



The Global Warming Policy Foundation

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BBC Complaints
PO Box 1922
Darlington
DL3 0UR

Reference CAS-4749312-KH4CSN

19 February 2018

Dear Mr Salt,

Thank you for your email of February 9th 2018 detailing your response to our complaint about a report by Roger Harrabin on the Ten o'clock News on January 18th 2018. We consider it inadequate and unsatisfactory, and request you reconsider your position in the next round of your complaints procedure.

We acknowledge your apology for the serious error made in Huw Edward's cue to the report. However, a correction on an obscure page on the BBC website is not a proportionate response. The grossly misleading statement was made on the BBC's flagship TV news programme to 5 million people. In our view there should be an on-air apology as the vast majority of the Ten o'clock news viewers will not have seen the website correction. Climate change, as the BBC has said, is a major story of global significance. When such a significant error is made it should be corrected appropriately at source.

Regarding the erroneous claim in Roger Harrabin's report we consider your rejection of our complaint to be confused, inaccurate and contradictory. It is also unscientific. You say, "Roger Harrabin's 'no heating effect' refers to a recognised formal El Niño 'event' in the year, rather than the temporary occurrence of 'conditions' which do not result in the recognised event that year."

As we have explained in our complaint there is a significant difference between a formal El Niño event and El Niño heating. There are various definitions in use by different countries and weather agencies as to what constitutes an El Niño event. What they have in common is that the El Niño heating effect has to continue for at least three quarters of a year, and not necessarily in the same calendar year.

The official data used by all meteorological agencies show unanimously that formal conditions for El Niño heating were established in the spring of 2017. Thus while 2017 was not a formal "El Niño year" it did have an episode lasting nearly three months of formal El Niño heating which contributed to global temperature. In fact, without this manifest El Niño heating, 2017 would not have been that warm. Roger Harrabin's claim, and your explanation are evidently incorrect.

Director: Dr Benny Peiser

Board of Trustees: The Rt Hon Lord Lawson (Chairman), Lord Donoughue, The Rt Hon Lord Fellowes,
Rt Rev Peter Forster, Sir Martin Jacomb, The Rt Hon Peter Lilley, Charles Moore, Baroness Nicholson, Graham Stringer MP, Lord Turnbull.

Indeed you provide more evidence of your confusion about El Niños in your explanation of Huw Edward's incorrect cue. You say the cue used on the earlier 6'o'clock bulletin was better. "Earlier on the Six O'clock edition we had stated '2017 has been the hottest year on record without the natural warming effect of El Niño'. This should have been reflected here as well." You don't seem to realise that the 6'o'clock wording was also incorrect.

You defend Roger Harrabin's reporting by claiming that it accurately reflects the positions of the Met Office and NASA. Yet their press releases are themselves contradictory.

The Met Office says: "Provisional figures for global average near-surface temperatures confirm that last year, 2017, was the warmest year on record without the influence of warming from El Niño."

This statement is wrong for the reasons we have given you.

NASA, however, is correct in that it specifically refers to an official El Niño event; "Even without an El Niño event – and with a La Niña starting in the later months of 2017 – last year's temperatures ranked between 2015 and 2016 in NASA's records."

We reject your explanation concerning the factual error in Roger Harrabin's report and request that you correct it based on generally accepted scientific data.

Yours sincerely



Dr Benny Peiser

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