Jeremy Gilbert, Garnaut "Consider Peak Oil" & ASPO-7 Barcelona

Jeremy Gilbert, previously Chief Petroleum Engineer for BP worldwide, visited Australia. He gave a presentation to the Municipal Association of Victoria, (1st October) and the keynote address to the Fuelling Food conference at the University of Western Australia (3rd October). He gave a seminar at UWA on 6th October, "Reserves Growth, the Myth in the Peak Oil Debate".

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ASPO-Australia has written to Prof Garnaut, suggesting that much more consideration be given to oil depletion in the lead-up to the 2009 Copenhagen conference.

"We are deeply concerned that your Draft Report explicitly rejects the notion that oil depletion will constrain economic growth within the next 50 years despite very strong evidence to the contrary. In our view the resulting analysis, conclusions and policy recommendations are flawed and will probably exacerbate the climate change mitigation problem.

The purpose of this letter is to draw your attention to growing acceptance of oil depletion in the scientific community and even by the IEA in its revision of the energy forecasts and emissions scenarios in the forthcoming World Energy Outlook 2008, a document intended in large part to inform negotiations in Copenhagen. Our view is that this will substantially improve the prospects for an effective agreement around a target atmospheric CO2 concentration of 450ppm."

The full detailed letter to Garnaut (written by Stuart McCarthy in Brisbane) is available here.

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Pedro Prieto, of ASPO-Spain, has written to say the final program of the seventh ASPO conference is available at www.ASPO-Spain.org/ASPO-7 20th-21st October 2008

The theme of the conference is "From below ground to above ground" and more detailed information is available from the conference website above, and in the letter from Pedro Prieto below

SUBJECT: FROM BELOW GROUND TO ABOVE GROUND Humans live in and from the biosphere. But in the first decade of the 21st Century, 85 percent of the primary energy consumed by the 6.7 billion humans comes from the lithosphere. About 40 percent of this energy is oil. Another 40 percent comes from natural gas and coal, and 6 percent more is from uranium. This represents close to 10 billion tons of oil equivalent, extracted every year from below ground. The technosphere, as created by humans, transforms the biosphere, with the extraction, transformation, and transport of useful materials from the Earth crust at a rate of about 33 billion tons per year. In addition, about 36 billion

tons of the accompanying ores and some 30 billion tons of earth crust cover are extracted. In total, the 11 billion tons of equivalent oil of primary energy are needed every year to extract, transform and transport about 100 billion tons of materials, including the energy materials themselves. Without that energy, these movements will not be possible. With decreasing energy supplies, the extraction of materials will decrease accordingly. Being a sphere, the planet is limited in size. It is obvious, therefore, that the resources contained in it are also limited. Geologists in general and the ASPO community in particular, know very well that the extraction of resources from the lithosphere is subject to a given pattern that limits and shapes the extraction rates. It has, more or less, the form of a bell shaped curve, shown in its logo. It is the Hubbert curve. And we all feel that we are reaching the peak in our ascent, even the present financial storms and other geopolitical clouds may disguise it. Then, it is a question of flows, diminishing flows, rather than the end of oil or gas. It is a physical and geological issue, rather than an economic one. And there is a clear evidence that economic growth and energy consumption run parallel and are very directly related, despite some anomalies. Technology improvements and higher financial investments help to delay the peak or plateau of the bell curve or reshape it, but can neither fight the reality of gradual depletion. There are also clear indicators that greenhouse and other gas emissions are also directly related to the fossil fuels, extracted from the lithosphere and burnt to provide services to society. However, classical economists still work, think and behave as if they lived on a flat Earth with unlimited resources to be made available by Man's ingenuity and market forces. Very serious issues are at stake caused by the growing gap between the available fuel supply, which is subject to natural depletion and the ever growing demand implied by classical economic theory. In the same way as a seed emerges from the ground and forms a plant, after some time, we will soon have to face the paradox and the dilemma of returning to the biosphere for survival, and rely more and more on renewable energy resources above ground. The Sun projects onto the Earth some 8,500 times more primary energy than we consume, but it is, again, rather than a question of volumes, a matter of flows and feasible energy capture rates of this as beautiful as dispersed energy. We urgently need to determine the extent to which we can maintain the present socio-political and technological environment with the renewable energy resources from the biosphere, by using the human ingenuity and technology; or if we have to reshape our way of living; or perhaps and better, a wise combination of both. We will be analyzing and discussing all these important questions in detail in the 7th. ASPO International Conference at the World Trade Center in Barcelona, Spain, on October 20th and 21st. See the Official program "From Below Ground to Above Ground" and join us by registering at http://www.aspo-spain.org/aspo7/registro_en.html