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The climate has always changed – so why are we concerned now?

Date: Thursday, 22 April, 2021

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: York 1 and 2 at Club York, 99 York St, Sydney

Abstract: We will travel back in time and search for climate episodes that were as warm as the present-day climate, or slightly warmer, but still within the guardrails of the Paris Agreement. We will discuss what we can learn from these past episodes in the light of current and future climate change and impacts, assuming we will successfully limit future temperature increase to 1.5-2 degrees above pre-industrial values. We will then widen our search and consider past climate episodes when greenhouse gas concentrations were similar or higher than today, and again discuss whether or not these are good analogues for future climate change and impacts. We will examine the timescales involved in the climate system and compare the rates of change that we experience today to what the planet has encountered in the past, and end with a quick summary of the main concerns we have today related to present day and future climate change.