy networks (Hoeijmakers et al, 2007) and that a new policy narrative can have many authors (Henry 2007: 93).

**Agendas and Policy Processes**

Kingdon’s model of the policy process rests on the notion that the political system consists of the coordination and confluence of three relatively independent “streams” of decision making: problems, politics, and policies: The problem stream represents the series of conditions requiring public attention. The policy stream represents the series of concrete policy proposals that may address actual or potential problems. Problems and policies are both identified and championed by participants in the system. The “politics” stream then represents the general policy environment and decision-making opportunities. This latter aspect has been pivotal in our case study and has been relatively neglected in the policy studies literature (also Mackenzie 2004: 372).

Actors who promote specific solutions are labeled policy entrepreneurs. Usually based in the policy stream, they ‘chase’ problems with their policy recommendations; that is, ‘solutions chase problems’. Sometimes, they take advantage of disruptions in the political system, or of emerging problems, to merge the streams. When these streams couple, a ‘policy window’ opens which may facilitate policy change. Each of these streams possesses a unique dynamic.
The problem stream develops through processes of mobilization and issue definition – often characterized in pluralist terms. The problem stream is characterized by dramatic focusing events that grab the attention of both the public and policymakers. They are relatively rare sudden events that cause great damage and foretell of greater future damage. Generally such events are concentrated to a particular geographical area or community of interest. Alternatively, policymakers become aware of problems through feedback on existing policy. Often this is negative feedback generated by evaluation studies, target groups, bureaucrats or policymakers themselves, who report on what is not working or on the unintended consequences of policies (Pralle 2009: 784-85). Issues gradually develop into a problem.

The policy stream represents various attempts to provide solutions to one or more public problems. This stream contains competing proposals for new policies or amendments of existing policies as well as processes for eliminating normatively and pragmatically unviable policies. In other words, the policy stream develops based on rules of natural selection of policies – often subject to elite pressures of a narrow policy community. Various specialized participants champion specific policy proposals that may be applied to a variety of public problems. The capacity of policy entrepreneurs to secure the coordination of different policy circles or departments to a specific solution or policy package is usually crucial.

The politics stream flows and ebbs on ideological and institutional characteristics of the policy system, reflecting changes in ‘the national mood’, the influence of public campaigns of interest groups, ‘administrative or legislative turnovers’ and changes of allegiances of politicians within parliaments. Changes can enable or disable the advance of proposals to the political agenda. Elections bring new participants into the policy process and provide deadlines for policy choices.

In sum, only when a prominent problem can be linked to a viable policy consistent with national mood at a time when elected officials can make a decision will new policies emerge. Kingdon made little effort to explain when this convergence will happen. He also had little to say as to whether the subject matter of the issue itself could be a critical factor. However, our case studies suggest that if we
want to account for differences in outcomes involving the same policy entrepreneur, the specific issue is at least part of the explanation and needs to be added to Kingdom’s schema. As we suggest below, the positive reception of the Garnaut Report on integration with Asia reflected a convergence of all three streams. By contrast, the Climate Change Reviews did not bring a convergence with the political stream and the specific issue area proved much more contentious.

Was (in)effective policy entrepreneurship the critical explanatory factor in each case? Or, as we suggest, did the substance of the issue in each case also have a bearing? Specifically, ANAA represented a culmination and consolidation of consensus forming via Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC) and the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC – Woods 1993), venues where Garnaut had long-standing expert status. This was an area of direct national policy interest and in which sovereign decision making could make a difference. By contrast, the Climate Reviews represent the initiation of new policies in an intractable issue area that had been politicized by the media and political parties, where Garnaut was criticized for not being a climate scientist. Adding a further layer of complexity was the fact that climate change is a global issue not amenable to sovereign control of one state. Perceptions of national costs to Australians and benefits to others meant that the ‘national mood’ assumed greater prominence in this issue area.

One of the key reasons why some policy entrepreneurs are able to influence policy is because they have significant personal resources. Such resources can be a mix of epistemic authority (such as that held by economists), former government service or policy experience in the field. Equally, importantly, policy-entrepreneurs have ‘political connections or negotiating skills, implying a combination of technical expertise and political know-how’ as well as ‘sheer persistence’ and willingness ‘to invest large resources in order to promote their solutions’ (Gulbrandsson & Fossum, 2009: 435). They function as an ‘issue initiator,’ ‘policy broker’ and ‘strategist’ (Skok, 1995). Even this combination of connectedness, personal qualities and dogged determination may prove ineffective if the ‘political arena’ is not receptive.

The art of the policy entrepreneur also includes their skills of political persuasion, and of bringing different peoples together. Informal networks and
professional associations are made influential by the policy entrepreneurs operating within them. The effectiveness of ANAA was enhanced by the long term consensus building activities among a community of Australian business people, economists and government officials who interacted with their Asian counterparts as well as in Australian venues mentioned below. It is important to the political and economic resonance of ANAA (unlike the Climate Reviews), as this professional community helped cultivate a positive atmosphere for policy change.

An over-simple application of policy entrepreneurship holds “a danger that attention is drawn to official policy entrepreneur such as chief executives, or other prominent politicians… (when) in reality there may be several people working together in the policy process” (Oborn, Barrett & Exworthy 2011: 328). Indeed, Garnaut was only one actor in the broader regional policy community. In other words, the key explanatory factor may not be the individual agent. A more sophisticated application of this approach suggests that the key explanatory factor may be found elsewhere in “a temporal conjunction of separate sub-policy processes: ‘agenda setting, alternative–specification, and decision making’” (Ackrill and Kay 2011: 72; and Skok, 1995: 326).

This turns agent centred explanation on its head by suggesting that the entrepreneur merely happens to be ‘in the right place, at the right time’, not unlike Chauncey Gardiner. Equally important, however, it is possible to be in possession of brilliant ideas at the wrong time, and persuasiveness, expertise and epistemic authority may count for little—or be so politicised as to be effectively undermined. Agency is clearly important, but even the most credible and energetic individuals may be unable to counteract the influence of what the Australian Treasurer Wayne Swan (2012) describes as politically and economic powerful ‘vested interests’. More so than Kingdon, we emphasise that the character of an issue, and the way it’s managed in the political stream, can be of critical consideration.

The life and times of a policy entrepreneur
In addition to his stints as prime ministerial adviser, Ross Garnaut was also ambassador to China, held numerous senior academic and public policy-oriented roles, not to mention running a gold-mining company in his spare time. Today, Garnaut is recognized as one of Australia’s leading neoclassical economists. Even at this stage it is worth asking the counterfactual: if Garnaut hadn’t been around, would it have made any difference? Would circumstances and necessity have eventually conspired to produce another figure or actors that might have championed similar ideas? Deciding quite how much to attribute to agency and how much towards facilitating structural conditions is a crucial but unresolved theoretical issue (Bell 2011).

What we can say is that having decided to become an economist, it made a difference that Garnaut chose to study at the Australia National University. The ANU is not only Australia’s most significant concentration of scholarship, but it was, and perhaps remains, the bearer of a particular ethos as far as public service is concerned. Such values are not to be underestimated as determinants of world views, orientations to public policy and the potential contribution of experts. As Garnaut points out:

Nugget Coombs would call the economists of Australia to a meeting in his office to talk about some policy issue in the ’50s, and so they interacted with each other rather intensively. And most of them had academic bases. But today the great bulk of economists work for business or government and the economics profession is less integrated into public policy discussions. In fact, it’s a minority activity. It was very different in those days, it was most different at ANU, and I grew up in that tradition.2

A pivotal meeting in Garnaut’s policy career occurred when he met Bob Hawke on the margins of the Crawford Committee on Structural Adjustment, of which Hawke was a member. This initial meeting eventually culminated in Garnaut being appointed as newly-installed Prime Minister Hawke’s principal economic adviser, a position he held from 1983-85. Significantly, Garnaut had written to both Hawke and Keating during the election campaign warning of the dangers of a fixed exchange rate and possible capital flight when they assumed office. The Hawke-Keating government went on to implement a radical program of economic
liberalization that included floating the dollar, partially deregulating the financial sector, reducing tariffs and instituting labour market reform (Kelly 1992).

While he may have had some influence on the thinking of Hawke and Keating, Garnaut believes they had already begun to move in this policy direction. Garnaut’s advice was influential not because of his entrepreneurial skills but because it chimed with, and gave intellectual credibility to, ideas that were circulating in Australia and internationally at the time (Ikenberry 1990). This was the era of Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and the shift from a Keynesian paradigm to the monetarist revolution that would deeply affect the US and Britain. In retrospect, it was clear that given a sufficiently compelling historical ‘critical juncture’ a well-packaged economic policy framework helped forge open a policy window capable of attracting significant political support from policymakers (Hall 1993).

It is indicative of just how widespread the intellectual revolution of the 1980s actually was that it was the Australian Labor Party—hitherto associated with protectionism and the all-encompassing Australian settlement (Castles 1988)—that was at the forefront of epochal policy change rather than its Liberal opponents. In many respects, therefore, Garnaut was the right man in the right place at the right time: when the Hawke government wanted a framework and rationale for what would come to be known as ‘Asian engagement’, Garnaut was able to provide one.

**Australia and The Northeast Asian Ascendancy**

Several factors were clear by the time Garnaut was commissioned to write a report on ‘economic growth and structural change in the economies of East Asia...[and] to assess the effects of these recent and perspective developments on Australia’ (ANAA: v). East Asia’s rapid economic development and industrialization was transforming the region to Australia’s north. When Japan replaced the UK as Australia’s biggest trade partner in 1967 it was clear that momentous changes were underway. Japan’s economic renaissance provided the catalyst—and model—for a much wider, regional process of industrialization and growth. Although many academics and policymakers in Australia and the US may not have approved of, or even understood, Japan’s state-led model of development (Johnson 1982), it was
delivering results and transforming the region. Whether Australian policymakers liked it or not, they had little option other than to come to terms with a rapidly growing region.

In preparation and behind the scenes, the ANAA consultation and drafting process performed a coordination function among the different policy circles and departments of Australian bureaucracy. On release, the ANAA was generally greeted with widespread acclaim and subsequently became the blueprint for Australia’s economic relations with the region. One of the most important differences between the 1980s and the current period with the ‘rise of China’ is that the Hawke-Keating governments were especially well-placed to push through fairly radical, potentially unpopular and disruptive reform. Without a permissive political environment and ‘national mood’ of the sort that Hawke in particular had cultivated through the rhetoric of ‘consensus’, the far-reaching economic reforms he oversaw would have been much more difficult, perhaps unachievable (Beilharz 1994).

Some of the ideas in ANAA were very confronting to established interests and perceptions of the time (Henry 2007: 95). The centerpiece of Garnaut’s recommendations was further, rapid trade liberalization and an abandonment of protectionism. The logic was impeccably neoclassical and based on assumed ‘complementarity’ between the rapidly industrializing Asian economies and Australia’s resource riches. For some academics and much of the trade union movement this was an alarming prospect. The principal difference between then and now, however, was the close relationship between the government and organized labour, which might have been expected to be the main focus of resistance to the proposed reforms. The close ties between the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) which had been most visible in the ‘Accord’ were instrumental in limiting opposition to the proposed reforms. This outcome is all the more remarkable given the ACTU and organized labour were more powerful forces then than now, when membership, reputation and influence have declined significantly (Cooper 2008).

Unions then, as now, were deeply concerned about the potential loss of manufacturing sector jobs that might flow from the abandonment of protection and
industry assistance. However, increases in the ‘social wage’, the inclusion of union leadership in the government-sponsored ‘peak’ bodies that oversaw the much discussed, and the widely perceived need for ‘structural adjustment’, all worked to minimize union opposition (Carney 1988). More predictably, business groups such as the Australian Chamber of Commerce and the National Farmers Federation were more enthusiastic backers of the ANAA’s proposals (Colebatch 1989: 21), even if the then Opposition industry spokesman John Howard was equivocal in offering his party’s support (Ecclestone 1989: 2). Not only were those economic interests that might expect to benefit from Garnaut’s radical policy agenda broadly supportive, but the fact that the economically liberal blueprint was sponsored by an ALP government with strong and effective links to a potentially disruptive union movement meant that an potential source of opposition was effectively nullified. The ‘policy window’ was wedged open by the convergence of political, policy and problem streams, and notwithstanding sources of criticism on the reports’ release. Here, one of the key roles of experts and inquiries is to give intellectual credibility to ideas that may already be circulating, but which may be difficult to ‘sell’ to powerful vested interests, stakeholders or the public more generally. In this context, Garnaut’s academic authority and ‘objectivity’ lent useful political weight to proposals that might otherwise have attracted greater opposition.

The ANAA appeared at a time when Australian policymakers were responding to broader shifts in the international economy that were having major domestic impacts—not the least of which was to highlight Australia’s perennial concerns about productivity and the appropriate role of government in managing a process of structural adjustment (Bell 1997). While domestic circumstances may have been receptive to what many have described as an essentially ‘neoliberal’ agenda, it is important to emphasize the paradoxical international dimensions of this process. On the one hand, the ALP’s adoption of a new market-oriented reform agenda was entirely in keeping with the international adoption of neoliberal ideas among the so-called ‘Anglo-American’ economies (Hay 2004; Simmons et al 2006). On the other hand, despite Garnaut’s policy ideas and the Hawke government being at the forefront of an even more ambitious agenda of foreign proselytization, their impact in the region was far less significant.
Although the *ANA A* was focused on domestic reform, it had major foreign policy implications that were actively developed by the Hawke government. The principal vehicle through which the benefits of trade liberalization were to be realized at home and promoted abroad was the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. Garnaut, along with his ANU colleague Peter Drysdale, had done more than most to promote the merits of trade liberalization and the institutionalization of regional cooperation (Drysdale and Garnaut 1989; 1993). APEC built upon an elaborate network of regional institutions, ‘track 2’ organizations and private-public links that might have been expected to facilitate the diffusion and implementation of the free trade agenda (Woods 1993). APEC’s increasing marginalization and even irrelevance among regional bodies suggests that Australia’s ‘policy community’ of like-minded scholars and decision-makers seriously underestimated the entrenched resistance to neoliberal ideas that existed in much of East Asia (Beeson and Islam 2005). Indeed, APEC’s experience suggests that in the absence of supportive political coalitions and conditions, especially at the domestic level, policy change and the adoption of new ideas remains extremely difficult. In other words, local political interests and obstacles can prove decisive, even when there is an international environment which might otherwise appear conducive to change. Nothing better illustrates this possibility than the reception of Garnaut’s second major report to government.

**The climate change reviews**

As with *ANA A*, the first of Garnaut’s reports on climate change, the *Garnaut Climate Change Review* (*GCGR* 2008), was a seemingly timely response to an issue that had attracted increased attention, especially in the minds of the electorate. By the late 2000s the issue of climate change was nominated as a core concern among a majority of people in surveys of public opinion (Tranter 2011: 85; Lowy 2007). In other words, the national mood ought to have been conducive to effective policy-making given that it was an issue that enjoyed widespread public support, and a largely bipartisan political consensus about its importance and causes.⁴
Support for climate change policies has declined markedly over the last few years. This is one key reason that policy has proved so divisive, especially among political elites. There are particularly ‘Australian’ reasons for this development: Kevin Rudd’s notorious ‘back-flip’ on climate change mitigation; Julia Gillard’s broken promise on (not) imposing a carbon tax; and Tony Abbott’s determination to extract maximum political advantage from an issue that has become increasingly difficult for the incumbent government. All undermine the possibility of effective leadership on contentious issues. There are more fundamental issues at stake that go beyond the Australian case and illustrate why climate change represents what Garnaut (*GCGR* 2008: 287-89) described as a ‘diabolical problem’.

The most intractable problem facing advocates of climate change mitigation strategies is that there is both an absence of consensus about what should be done, but there is also a continuing dispute about the nature—even the existence—of the problem. The scientific evidence is contested and politicized (Eichenbach and Eilperin 2011). The fractious debate around climate science is a dramatic contrast to the circumstances that surrounded *ANAA*.

While there may have been widespread enthusiasm for economic reform and liberalization among policy elites in parts of ‘the West’, such ideas were not greeted with universal approbation. There is a continuing debate about what constitutes ‘good’ economic policy, one with renewed urgency in the aftermath of rolling global economic crises (Sachs 2011). Even when the ‘Washington consensus’ was at its most influential, it never enjoyed universal support as either a blueprint for action or an accurate diagnosis of empirical reality. Yet *ANAA* was largely adopted and its messages about trade liberalization, the limitations of ‘industry policy’ and the need to become more Asia literate have largely become the conventional rhetorical wisdom in Australia.

Economics is a social science and a somewhat discredited one (Colander 2011). ‘Climate scientists’, by contrast, operate in a rather more robust intellectual universe in which there is much greater agreement about ‘the facts’ and the way they are understood: 97-98 per cent of recognized climate scientists agreed on the basic causes of anthropogenic climate change and its likely consequences: global warming
(Andreeg et al 2010). Given such an overwhelming consensus one might have expected that Garnaut’s task in promoting climate change mitigation strategies would actually have been easier than convincing a ‘left wing’ government to overturn a political and economic settlement that had underpinned social stability for decades.

Undermining authority

The content of the first climate change review (GCGR 2008) was primarily a recapitulation of the conventional scientific wisdom. As Garnaut pointed out, ‘the outsider to climate science has no rational choice but to accept that, on a balance of probabilities, the mainstream science is right in pointing to high risks from unmitigated climate change’ (GCGR 2008:xvii). At one level, Garnaut articulates the view of someone who has a fundamental belief in the power of scientific evidence and rational argument to arrive at the best policy outcome. On the other hand, GCGR 2008 also recognized that this might not happen:

Observation of daily debate and media discussion in Australia and elsewhere suggests that this issue might be too hard for rational policy making. It is too complex. The special interests are too numerous, powerful and intense. The time frames within which effects become evident are too long, and the time frames within which action must be effected too short. (GCGR 2008: xvii).

The ‘vested interests’ that both Swan and Garnaut identified are not the only obstacles to enacting major policy change that will inevitably produce individual winners and losers over the short term political cycle. In Australia and the US, there has been a systematic effort to discredit the scientific consensus and thus the need for climate change mitigations strategies that Garnaut advocates. There have been very different responses to the implications of climate change in Britain as a result of the Stern Review where media coverage has been relatively balanced \(^5\) and the US, where climate denial is a much more prominent in the political stream (Boykoff 2007).

There are particular features of the Australian policy debate and political context that present particular challenges for those attempting to promote climate change mitigation. The Australian media is much smaller than its counterparts in the
US and the UK and the potential for the debate to be dominated by a limited number of voices and perspectives is consequently high. In Robert Manne’s (2011: 113) view, ‘the *Australian* has conducted a prolonged and intellectually incoherent campaign against action on climate change, which has undermined the hold in public life of the central values of the Enlightenment, Science and Reason.’

What is even more remarkable perhaps is the level of personal enmity displayed toward Garnaut (and public intellectuals like Manne). *The Australian*’s foreign affairs editor suggested that:

> There is also something profoundly offensive to democratic practice in the way the Gillard government has shovelled out vast amounts of public money to long-term friends of the Labor Party, such as Garnaut and Tim Flannery, so that, with a wholly spurious and confected institutional credibility, they can declare: government good, opposition bad. (Sheridan 2011).

Similarly, Andrew Bolt (2011) defended well-known climate skeptic, Christopher Monkton’s description of Garnaut as having a ‘fascist point of view’. Monkton became a minor YouTube sensation when he suggested during his ‘Lang Hancock Memorial Lecture’ that Australia’s mining magnates should use their economic power to create a Fox-News style channel to promote their political views (Manne 2012).

Any remaining doubts Garnaut may have had about the possibility of having a rational, dispassionate debate about ‘the facts’ would have been dispelled by his exposure to ‘astroturfing’, or the creation of specific interest groups that are ‘generated by an industry, think tank, or front group, but disguised to appear as spontaneous “grassroots” effort’ (Dunlap and McRight 2011: 154). Stage-managed public outrage and abuse are becoming a part of the Australian political process. As Garnaut notes, despite the widespread belief that the new social media can be empowering and open up the political process to new participants, it can also be used to ‘warp the public policy discussion’. Not only was climate change mitigation dependent on overcoming powerful political obstacles (a more prominent feature of GR 2011), the policy window was opened to wider societal input, diluting the impact of policy entrepreneurs and drowning out the voices of climate experts.
One of the features of GR 2011 is the emphasis on equity and the increased recognition of the importance of the international context in trying to impose the carbon taxes or an emissions trading scheme. Whereas the international context provided critical ideational momentum and support for ANAA in the early 1990s, in the first part of the twenty-first century the situation was very different. Not only had there been a spectacular failure of international cooperation and consensus at the Copenhagen climate change talks, but key countries such as the United States appeared to have given up on the possibility of enacting meaningful policy in the face of powerful domestic opposition (Timmons 2011).

Although Garnaut is at pains to emphasize that some countries, such as China, (and even large American states) are addressing the issue, the more nuanced anti-mitigation argument contends that even if the science is correct, why should Australia impose painful domestic costs that penalize consumers and producers if they make little difference to global outcomes? This is essentially the position developed by Tony Abbott (2011) and used as the justification for repealing the carbon tax legislation. Given the complex, contentious nature of the evidence and the policy response, it is unsurprising that it has proved very difficult to achieve consensus, when powerful political forces contest expert opinion. By contrast, the political context of ANAA was one where Australian interests could be rallied around a persuasive narrative of economic reform, and where sovereign policy making could direct many of the long term benefits home to local constituencies.

**Conclusion**

Making a judgment about the impact of policy entrepreneurs also involves taking a position on the perennial debate about the relationship between structure and agency, the domestic and the international, and whether it is ideas, institutions or interests that set policy agendas. The multiple streams model can accommodate these debates. However, most analyses of the policy entrepreneur have tended to stress the agency and effectiveness of the policy entrepreneur operating from the policy stream. Such analysis is often in the abstract, assuming that policy entrepreneurs are in possession of high standing or strong expert credentials; applications to real
individuals are relatively rare. Our focus on the differential impact of the various Garnaut reports seeks to provide an antidote by stressing contextual factors, especially the intricacies of the specific problem and the overwhelming forces flowing from the political stream whereby reception to (social) science can be used to bolster (or deflect) policy change rather than to inform policy. Ken Henry describes this dynamic more benignly as the need for economic policy advisors to be “responsive to the government of the day” (2007: 90).

In our case studies it is evident that structures continue to matter. In the case of the environment, the structure of the biosphere may, as the Marxists used to say, actually prove to be determinative ‘in the last instance’. Even in the slightly less existentially fraught economic sphere, it is plain that long-term ‘structural’ crises in the global economy opened up an ideational and political space in which new ideas were actively sought, and new policies implemented.

The key difference between Garnaut’s climate change injunctions and those associated with economic reform was that even those who doubted the wisdom of his economic policy prescriptions conceded that they were supposed to be in the long-term ‘national interest’. Via ANAA, Garnaut was not only able to ‘attach a set of solutions to a problem’ but also to effectively frame the problem in ways that accorded with the vested interests of business and the unions in Australia. With climate change, the principal beneficiaries will be the unborn or the unfortunate and unknown outside Australia. Selling that idea in the face of an incredulous media, a hostile political opposition and powerful vested interests will tax the powers of even the most entrepreneurial of idea brokers.

Are there lessons about policy entrepreneurship? First, ANAA reveals that individual epistemic authority is important to gearing policy reform but also that of the policy network and professional community that undergirds and bestows credibility on entrepreneurs. Second, ANAA represented a consolidation of policy trajectories already extant in the policy stream. Despite on-going debate, a set of solutions were recognized in both the policy and political streams but which needed further legitimation and promotion. The ANAA helped facilitate that policy coordination linking the solutions from the policy stream with the reform agenda of Labor
government political stream. Third, the policy issues and problems surrounding *ANAA* were ones which a government could engage in effective decision making and action at a national level. The Accord promoted a positive ‘national mood’ in the political stream providing the window of opportunity for policy entrepreneurs like Garnaut (and others) to cross between their facilitation roles among government departments, academia and various dialogues and networks to move into the public realm as policy advisors. In short, dynamics in the political stream make policy entrepreneurship successful (or not).

By contrast, in the Climate Reviews, Garnaut lacked the same degree of scientific experience and credibility that he had as an economist and Asia expert with *ANAA*. More importantly, entrenched dissent and division in the political stream, compounded by a hostile media, politicized climate science and polarized the community. The problem definition and agenda setting roles of policy entrepreneurs working from the policy stream (Skok, 1995), even those afforded governmental patronage, are unlikely to overcome powerful oppositionary forces in the political stream seeking to contest and thwart the next steps of decision making, policy coordination and implementation. Lastly, there is a growing literature that highlights the possible absence of solutions to the climate change problem (Hamilton, 2010). It sets the climate issue apart in terms of its world-wide impact that is beyond the scope of sovereign policy control of any one nation and hence its innate political intractability.
1 We would like to thank Andrew Carr and Will Lee for research assistance, the reviewers of AJPS for helpful comments, and Ross Garnaut.

2 Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes from Garnaut are drawn from an interview conducted by one author.

3 See, for example, the collection of essays in the special issue of the Australian Journal of International Affairs, 1990, 44 (1).

4 As Shaun Carney (2011) points out, as recently as the 2007 election, ‘the Liberals, the Labor Party and the Greens all went to a federal election advocating quick action to put a price on carbon. Together, they attracted 87 per cent of the primary vote.’

5 The Stern review was also conducted by a professional economist rather than a climate scientist in the belief that a focus on the economic impacts of climate change might prove a bigger impetus for mitigation policies. To judge by the more positive response to Stern’s report in the UK and its translation into policy, this judgment may have some merit, but the less partisan political atmosphere and more balanced media coverage has also played a part. See Jordan and Lorenzoni (2007).

6 Interview.

7 An anonymous reviewer pointed out that the same sort of analysis could usefully be applied to Hugh White’s efforts to influence the debate over Australia’s strategic policy. We also note that a comparison to Henry report on the ‘Asian Century’ would also make a good comparison.

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