

NATIVE FOREST — LOGGING

Motion

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [4.47 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns WA Labor for its short-sighted decision to unilaterally shut down the native forest industry based on a deeply flawed justification.

Before I commence the debate on this motion, I wish to thank the Minister for Transport for her response to the motion raised by the Leader of the Opposition. The Minister for Transport and I may vehemently disagree on some issues at some times, but I respect that she is both passionate and compassionate, and that was no more evident than in her response to the debate today. I thank her very much for her sincere response. On a personal level, I am extremely saddened by and sorry for the recent loss in the minister's family.

I was fascinated by the response of the Minister for Environment in question time today to the question put to her on the stated justification for the unilateral decision by the state government, with no consultation with anyone other than through some sham online survey, to shut down the forest industry. There was no consultation at all—none. It was just a unilateral decision based on some popularity vox pop poll, carried out by the state government.

Ms S.E. Winton: You were going to shut down Collie! How did that work out for you?

Dr D.J. HONEY: I can tell the member that there is one thing that any decision like that would include and that is lots of discussion and time for discussion. That was not the case here. This government deserves to be condemned for the way it has dealt with this matter. The actions of this government will have an absolutely devastating impact on the communities in the south west of this state not only today, but also in the future. That devastation and the enormous personal, social and economic impact on those communities is getting worse by the day, given the decision that was made by the government.

I would like to outline to members in the chamber some facts on this issue. What is very clear is that none of this decision was based on facts—none of it. The government has not put forward one single so-called justification for this decision, other than it thinks it is popular. It has not put forward one single justification that holds any water whatsoever—quite the opposite. This industry is a key driver for economic activity in Western Australia. It contributes \$1.4 billion to the Western Australian economy overall. It creates over 6 000 jobs, 90 per cent of which are in regional areas. Again, what we see from this state Labor government is another attack on the regions. It is attacking regional representation with its disgraceful legislation for so-called electoral reform, which is going through the upper house at the moment. We have seen the government's complete disregard for the regions by not properly investing to enable them to take advantage of the renewable energy revolution in this state.

The government is now setting out to destroy what is probably the only truly scientifically managed sustainable industry in the state of Western Australia. The forestry industry has for some considerable time been based on an enormous amount of science and scientific study. The industry is responsible for harvesting less than one per cent of the total forest area annually. That is in the context that two-thirds of the state forest cannot be touched by logging; it is permanently protected from logging. I am sure that these things are revelations to the Minister for Forestry and the Minister for Environment. It is clear that they did not look at any information before they made their decision. Less than one per cent of the 38 per cent of regrowth forest available is harvested annually.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: What that means, minister, is that it is over 100 years before any milled area is returned to.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms R.S. Stephens): Minister for Water!

Dr D.J. HONEY: If the minister had any contribution to make to this issue, he should have made it before he announced this ludicrous decision.

The forestry industry is an important sector that makes an important economic contribution, especially to regional communities. It is unbelievable that the Premier, the Minister for Forestry and the Minister for Environment would choose to cause such substantial long-term harm to those communities.

Mr P.J. Rundle: What about the member for Warren–Blackwood?

Dr D.J. HONEY: Exactly. I am about to get into that, but thank you very much, member. The fact that the member for Warren–Blackwood and a number of Labor upper house members have just stood back silently, without putting up any fight on behalf of their local communities, speaks volumes about the ruthless nature of the control that is being exercised by the few elites in the Labor Party. We have seen this time and again—regional members who are elected to represent their regions—are utterly silent on this matter.

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Ms S.E. Winton: Don't you think they might actually agree with it?

Dr D.J. HONEY: Good on you, member for Wanneroo, for mentioning that! They stayed mighty quiet about it before the election, just as they did about the change to regional representation in the upper house—mighty quiet. I am happy again that the member is highlighting that to me. She is saying that they agreed to it. They are happy to hide behind a lie, a lie by omission. This was always on their agenda. That is what the member for Wanneroo is telling me. They just did not bother to tell the people who elected them. What an absolute disgrace! I can tell members that the member for Warren—Blackwood would not have been elected if she had let her electors know about this secret plan that the government had.

On 8 September —

Ms S.E. Winton interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Acting Speaker —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo!

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much, Acting Speaker.

On 8 September, without any consultation, WA Labor blindsided the industry by announcing that it would end logging in native forests, commencing in 2024. I want to take a moment so that the house can hear the words from some of the people in the forestry industry. I will go through a few direct comments from various people. The people who are affected, the people whom these two ministers, who are sitting side by side and laughing, did not bother to talk to —

Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The people you did not bother to talk to! The deceit—proud deceit!

Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: They are proud of having had no consultation whatsoever. The Forest Industries Federation of WA has said that this decision was a total shock to the industry, with no prior consultation. It has said also —

The native forest sector directly employs more than 500 people and contributes over \$220 million to the WA economy each year. In turn, the sector underpins small businesses, suppliers and service providers in regional WA. An additional 1.8 jobs —

I think that is a substantial underestimate —

are created in the economy for every direct job in the native forest sector.

That is a total of 1 400 jobs. Overwhelmingly, 90 per cent of those jobs are in regional WA. The Labor Party has attacked them. That is going to impact —

Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Maybe the member should wait and listen to this debate and hear how foolish this decision is. This is a profoundly bad decision. I spoke to David Mottram from Rockbridge Timber. That company employs 10 people, so 10 families derive their income directly from that mill, but we know that there are another 18 families, which means that almost 30 families in the community of Manjimup and surrounding areas derive their livelihood from that company. It is really interesting. Members opposite should actually bother to talk to the people in that industry. Who uses this mill's hardwood timber? I am certain most members are completely ignorant of the fact that the mining industry is a substantial user of its timber. Why? It is because jarrah hardwood is unique. It is incredibly strong; in particular, it is incredibly strong for its weight. Unlike pine, jarrah does not fail catastrophically. Jarrah does not split; and, if it does break, it fails very gradually. Any members in this place who have taken an interest in the building industry would know that when pine was introduced into roofing timbers in Western Australia, there were a number of construction deaths of workers who had been walking on pine beams and those timbers had broken instantly and unexpectedly.

This one small mill supplies timber products to BHP, Pilbara Iron and Fortescue Metals. Jarrah is critical for the outrigger blocks for drilling rigs. There is no safer replacement than jarrah blocks. Why is jarrah so important for jetty materials and bridge building materials? It is because people on mine sites need to undertake ad hoc constructions and temporary constructions, and jarrah timber is the pre-eminent material for jetties, bridges and general construction. I cannot see the member for Forrestfield in the chamber. Jarrah is also used for pallets.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: That shows the ignorance of the Minister for Forestry. Pallets are critical on mine sites for carrying heavy equipment. Why is jarrah essential? It is because there is nothing better for the construction of the pallets that carry critical equipment and mining equipment. It is a critical thing on mine sites. Pallets are not just pallets. In

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the world of ignorant people who live in metropolitan Perth and do not get out, maybe they think that that is not important, but it is. Do members know how important autonomous trucks are? The pegs that go into and along those roads to hold the reflectors are jarrah pegs. Why? It is because they are lightweight, strong, easy for the workers to put out and durable. Regarding scaffolding boards, no members opposite probably go on a scaffold or build one. Nevertheless, there are some members in this place who do come from the manufacturing unions, such as the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union and associated unions. There is no better material to use for a scaffolding support than a jarrah plank. The aluminium planks are not as strong, safe or durable. I might say, particularly in the aluminium industry that I was associated with, you could not use aluminium because it was subject to corrosion, and that is true in many mining operations. The jarrah planks are also highly chemically durable, so they are a critical input into the scaffolding that is used extensively right across metropolitan Perth, including in the mining industry.

As David Mottram pointed out to me, the mill that has been running for 33 years has no holes in the ground, no tailings dam and no mining of water from a finite water aquifer, and it is an industry that is 100 per cent renewable and recyclable. Every single thing that they get into their mill is re-used. The sawdust is used for potting mix. The pine bark is used for smoking meats, mulching and other purposes. Every single bit of timber that comes into the mill is used for a useful purpose. Members, tell me one industry that can boast that! We were talking earlier in debate last night and this morning about the nickel industry and that 95-plus per cent of all material that goes through those processes ends up on mullock heaps, which create environmental issues. In this case, 100 per cent of every single thing that comes into that mill is a useful product that gets used by other people. The pine tips get used for mulching. The karri goes to waste timber mulches, biochar and the like. Labor has promised new industries, but the towns of Bridgetown, Nannup, Manjimup, Greenbushes, Denmark and Busselton are having major hits from this. I talked to Hon Paul Omodei, the shire president of Manjimup, and he told me —

Ms S.E. Winton: You talk to lots of people!

Dr D.J. HONEY: I bother to talk to people, member—unlike your side.

South West Haulage has 95 employees and 34 trucks that are nearly all involved in the native forest industry. Just that one business puts over \$4 million into the local community. It makes the so-called “just” transition fund of \$50 million utterly laughable. I would be fascinated by the member for Warren–Blackwood’s view on this and whether she thinks that is adequate compensation because that does not even match a quarter of the annual output of this industry into those local communities. We are talking about a farcically small amount of money allocated that is supposed to make a difference.

I was talking to David Wettenhall, an ex-forester, and he made a really excellent point. The members of the other side are ultimately going to have imported deforestation because there is enormous demand for hardwood timber in this state and from the various industries such as mining, building and construction, housing and furniture. In essence, all that demand for hardwood will now be for imported timbers. Where will they be from? They will be from Papua New Guinea, Malaysia or Indonesia. Anyone who knows about the hardwood industries in those countries knows that in the great majority of cases, the major timber companies in those countries are not domestic companies; they are in fact overseas companies that operate there. They do not have a fraction of the forest husbandry experience that we have in Western Australia. We have an outstandingly well-managed industry that that side of the house, the Labor Party, is utterly determined to destroy. As David Wettenhall pointed out, in 2.5 million hectares of state forest, 800 000 hectares are available for forestry; therefore, more than two-thirds of it is never touched at all. In 2019, 6 000 of that 800 000 hectares was logged. This is all based on a forest management plan that had full consultation. I will go through some other points in relation to that in a little bit more detail soon.

I have a letter that was sent to the member for Vasse from Neil Whiteland at Whiteland Milling; I will go through some sections of that letter —

Whiteland Milling believes the McGowan government has significantly under-estimated the ramifications of their shock decision to cut all native hardwood timber supply at the end of 2023.

This ill-informed decision was made based on a ‘loose’ public survey. This decision was made without industry consultation or input into the direct and indirect costs to shut down this whole industry.

Based in Busselton, we are a local, family business that employs up to 40 staff —

With that 1.8 multiple, which as I have said is conservative, 112 people are employed as a result of that business. It continues —

and injects millions of dollars into our local ... economy every year. We are very concerned about the future of our workers and all the industries that work with us, both directly and indirectly.

The letter goes on to say —

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Just two years ago, the State government released a plan for the native forest sector from 2019–2030 which gave us all confidence for our future.

The Minister for Forestry should be very aware of this because, and I quote —

In January 2021, the Hon Dave Kelly MLA Minister for Water; Forestry; Youth announced that the,
“Management of our native forests is a key pillar in our battle against climate change, and sustainable forest management can maintain or enhance forest carbon stocks, including by transferring carbon to wood products.” He also said, “The timber sustainably harvested (from Barton 0418) will mainly be used by sawmills in the south-west providing valuable economic activity and jobs to the local community.”

How things have changed! That is what the Minister for Forestry was telling the foresters, the people who were investing in their businesses and making multimillion-dollar investments, and the young people considering their careers and their future in a sustainable industry. Is it any wonder that they thought that the Labor Party and this Labor government had their back, because that is what the Minister for Forestry told them—and then two years later, with no consultation, utterly by surprise, he says, “Hang on. It’s all ending.”

To further quote the letter —

These recent statements from the government gave us the confidence to continue to invest in our industry and our sustainable and viable family business.

I will not quote the whole letter, but it goes on to talk about the utter inadequacy of the so-called just transition fund. Whiteland Milling does not know where its customers will be able to source timber in the future. The letter continues —

The plan to replace hardwood with pine is flawed. Pine is not suitable for flooring, decking, high-grade furniture or outdoor use.

The idea that pine is going to replace what the government is destroying is an utter nonsense, and members opposite must know in their heart of hearts that that is an utter nonsense.

The economic input that this one small family-owned mill makes to the community is considerable. The letter continues —

Whiteland Milling is constantly investing and upgrading plant & equipment. In the past few years alone, we have built a whole new sawmill, four new drying kilns and a new docking system. All these upgrades flow through our local business community ...

It goes on to say that Whiteland Milling will not be able to recover any funds from that equipment. The letter continues —

As an example, in 2020, our total expenditure exceeded \$7 million so when we are forced to close our doors and lay off all our staff, this will affect many local businesses.

Therefore, \$7 million will be taken out of the Busselton community when the government shuts down the industry. The reality is that this government is offering nothing meaningful that will replace any of that—nothing meaningful whatsoever!

The Labor Party’s policy not only hurts local jobs and local communities, but also is deeply flawed in its logic. It highlights the complete lack of understanding of its ministers. In terms of a lack of public policy, the only justification that could hold some water is to say that this is a popular decision. I tell members on that side that if that is their justification for making any decision in this place, go and halve land tax or payroll tax. If the government surveyed businesses and asked whether it should halve payroll tax, it would have 100 per cent of them saying to do it. If the government asked the general public of Western Australia whether it should halve land tax, perhaps not 100 per cent, but 90 per cent would say yes. Anyone who is thinking of buying a house would say, “Absolutely, do it.” But that would be an irresponsible public policy decision.

The role of government is not to sit there releasing some vox pops and doing something just because it thinks it is popular. The role of government is to do what is responsible for the state of Western Australia, and, in this case, what is responsible for those regional communities.

The Minister for Environment’s response to my question in question time today was laughable. The so-called environmental argument for this decision does not hold water. In fact, this decision will result in a worse environmental outcome for native forests. I will quote the Minister for Forestry, who loves to go on about this. He states —

The McGowan government accepts the science that underpins our understanding of climate change and acknowledges that climate change has already significantly impacted our environment and community.

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There we go! He went out on a limb on that one. Everyone accepts that; the federal Liberal government accepts it, the federal National Party accepts it and the local Nationals WA —

Ms S. Winton interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am fascinated to see how much attention the other side of the chamber pays to our state conferences, member. I heard that the Premier was reading the transcript of my speech. I was flattered, to be honest. Hopefully, he got a few hints and learnt something from it. The minister continues —

Sustainably produced Western Australian plantation timber will play a key role in our climate change battle. Plantation timber is renewable and has the potential to sequester millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

He goes on to talk about planting pine trees. That is fine; the government can plant all the pine trees it likes. Planting pine trees is utterly independent of any decision around the native forest. As I already pointed out, pine cannot replace a fraction of what hardwood timber is used for.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Is a job in a softwood plantation not worth the same as a job in a native forest?

Dr D.J. HONEY: I find this utterly farcical. The minister clearly does not understand how they even plant pine trees. He thinks that the 1 500 people employed by this industry are going to be employed to plant pine trees. Is that the minister's contention? He thinks that they will be employed to harvest those trees. Let us jump in our time machine and think ahead.

Mr D.J. Kelly: There will be harvesting, too—you don't just plant them.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Outside the odd bit of thinning, which is done by a machine and tractor, none of this timber will go into mills for 15 or 20 years. Everyone can put on hold their mortgage repayments, their car repayments and their kids' schooling. They can put all that on hold for 15 years and wait for these mythical jobs that are going to come out of the pine plantation. We know the truth. This government has not even identified where it is going to plant them. The massive increase in farm prices, as the two members sitting on my side here today are well aware of, will make it even less probable going into the future. If members want to talk about the environment, comparing a monoculture of pine trees with the diversity of a jarrah forest is, again, laughable. Pine plantations are monocultures. They are less biologically diverse than a cleared paddock. They are utter environmental wastelands. Members opposite should visit the pine forest at Wanneroo—they do not have to drive far—and see what is there. They will see acidified soil and acidified groundwater —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Dr D.J. HONEY: Those pine plantations are massive water pumps that have dropped the watertable dramatically. One of the reasons the water in Gngangara mound is going down is the pine trees. They are massive consumers of water. Everyone living around where those pine trees are to be planted will see their watertable absolutely plummet. Perhaps part of the Just Transition package can also be to pay for all the farmers to extend their bores and wells so that they can reach the groundwater—although it is pretty clear that the Minister for Water is pretty keen that farmers in the south west do not have access to any water.

We will go through this in a bit of detail. Let us look at the sustainability of harvesting timber from native forests. What happens to that timber? That timber is used in building construction. That material then sequesters the carbon associated with it. A media release from the Australian Forest Products Association states —

“WA was using less than 1 tree in 1000 for forest products in a completely sustainable way, ensuring any tree used was replaced by careful regeneration. Internationally the world is increasingly turning to sustainably sourced tree-fibre to replace plastics and to construct carbon storing timber buildings. The world needs more certified, environmentally careful forestry—such as occurs in WA—not less. Well managed forests are one of the best ways we can help the planet ...

That is, in fact, true. That is the science, but it is clear that either the Minister for Environment did not hear it or she just wilfully chooses to ignore it. I will quote the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and its fourth assessment report.

Mr J.N. Carey interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am sure that the Minister for Housing is passionate about the importance of hardwood. In fact, in this place I heard the minister telling me that low-cost housing will be constructed out of wood. I will bet my bottom dollar that it will not be constructed out of only pine, because white ants just love it.

I will go back to the IPCC's fourth assessment report. This is what the IPCC has to say. This is the globally accepted science that this lot opposite bang on about all the time. Members opposite come in here and talk to us about climate

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change being real and the IPCC says this and that. They want to lecture us on this side about it, knowing all the while that we are passionate about sustainable industry and protecting the environment and we understand the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This is what the IPCC report had to say —

... a sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fibre or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit.

That is what it says, but the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Forestry know better than the IPCC. They have come up with some mythical statement—it was in the Premier’s press release originally when this decision was made—that not harvesting timber is going to magically sequester more carbon in the native forest. It is utter rubbish. In fact, the best way to ensure continued sequestration of carbon is to continue to harvest the native forest in an environmentally sustainable and responsible way. The Minister for Forestry likes to talk about science. He said —

The science says business as usual for native forestry is just not sustainable. That is what the science says; that is why there needs to be change in this industry.

That is utter rubbish. The minister knows that, because the minister quoted two years earlier in 2019, at least in excerpt, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, so something has magically changed. The minister has woken up and had a revolution—I should say he has had a revelation; he might have had a revolution as well! He has had a revelation. He said, “Hang on, all those scientists and experts from around the world are all wrong. We have come to the conclusion that they have all got it wrong.” It is utter rubbish. The simple reality is that stopping sustainable harvesting of logs in the forest will not decrease carbon emissions in the forest. It will increase carbon emissions, because at the moment the timber from that forest is being used for many other purposes that are sequestering that carbon. I have heard members on the other side say that they will plant pine trees. They can plant as many pine trees as they like. That wood will go to a completely different market, in the larger part, than the hardwood timber does. If the government wants to spend that money, it can do it. It will create jobs.

We know, or at least it is reported by industry associations there, that the majority of people coming to live in Manjimup do not have jobs. They are not coming for jobs and they do not have jobs. They are moving there because of the beautiful lifestyle in that part of the state. I am sure that the member for Warren–Blackwood would agree that it is a beautiful part of the state to live in. The majority of people moving there do not have jobs, so if the government wants to plant pine trees and create more jobs for those people, it should do that. But why would it set out to destroy an utterly sustainable industry, an industry that is sustainable not just for one year or 10 years? That is not like the industry I worked in. I worked for Alcoa, as I have told members in this place many times. Alcoa’s operations in 50 years will have ceased—gone. Those bauxite reserves will be depleted. All that industry will be gone. Our sustainable forest industry can be here in 200 years, 300 years and 400 years, and that is something this government wants to stop.

I have talked about pine monocultures. Pine plantations are worse than an environmental wasteland. In fact, pine plantations have a massive negative impact on watertables where they are planted. Wherever those pine plantations are planted, it will take the watertable down many, many metres, and that will affect wetlands and other land uses, and it will make the placement of those pine plantations extremely difficult. So, do not talk to me about the environment. In fact, the government is going to harm the environment with those trees. If the government wants to do that, it can go and do it. The government will struggle whatsoever to find any land to plant pine trees, but let us say it spends taxpayers’ money buying land and plants those pine trees. They will not be proper millable timber for 10, 15 or 20 years. We will have a massive gap. As I have asked before, what is going to happen? That hardwood timber will be replaced—it will be replaced by timber from Papua New Guinea, and it will come in from Malaysia and Indonesia. The minister is importing deforestation. I know those countries have good governance and they are trying hard, but those governments struggle to contain the rogue loggers taking the timber. That is what the minister is doing. He is going to import deforestation from those other countries. Instead of having a superbly managed forest industry, utterly sustainable, done on the strongest scientific and environmental principles, the minister is going to import deforestation from those other countries. That is what is going to happen. That is what will be used for hardwood furniture, planking and other critical uses in this state. It will destroy jobs and drive further environmental harm in other countries.

That is what the minister is doing with this decision, and all because the government did a vox pop. It did an online survey. The government talks about getting feedback. I cannot comprehend how anyone involved in politics would think that is an appropriate way. The government knew what the outcome would be. The government knew that that survey was pushed by interest groups to its members. There was no limit on the number of times someone could reply to the survey. If someone had been keen, they could have sat down and done a thousand responses. What possible validity could that have? That was the basis for the minister’s decision. I understand people being passionate about the forest. I grew up in the bush. I love the bush; I love trees—but the nonsense we hear here! We heard the

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minister today talking about deforestation. That logging and timber industry is utterly opposed to deforestation. Those foresters are passionate. I have not read out all their letters, but I will tell the minister what they have to say about the mining industry. Foresters want to stop it because they are passionate about forests. They hate seeing the trees knocked down.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Do you support that?

Dr D.J. HONEY: I support sustainable mining and I support sustainable forestry. The minister would know —

Mr D.J. Kelly: The people who have written those letters you are quoting from want us to close down Alcoa. Do you want us to do that?

Dr D.J. HONEY: That is my point, minister. I do not want to do that. Not to defend my former employer, but Alcoa is the only mining company in the world on the United Nations Global 500 Roll of Honour. Why? It was not good in the 1970s, but Alcoa learnt from its mistakes and put an enormous effort into making sure it had 100 per cent replacement of species in those forests. The foresters are passionate about the forest and they have a slightly different view from me on that, and I have discussed it with them. I have met a lot of people.

Ms S.E. Winton: You talk to everybody!

Dr D.J. HONEY: I talk to a lot of people, as the member for Wanneroo knows. I talk to more people in Wanneroo than she does, I know that. I tell the member what: I have talked to more horticulturists.

Mr J.N. Carey: He's been everywhere, man!

Dr D.J. HONEY: I have!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Dr D.J. HONEY: The Minister for Housing has stolen my thunder for my Christmas song! I may not have been everywhere, but I tell the minister what: I get around and I talk to a whole heap of people. I get around to a whole heap of people.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The member for Wanneroo is very loud now.

Let us go on, if we can. Let us talk about sovereign risk. I will read this out. The Western Australian regional forest agreement was originally signed by the Australian and Western Australian governments on 4 May 1999 to establish a framework for the sustainable management of forests in the south west region of Western Australia. When do members reckon it was re-signed? Was it back in the midst of time, back in the middle of the Barnett government? No doubt it had to be done then, but it was signed on 29 March 2019. On 29 March 2019, this minister—I am certain that the Premier and others, cabinet, had to agree to it—signed a 20-year rolling extension of that forest agreement with some minor amendments. That is what the minister signed, and all the businesses saw that. That is why businesses made their investments. That is why we saw one mill making a \$50 million investment, and it was prepared to make further investment with some support from the government. That is why they made the investment and minister stood beside them. They made that investment, because they believed they had a further 20 years of sustainable yield from that forest. The minister utterly betrayed them. That is not just from that mill. That is common feedback I had from right across the industry. All those businesses, those millers I spoke to, the people in the communities who depended on that forestry, all believed that they could make their investments because the minister had signed that agreement, because he had made a commitment to the federal government that he was going to sustainably manage the yield from that forest for the next 20 years. That is what they believed, and the minister has utterly betrayed them. I could literally go on for three hours on this topic, if members begged me!

Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Yes, if members begged me! However, this is an extremely serious matter. This government stands condemned for the irresponsible and short-sighted decision to shut down this industry. Not one single argument that the government has put forward to justify this decision holds any water whatsoever. This decision will be worse for the environment and massively worse for regional communities. The so-called compensation package is frankly pathetic and will not replace a small fraction of the jobs that will need to be regenerated, for nothing other than allowing the ministers to have a warm glow when they walk into a meeting of the green left faction of the Labor Party and pat themselves on the back for doing it. They are destroying the livelihoods and careers of thousands of people, particularly in the south west and the regional areas of this state.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [5.32 pm]: I strongly support the motion moved by the member for Cottesloe, which states —

That this house condemns WA Labor for its short-sighted decision to unilaterally shut down the native forest industry based on a deeply flawed justification.

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There is so much information here from opponents of what this government has done, and I will work my way through some of it. Firstly, I want to express my disappointment in both the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Forestry. The Minister for Environment obviously put out that survey as some sort of justification, but what really worries me—I am sure it is also some sort of attempt to gain favour with the inner-city green vote, which I am sure it will do to some extent; it will be great in Morley, Fremantle and places like that—are the members of the community in Manjimup —

Dr D.J. Honey: Baldivis.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: — and Baldivis. I am worried about the member for Warren–Blackwood, because I am sure she had absolutely no idea about what was going to be done to her electorate. She has come in here in good faith looking to serve the voters of Manjimup, Nannup and Pemberton and the rug has been pulled out from underneath her. As I said, I like the member for Warren–Blackwood, but I am worried because in March 2025, the voters in Manjimup and Pemberton —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): Members! The member for Roe has the floor.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker.

In March 2025, the voters of Warren–Blackwood will have their say and it will be through no fault of the new member for Warren–Blackwood. I am sure that she will spend the next three and a half years trying to justify the decision of the environment minister and the forestry minister, who are really playing to the inner-city vote. That is just my personal opinion, as I said. I wish the member for Warren–Blackwood good luck over the next three and a half years.

There is a pattern developing within this government—cut first and consult later. We have seen it with the marine park situation on the south coast: “We’re going to make marine and land-based parks. We’re going to have five million hectares of land and sea parks and we’ll put it out there first and consult later.” The consultation is starting to improve, so I will give the Minister for Environment that, but it is because the community pushed back. It had no idea; these announcements were just made and then it was consulted later. This is exactly what has happened with the forestry industry.

I want to give an example from the electorate of Roe that is close to my heart. It is about what has happened to many of my constituents who have forestry contracts. They planted pine trees in good faith anywhere up to 15, 20 or 25 years ago. The plantations were established and most of them had a term of about 40 years. Recently, many of those farmers were in a state of shock. Ents Forestry Pty Ltd, which is a forestry management and consulting company, had had very little information from BP, the company that my constituents had the contract with. They got this letter in the mail saying that Ents Forestry had taken on 107 contracts from BP. The plantations cover about 2 400 hectares stretching from Williams to Wellstead. The contracts were based on sharefarming arrangements under which the landowners were responsible for maintaining fences and gates, fire prevention and vermin control, while BP was responsible for maintaining the trees, including pruning, trimming and thinning, and fertiliser application and insect control. BP then contracted the Forest Products Commission to manage the plantation and take care of any maintenance. Under the agreement, BP would get 70 per cent of the harvest revenue and the landowner would get 30 per cent. This was established 25 years ago and the landholders were going along and then all of a sudden they got this letter saying that the contracts had been transferred. Aside from that, the really disappointing thing is that the FPC seems to have walked away from any responsibility for the plantations, even though for 18 years it was responsible for maintaining those plantations.

The community focus has now switched to the FPC. Those farmers are disappointed. There have been many articles in *Farm Weekly*, *Countryman* and the like about the disillusionment of those farmers. This is exactly what we are talking about. The forestry minister has come out with this great plan for farming softwood in these pine plantations for which, as the member for Cottesloe pointed out, there is no land. No land has been acquired and it is going to be very difficult to acquire land considering the current price of farming land. So my question is: if and when the FPC manages to get this land and plant these trees, will it be able to maintain and look after those forestry assets properly? There are already 2 400 hectares of pine plantation and the FPC has not turned up for years. Some of the farmers are reporting that it has not been there for 10 or 15 years. The pine plantation has not been thinned properly and a lot of the farmers are now saying that they would rather the land go back to farming land. That is a real disappointment for me.

The final thing that came from the meeting in Katanning was a vote of no confidence in the Forest Products Commission. It is pretty disappointing when I see my local farmers in the electorate of Roe and some of the adjoining electorates being hung out to dry. Will the new pine plantations that are supposedly going to be planted to somehow assist in this native forest program do the job? As the member for Cottesloe pointed out very well, and as the Australian Forest Products Association’s media release of September 2021 pointed out —

“This announcement of a renewed investment in more softwood trees is therefore very welcome, however the State Government must be honest with West Australians. The trees planted in plantations do not provide the hardwood timber which is used for floors, stairs, and windows. That timber will have to be imported into WA in future years. There is no surplus in Eastern states so it will mostly come from overseas where often the same high levels of environmental control are not operating.

That is a question for the Minister for Environment. When the government closes down the industry, we will import timbers from places such as Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and South America. Those places have nowhere near the environmental practices of Australia. I am very much looking forward to the environment minister enlightening me. When I see on TV that in the Amazon they are knocking down forests the size of tens of dozens of football fields every day, and I see the Western Australian government putting us in a situation in which we will have to import that timber from those countries, I am really looking forward to the explanation from this minister on what the plan is. How will the minister implement the climate change plan, or whatever it might be, on those governments that seem to be less conscientious than Western Australia and Australia? That is the first part of it.

As I said, I worry about this proposed program to supposedly plant all the pine plantations. I worry also about the acquisition of land because, although it sounds good on paper, I do not think a lot of people will want to sell land that receives 600 millimetres of rainfall to plant pine plantations on. I could be proven wrong. I have looked at some of the claims made by the Forest Industries Federation of WA; for example, “Native forestry is not viable”, but the “Fact” states, “Native forestry is viable and underpins many profitable local businesses”. The claim was made, “Old growth forests are being destroyed”, but the fact is, “In 2001, WA became the first state to outlaw harvesting of old growth forests. High conservation value forest, habitat trees and riparian zones are also protected”. The claim was made, “85% of the timber that comes out of those forests is either waste, charcoal, firewood or pulp”, but the forestry industry points out, “We use the whole tree. 100% utilisation with all timber going to the highest value use, from furniture through to silicon produced from charcoal. Nothing is a waste”. The claim was made, “Transition the timber industry to plantation and farm forestry” but the fact is, “Plantation forestry cannot simply replace native forestry”—as I just pointed out—“Land availability, market access and fibre properties are all limiting factors. The result would be an increased reliance on timber imports from other countries.” That is exactly what I just pointed out to the environment minister. The final claim was, “The forests are worth more standing”, but the fact is, “The forests are worth most, when managed properly. Actively managed, multiple-use forests fight climate change, provide renewable resources and recreational opportunities.” That is what the Forest Industries Federation is pointing out. As I said, it has been a total shock to the industry with no consultation: “cut first, consult later” is the mantra of this new government. I have a really serious concern about where it will get the land from.

I want to quote from an excellent article in the *Business News* by Jesinta Burton, an excellent journalist. I know her well from her time at *The Esperance Express*. She has done some good work here. She pointed out that the Forest Industries Federation of WA was among the first to speak out, describing the decision as “sudden and reckless” and that both businesses and their employees in the industry have been blindsided. Jesinta Burton reports —

FIFWA director Melissa Haslam said the reverberations of the state government’s decision would first be felt by regional communities reliant on this industry, which contributed \$1.4 billion to the WA economy each year and supported about 6,000 jobs.

It is incredibly disappointing. Jesinta Burton spoke to one of the furniture manufacturers, Michael D’Andrea from Artifex Australia. I notice today that Hon Steve Martin and Hon James Hayward were at that company today looking at some of the fantastic furniture it produces. Referring to Mr D’Andrea, Jesinta’s article states —

He said he was shocked and confused by the move, particularly given the government had claimed the industry was operating sustainably; something that had become a major selling point for the business.

In fact, the Forest Products Commission’s annual reports, endorsed by Forestry Minister Dave Kelly, claimed hardwood logging in WA met the strictest environmental standards and was considered sustainable by both internal and external experts.

There it is, the Forest Products Commission’s annual report endorsed by forestry minister, Dave Kelly. As the member for Cottesloe pointed out, that 20-year forest agreement was signed in March 2019. We have an industry that thinks it has security, it has some longevity and something to work from. A survey was put out by the Minister for Environment’s department, or whatever, and I quote —

A government spokesperson told *Business News* close to 17,000 responses were received, 95 per cent of which called for more areas of native forest to be protected and 73 per cent believing no harvesting should occur.

Funnily enough —

But less than 10 per cent of the respondents were directly employed by or affiliated with the South West forestry industry, native timber harvesting or artisan timber product manufacturing.

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That is the deception that this industry is facing. I cannot say how disappointing it has been. I will admit that I do not profess to be a forestry expert but I do profess that I know how local communities and local businesses work. It is incredibly disappointing for those industries and those communities to have to face what has been put on them by this couple of ministers.

I would like to wrap up with the situation at Parkside. The minister will no doubt refer to it and the fact that it was looking for extra funding and all the rest of it, as we have heard in question time previously. However, back in 2019 Minister Kelly said that it was fabulous news for the town of Nannup when Parkside Timber bought Nannup Timber Processing. It was a great vote of confidence for the industry here and in the south west and it was great news for employment. There is not too much confidence out there now; there is not too much confidence after this government has pulled the rug out. On 15 January 2021, Parkside Timber invested \$14 million in upgrading the facility in Manjimup and recruited 65 staff. As at 22 September 2021, Parkside had invested \$54.4 million and employed 160 people. Over the past two years, the Parkside Group has been encouraged by the Premier, the minister and local mayors to continue to develop the business into a world-class milling centre. The Parkside board subsequently approved additional capital improvements to WA businesses, which would have seen a total investment of \$103 million.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The outcome would have meant 720 full-time jobs in WA supporting local communities. Although Parkside will continue operating as usual, the announcement regarding the closure of native forest harvesting came as a complete surprise to the Parkside Group and was extremely disappointing.

I want to reiterate the disappointment of the farming community in my electorate, which entered into contracts in good faith. These farmers believed that the Forest Products Commission —

Mr D.J. Kelly: Sorry, member, you understand that issue is completely separate to the native —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I understand.

Mr D.J. Kelly: I wouldn't want people to get confused that the two are related.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I understand that. I guess I was trying to connect the fact that I am concerned about the minister's \$350 million pine plantation package. I am worried about whether the government will be able to acquire any land. I am worried about whether the Forest Products Commission will perform, because it certainly has not performed with those previous contracts. This relates to both governments; it is not about the Labor Party or the Liberal-National Parties or whatever. This is about management of the forests—the forests not being thinned properly and not being looked after properly. A total of 2 400 hectares will probably go to waste. As we pointed out many times, it takes a long time to grow pine trees, and they have to be looked after properly. We could be talking 20 years down the track before we get any decent results. Those farmers are saying that they want their land back. It is more profitable to grow grain or farm sheep, cattle or whatever. It has not worked out. I am linking it to that.

The motion is about the native forest industry, which relates to the disappointment of these furniture makers, communities and businesses that thought they had assurance when Minister Kelly said in 2019 that it was fabulous news for the town of Nannup when Parkside Timber bought Nannup Timber Processing, and it was a great vote of confidence in the industry. This government has not shown a great vote of confidence in the timber industry. The recent decision is incredibly disappointing. As far as I am concerned, this government needs to have a good, hard look at itself because this culture of “cut first, consult later” is not on.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.53 pm]: I will be interested to hear from the Minister for Forestry at some point tonight. I rise to speak to the following motion moved by the member for Cottesloe —

That this house condemns WA Labor for its short-sighted decision to unilaterally shut down the native forest industry based on a deeply flawed justification.

If we break down that motion, we see that it contains a number of elements. The unilateral nature of the decision that has been made is quite apparent. On 22 June 2021, Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson, the Minister for Environment; Climate Action; Commerce issued a press release titled “WA public invited to have their say on native forests”. When I picked it up, I said to members of my party that it was a very strange looking consultation. I wondered why the Minister for Environment; Climate Action was conducting consultation prior to developing a forest management plan. It was explained to me that under the forest management plan, the Minister for Environment is more or less the asset holder, while the Minister for Forestry is the asset manager. Soothing words were said to me that that was okay, and there was “nothing to see here”. I did not feel comfortable about that. I now know that that was right, because on 8 September this year, we saw what some would say was the historic announcement in a press release by the Premier, the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Forestry that the government would take a historic move to protect native forests. It is not mentioned anywhere in the press release but we know that the justification given by the Minister for Environment at various points was a survey that she conducted—that very same survey that I had some trepidation about back in June.

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The website of the WA Forest Alliance provides a little insight into the survey—who responded and what the responses were. We know that there were 17 000 responses. I understand that four per cent of those responses were not from Western Australia, 64 per cent were from Perth, and 32 per cent were from regional WA. On the basis of the 17 000 responses, we understand that 95 per cent of respondents mentioned that they supported the notion that more areas of native forest should be protected. I think 73 per cent agreed with the suggestion that no native forest harvesting should occur. It was a very loaded survey that asked specific questions requiring yes or no answers that were aimed at getting an outcome.

We also know that the WA Forest Alliance, the Wilderness Society et cetera have actively pushed the idea that people should participate in these surveys and respond in particular ways. A survey on Western Australia's native vegetation policy, which similarly attracted attention, closed on 25 October. On the WAFA website, with the Wilderness Society's assistance, there are a number of suggested answers to the survey questions for members to submit. No doubt, another 11 000 members submitted the types of responses that the government would like to hear. That is the justification for the government to act in ways that I think it had already determined before it conducted the survey. I was looking for a bit of justification about that.

An interesting article by Jesse Noakes was published in *The Saturday Paper* titled "How the fight to save WA's native forests was finally won". An unnamed government spokesperson is quoted as having said that there was no consultation with industry; the only consultation was the 17 000 respondents to that survey. That is very much an ambush of the forestry industry by the government. That article said that Labor MPs had told the people looking to end native forestry that they needed justification to take action. It appears to me that a plan was put in place and enacted pretty soon after the election in order for the government to gain that justification. It sent out a push survey that would get certain responses. On the basis of the responses of 11 000 people, the government said that it would shut down an industry that had been in this state for over 100 years.

I point out that at the moment a debate is going on about representation in the Legislative Council. About 11 000 votes are needed to get a representative of the Mining and Pastoral Region in the Legislative Council—the smallest quota of the six regions. The government is claiming that that is not enough people to justify electing a member of Parliament. However, it is apparently enough people to justify shutting down a 100-year-old industry that hundreds of people rely upon for their livelihood and in which the government encouraged investment by a company—Parkside Timber was the one the member named—as it was a good idea to get together and invest in the native forestry industry. It was unforgivable for the government to do that, knowing that it was planning to shut down this industry—unforgivable.

When the Minister for Water was forestry minister, he released a press release on 3 December 2019 headed "Local timber industry gets a boost as leading miller joins WA". This media release talked about Parkside Timber coming to Western Australia, and was put out about a year before certain unnamed Labor MPs told advocates for the closure of native forest logging that they needed some justification. Only about a year before that, the minister pretended to support the hardwood industry in Western Australia. This press release talked about Parkside Timber purchasing two south west mills, with plans to reopen the Manjimup processing centre, which was expected to create local jobs. It went on to say —

- WA's forestry industry supports more than 6,000 jobs, particularly in regional areas
- McGowan Government committed to maintaining a sustainable forestry industry

Comments attributed to forestry minister Dave Kelly state —

"The McGowan Government sees Parkside's investment as a step forward in maintaining a strong forestry industry that supports WA jobs, while still protecting the environmental values of our beautiful native forests.

"This is the largest native forest industry private investment consolidation and restructure in 15 years which will secure hundreds of direct and indirect jobs in the industry.

"I welcome Parkside's commitment to creating high-value timber products from smaller, younger regrowth trees.

"The native forestry sector is an important employer and economic contributor that supplies our community with sustainable, renewable building materials and other timber products.

"The purchase follows the release of the McGowan Government's Djarlma Plan which set out the strategic direction for the future of the Western Australian forestry industry to support healthy forests and WA jobs."

I put to members that it was somewhat deceptive for the government to put that out and then act in the way that it did a year later to shut down that industry. That employer, which had only recently made that investment in good faith, has been left out to dry.

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I want to go through some of the discussion that took place immediately after the announcement was made. This is a bit of the transcript of an interview conducted by Jane Marwick on 13 September 2021. The caller was John Clarke, a forester. The transcript of the interview was supplied to me. Mr Clarke said that one reason the Premier had used to justify the ban was that he believed it would preserve habitat and biodiversity, but that he was wrong. He said that not one single species of plant or animal had become extinct in Western Australia due to native forest timber harvesting, and that that was counting the logging that took place before the introduction of the Forests Act in 1918 and the creation of the forests department. He said that the foresters of a hundred years ago were the ones who genuinely saved our forests, as they had argued hard with the government of the day that the forests had to be reserved from clearing for agriculture, dedicated as state forests through the Parliament, and managed for their many sustainable uses. Mr Clarke said that the Premier and the Minister for Environment must have little faith in the many clever and dedicated foresters and scientists in the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions who run a long-term biodiversity monitoring program called Forestcheck, which counts and measures about 350 species of animal, bird, reptile, plant, fungi, lichen and liverworts across our native forests. He said that this important work has shown that harvesting and prescribed burning does not adversely affect biodiversity at all. In fact, Forestcheck is a thing. I have a copy of some pages off the web that outline its work and that it is monitoring the good health of the forests.

The minister made a decision that does not really stack up in terms of science. I am sure she will get up and tell me I am wrong. Perhaps she might listen to someone from her side of politics called Joel Fitzgibbon.

Ms A. Sanderson: Is he? Is he?

Mr R.S. LOVE: In an article in *The Australian Financial Review* in October 2021—sorry; what is so funny about that? It is one of their own members.

Ms A. Sanderson: He is not really on my side of politics. Go for your life.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The article states —

Our forestry industry is the underutilised tool in the lowering greenhouse gas emissions kit. The “net” in net zero emissions describes our aspiration to put no more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere than we take out.

Our forests absorb and store carbon, lots of it. Post-harvest, the carbon remains trapped in the wood products we manufacture from the logs.

He later stated —

There is another case for providing more support to the forest and forest products sectors. They create lots of jobs, around 80,000 of them directly, and another 160,000 indirectly: in forest management, harvesting, haulage, sawmilling, manufacturing, wholesale, retail, and construction.

The modern forestry sector is sophisticated and high-tech.

This is a Labor member, who was talking about the forestry sector being good for the environment, good for jobs and good for our economy. Why, then, does it receive so few mentions in the climate change debate? The only mention the minister has made about it has been to shut down the industry that would harvest that wood, lock it up in furniture, in wood products, and then regrow the wood, taking carbon from the air by the process that the Minister for Environment might have heard of, called photosynthesis. Plants take carbon from the atmosphere and put it into their cells, which, in the case of a tree, will eventually be wood.

Ms A. Sanderson: It is science!

Mr R.S. LOVE: It is science! I think it is called primary school chemistry or biology. It is not exactly rocket science. That is how to sequester carbon. The government is taking away an option for sequestering carbon. This decision is short-sighted and deeply flawed because it will do away with an industry that not only could potentially help fight the increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, but also was supporting jobs in the regions. The government has done this on the basis of a flawed methodology. A push survey was conducted—the government set out to get the answers it wanted. What worries me immensely is the current survey the government has out about the native vegetation situation. I worry about what is coming next for areas such as the wheatbelt. No doubt we will see some measures put in place as a result of the government’s survey of 10 000 or 11 000 people who will no doubt sign up to whatever the government wants them to sign up to in the future, and who will provide justification. It is not a discussion about clearing as such, but about the management of native vegetation per se and the whole ambit of it. I have concerns about where that direction will take us. I think it could take us into a very worrying area for the future of agriculture in the wheatbelt and other areas. I would like the minister’s assurance that she will not make any more unilateral decisions without consultation and that she will actually go out and talk to a whole range of

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stakeholders and not just the 11 000 people who responded positively to her survey in the way that she wanted them to respond, while ignoring everybody else who may not have even known that the government was planning to make such a drastic decision on the basis of the result of that survey. I think it is quite extraordinary. If the minister had said that on the back of the survey, the government would decide whether to shut down the logging of native timbers in forests, she might have got a bit more interest from other less engaged persons than she actually ended up getting.

I do not think people fully appreciated the ramifications of that survey. Had they known that the future of an industry would hinge upon the correct response being received, they might have participated more widely and the government might have got something more approximating a full analysis of public opinion in Western Australia, rather than the feelings of a splinter group. I would say that the government is becoming adept at targeting that splinter group and will use that for justification. It is also a splinter group that is no more than the number of people the government needed to get itself a seat in the Mining and Pastoral Region. The government now says that is inadequate to enable those people to have a say in that chamber of Parliament, yet the government is willing to shut down an industry based on the opinions of a similar number of persons. That is quite apart from the fact that not everybody who responded supported the end of native forest logging—I think 73 per cent did, so the others either did not respond one way or the other or said that they were not in favour of it. It is a clear majority of that select group, but it is not an overwhelming majority of Western Australians. That is a very flawed way for the government to set out to get an answer. I think the government got the answer that it wanted to put in place a plan that it had already had in mind.

The Minister for Forestry himself probably would admit that there would be some conflict with his 2019 press release that welcomed the investment of Parkside Timber in a timber mill that was aimed at using native forest logs. The minister said how his government welcomed and supported that, but over a year later, we are seeing the shutdown of that industry and the absolute devastation of that business. I would suggest also, from the reaction around the town, that the devastation is being felt by many people in the area. My colleague Hon James Hayward has been down in that area and has been very active in discussing these matters with the communities around Manjimup and other areas. It is pretty clear that people are angry and feeling very aggrieved with the decision of this government. As the member for Roe pointed out, the people in that seat probably did not understand when they went to the election last year that they would be seeing the end of that industry.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.S. LOVE: Normally, these sorts of things take some time. I was in Albany as a student at around the time the whaling industry in Albany was shut down. I think everybody knew that there would come a time when that industry would be shut down. Some people locally might not have wanted to see it shut down, but other people locally certainly did want to see it shut down. I do not think there was any doubt that there would be a long history of discussion and that at some point there would be a feeling that that industry would go.

Given the enunciation of the minister back in 2019, a fair indication should have been given to the forestry industry that this would come. The decision that was made was unilateral. It blindsided many people who have made a life in that industry. I know that other members have gone through some of the press releases that were put out by the Australian Forest Products Association, the Forest Industries Federation and furniture manufacturers, expressing their dismay, disappointment, shock and grief—the sorts of words we would not expect from an industry that was being treated fairly and was being consulted.

The worst thing about this is the lack of consultation with the industry. Why would the government not work through these matters and have an intelligent and adult conversation with the industry and say, “This is where we want to go as a government”, instead of communicating to the industry by press release? That is the most disappointing part about it. The government did not go through a process of giving the industry a bit of warning and telling it what it was thinking of doing, and of saying to Parkside, which has spent millions of dollars to set up, that it does not think this industry has a long-term future. Instead, the government gave it exactly the opposite signal and then, by press release, told the community that this industry that people have relied upon, this industry that the government has said is viable, and this industry that has a whole apparatus of government and scientific oversight around it, is going.

I notice that the Minister for Emergency Services was in the chamber earlier. I had hoped that he would be here at this point. I want to point out that we know that fire is a huge risk in that area. We have seen some devastating wildfires. I do not doubt that people are concerned about that. It concerns me that without an active forestry industry, we will see a level of risk, because that forest will have to readjust to coming back to being the type of forest that existed prior to European settlement. We only need to look at the history of Australia and the understanding we now have that there was a fair degree of human management of the environment through the Aboriginal peoples of this land, and that they practised techniques to prevent the risk of catastrophic fires and to keep some of the forest in good health. I do not think that just locking up that forest and letting it go without active management will be an option. Active management will not be cheap. It will come at a cost. I heard the minister say that the forestry industry

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is being subsidised in some way. I do not know, because I do not have the full details of that, but I suggest that there will be substantial costs to the state in managing those areas of the forest, just as there is a substantial cost to the state in managing the rest of the conservation estate. That will now be at a greater level because of the higher risk of fire with greater vegetation loads, and the fact that if we abandon forestry, the forest will be out of kilter with what it would have been had there been no involvement at all.

Those issues concern me greatly. I will wrap it up now, because there are a couple of ministers here and I am hoping to hear from them, and perhaps if no-one else wishes to speak, we will be able to vote on the matter. We will see what happens. I hope to get some response from the Minister for Forestry and the Minister for Environment.

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Environment) [6.17 pm]: I am happy to speak on this motion, which, of course, the government does not support, and which is, frankly, riddled with errors and assumptions. It was interesting to listen to the speakers opposite regale arguments from the 1950s—although I am not surprised by the member for Cottesloe—as though we are still living as things were half a century ago, and that we just need to keep doing the same things that we have been doing for the past decades and everything will be fine. Everything that we have been doing around the environment and clearing and climate action is fine; we do not need to change. We can pick and choose the things that suit our arguments. The member for Cottesloe has called the reliance on evidence around the reduction in rainfall, the drying climate and the slower growth —

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: He claimed that is a so-called fact. What is that term that Donald Trump coined?

Mr D.J. Kelly: Fake news.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Fake news. That is right. Alternative facts—he said he had a set of alternative facts. The member for Cottesloe is living in a universe of alternative facts. We see that daily. The member for Cottesloe claims that somehow the jarrah forestry is sustainable, when, in fact, it had never actually received Forest Stewardship Council certification, which is the global standard for sustainable forestry. It never received that and is not considered sustainable forestry. That is a real fact. I will let the Minister for Forestry go through the arguments around timber yield and economics, but I will touch on them because they do cross over with the environmental evidence that this is absolutely the right policy decision of government.

I have no argument that it is incredibly challenging for a number of families and communities in the south west. There are no arguments from the government about that. We are acutely aware of that, which is why we are committed to funding a transition plan and working hand in hand with those communities towards diversification. That is the focus of this government. Those communities can diversify and they have been diversifying. They were not entirely blindsided by this announcement—that is completely dishonest. I think maybe the Liberals and Nationals who live in a universe of alternative facts were blindsided, but the communities living down there were not. They have been doing a really good job of diversification. There is a lot of optimism in our rural towns and in our south west, as there should be.

It is interesting that the member for Cottesloe in particular was more than happy to shut down an entire coal industry in four years without even going down and facing that community. He was willing to do that to a far bigger workforce than the workforce affected by this decision and argue that point. He is still arguing the point and still hanging on to that policy. I am interested to know whether he has been down there. He visits a lot of people. He talks to a lot of people. Has he been down to Collie to face that community about what the just transition would look like under the Liberal Party's plan? It is entirely hypocritical of him and he is all over the place. On one hand, he is supporting green hydrogen and, on the other hand, he is questioning the science around climate change, native forestry and deforestation. He is just all over the place.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Cottesloe!

Dr D.J. Honey: I did not say one word about climate change—not one word!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): Member for Cottesloe! The minister has the call. Although I do not mind a little bit of good-natured back and forth, repetitive, persistent interjections are not helpful.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Thank you, Acting Speaker.

There was also an extensive debate in the Legislative Council on this issue and I have read through the *Hansard* of that debate. It is always interesting when the people elected assume those on the other side do not know what they are doing. Hon Jackie Jarvis had explained to her by Hon James Hayward how the forestry industry worked, even though he did not know what two-tier karri forest was. He was explaining to her at length—like we get in this chamber often—how the sustainable forestry industry works, and I was delighted to see her get to her feet and explain to the

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member that she was actually a member of the Forest Products Commission! She is a member of the FPC and is quite aware of how it works. Although we over on this side appreciate the lessons, we are quite capable of finding our own information and doing research and making our own informed decisions. I have to say the credibility on the other side on this issue is extremely limited. Hon James Hayward insisted for some time, until he realised that he had got it wrong, that it was Richard Court who ended native logging in 2001. He dug himself a hole, but he dug himself out. But it is pretty hard to take it seriously, I have to be honest.

What we do take seriously is the impact of climate change in Western Australia. We are seeing a more urgent need to take action on climate change. We know that climate change is impacting the growth of our forests and impacting our biodiversity. Those replanted forests are simply not growing back as quickly as we need them to to sustain the yield that has been agreed to. In fact, I think the people who work in the forestry industry are not even meeting the yield because of the challenges around climate change. They are on the ground and they see that.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: I sat and listened to the member for Cottesloe.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo!

Ms A. SANDERSON: A lot has been made of the survey that was put out. It was accused of being a secret survey, even though it was tabled in the Legislative Council, so there was nothing secret about it. The member for Moore talked about a select number of 11 000 respondents. There were actually 17 000 respondents.

Mr R.S. Love: I said 11 000 responded positively to your survey.

Ms A. SANDERSON: I stand corrected. I have to say that I do not think 11 000 is a select number and neither is 17 000. It may not be the basis on which we make a decision, and certainly this decision was not made based on that, but it is a good thing to ask people what they think. The member for Cottesloe has been asking the government to talk to people. The state's south west forest is a state asset. It is not owned by the foresters. It is a state asset that is also a really important carbon sink. It also has emerging industries that are, frankly, in conflict with ongoing native logging and are more sustainable and more complementary to the forest, so there was an overwhelming response supporting better preservation of our state forests. Essentially, it was a very thorough survey and the member for Cottesloe does the Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute a great disservice by claiming that it was a Facebook survey. The institute is run by independent scientists, and I think it just goes to show what regard the member has for science, frankly.

This industry has been struggling, and the member can continue to lie and be dishonest to them, but there were a number of times when those mills stood down their staff because they could not get the yield. A number of those mill owners have been trying to sell their mills for a number of years. The member did not mention that in his speech. This is not a sustainable industry. Meanwhile, whilst that member was in government, he let the pine plantation whittle away with no plan to rebuild it. These two policies do go hand in hand; they are not isolated. They were announced as a package. We are ending native logging. We are protecting all karri, jarrah and wandoo forests in the south west. That is what we are doing and the two-tier south karri forest will have immediate conservation protection because those forests contain old-growth trees. They do not meet the very tight definition of "old-growth forest" and I think that probably needs to be looked at, but the forests do contain really important environmental assets and they are more valuable to us in the ground as carbon sinks, habitats and improved biomass. They improve biodiversity and protect threatened species. No, member, species have not gone extinct, thanks to the good work of many volunteers and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and committed individuals. But do we wait for species to go extinct before we take action? Is that what we do? We are not prepared to do that! We are absolutely not prepared to wait for them to become extinct.

Mr D.J. Kelly: For the first time, there's now more numbats than Liberal Party MPs.

Ms A. SANDERSON: That is actually true! Numerous numbats and baby numbats have been seen—the member knows they have been seen—in the area of the highly discussed prescribed burn.

On the impacts of climate change—I do not want to take up all the time because I know other members are keen to speak on this—the report that the member for Cottesloe is relying on is 14 years old. The 2019 IPCC report was very clear. It found —

Reducing deforestation and forest degradation rates represents one of the most effective and robust options for climate change mitigation, with large mitigation benefits globally ...

I have another more recent report. The 2019 IPCC *Special report: Climate change and land* stated —

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Reducing deforestation and forest degradation is a major strategy to reduce global GHG emissions. The combination of reduced GHG emissions and biophysical effects results in a large climate mitigation effect, with benefits also at local level.

That is some of the evidence that we are relying on. Australia has almost reached 1.5 degrees of warming on average. We have reached 1.44 degrees, and that figure is from the Bureau of Meteorology—more scientists. The climate is warming. We have a huge challenge here, and we have to take action. This is one of the levers that we have available to us as a community to take that action.

The south west forests have experienced a 20 per cent decrease in major July rainfall since the 1970s. Some affected native forests, including regrowth forest, are not growing at the rate that we need them to. The south west forests store the equivalent of 600 million tonnes of carbon dioxide; they are an incredibly important carbon sink. It is true that young trees absorb carbon, but old and mature trees store more carbon. It makes no sense to chop them down, woodchip them and burn them, and then grow new ones! It makes no sense.

Dr D.J. Honey: The wood gets used and it sequesters carbon.

Ms A. SANDERSON: It is largely woodchipped and burned, and used for biomass. We have to weigh up what is of greatest benefit to us in this challenging environment. Frankly, the greatest benefit to us is to leave them in the ground and to grow a sustainable industry in Western Australia, which is what the government is doing. They are a very important carbon store.

We know that if the world stopped deforestation, or even slowed it down significantly, we would get to one-third of the target of reducing emissions by 2030. That is how significant the impact of the forestry industry and deforestation is.

I have sympathy for foresters. They are reducing in number, not only here but globally, because the industry is changing. Those skills will remain in Western Australia, and the jobs will in fact grow. I have sympathy for foresters, because they have had a commitment around this idea of sustainability, and they are very wedded to that commitment, but the evidence shows it is simply not working and it is not a sustainable industry any more. It is dishonest to those communities to continue to tell them that it is sustainable because, frankly, it is just not true.

Let us put this into perspective, the native forestry industry represents about eight per cent of the entire forestry sector, which is a small percentage of the entire forestry sector. Since the commencement of the current forest management plan in 2014, the Forest Products Commission has operated at a loss of \$2.8 million per annum. This is about making the FPC a more viable and sustainable operation in itself. It is underwriting an industry that cannot survive into the future. We are asking the taxpayer to put their hand in their pocket and underwrite an industry that is not viable, whereas the alternative is to develop new industries like tourism and beekeeping. The state government has landed a new native title settlement; it is a record native title settlement for the south west Aboriginal people, the traditional owners. The Noongar nation is one of the last to have a significant native title settlement in Western Australia. They should have an opportunity to have a say over what goes on in their native forests, and they will. The forests are incredibly important for Aboriginal culture. They have a deep connection across their forests, and the forest industry is not complementary to that at all.

We are entering a new era. I know that is really challenging for members over there.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Roe! Just pause for a moment, minister.

I have known the Minister for Environment for a long time and she is more than capable of defending herself, but the optics of three blokes hectoring her on one side is not a great way to end the evening. I will give the Minister for Environment the call, and will let her conclude in silence.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: I think we have just been responding to questions. I do not think there is any attempt to bully the minister. I am happy to listen to the minister.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): The word I used was “hectoring”. Do not use a point of order to argue with the chair again, member for Moore.

Debate Resumed

Ms A. SANDERSON: Thank you, Acting Speaker.

We will go into the forest management plan in consultation. That in itself required a policy decision up-front. That is the process. We have to set the policy parameters early for the Conservation and Parks Commission to undertake the really important work of the forest management plan. That is a 12 to 18-month process in and of itself and it will have extensive engagement across a range of stakeholders. There will be deep and meaningful consultation

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on that forest management plan, but the process is very clear: they need a policy direction from government up-front in order to undertake that work. That is what they have got. They have got a clear policy direction. It is absolutely the right policy direction. Frankly, it is one of the policies I am most proud of as a government. I feel very proud, as Minister for Environment, with the Minister for Forestry, to lead this policy. It goes hand in hand with conservation and sustainable timber growth, and a sustainable timber industry in Western Australia that will also support the building industry. Under the FMP, we will see around 2.5 million hectares of native forest excluded from harvesting, which will be an outstanding outcome. It will not be without its challenges for those communities.

I want to make the point that somehow the member for Roe thinks there is a plethora of Greens who live in the seat of Morley. Anyone who does any kind of analysis of elections, which clearly the member does not, will know that the seat of Morley has the second or third lowest number of Greens of any seat in the state. It is all about the primary vote, member for Moore, for the Labor Party in Morley. I cannot rely on the Greens, and it is absolutely absurd for the member to say that about some inner-city Morley people. I think they would be offended by that characterisation. They care deeply about the environment, but I am not chasing any Green vote in the seat of Morley, because there are about four of them—and one of them is a candidate. They are very nice, but they do not poll well; I always welcome them and their input.

The member for Moore is always an interesting contributor. I think he suggested during the estimates hearings that somehow I needed to stop and take a breath as I had not possibly thought through this decision. Member for Moore, I will stop and take a breath when you take a nap! It was so frankly offensive that somehow this is not a well thought through decision. It has been noted in the chamber that the member for Moore genuinely feels he needs to get up and explain what the Leader of the Opposition has explained quite eloquently herself. I may not agree with her arguments, but she is articulate and she can put them, and she certainly does not need any assistance from the member for Moore in re-articulating them to the chamber. Thank you for your assistance and advice, but I am perfectly capable of making considered and sensible decisions that are based on evidence and fact, and that will protect the forest and industries into the future, and we will support those south west communities to diversify in industries that we will see for generations to come.

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Forestry) [6.39 pm]: I want to make a few comments. The Minister for Environment covered a lot of things. I find the idea that members on the other side are the ones who really care about working people and timber mill workers a little bit hard to stomach. Through the years of the Barnett government, as shadow Minister for Water, I watched the Minister for Water, now Leader of the Opposition, cut 400 jobs from the Water Corporation. About 100 of them were in regional Western Australia. She did it without batting an eyelid. She did not even blink. She cut 400 well-paying permanent jobs out of the Water Corporation, many in regional Western Australia. There was not a peep. I will not take it from members opposite that somehow they are the saviours of working people. We take very seriously this decision and the impact it will have on not only directly employed staff but also the small businesses that are involved in this industry. It is not a decision we have taken lightly.

The Minister for Environment indicated that native hardwood logging comprises eight per cent of the forestry industry. When members opposite talk about the industry employing 6 000 employees, that is the whole forestry industry; it is only eight per cent. It has been making a loss since 2014—\$2.8 million. From the Forest Products Commission's books, native logging makes a loss. One of the issues that has become very clear as we come to the end of this forest management plan is that the impacts of climate change are much greater than were anticipated when it was put in place. The decline in rainfall has significantly reduced the yield of sawlogs that we are getting.

Dr D.J. Honey: Since 2019?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I will get to that in a minute, if the member will just let me. I think with you lot, we had three people saying much the same thing for a very long time in the limited time we have.

The yield that we are now getting from coupes that have been harvested is significantly less than was anticipated by the FPC. The jarrah sawlog yield from some of those coupes has gone from 20 tonnes per hectare down to as low as 15 tonnes. That is very significant. To get the same amount of sawlogs out of the forest, we have to harvest more hectares and we might get the sawlogs, but it increases the ratio of residue. When people say that every part of the tree is utilised, in many cases that is true, but some of it is for quite low-value products like woodchips. For example, take a 300-year-old karri tree. If 60 per cent of that tree is cut into sawlogs, 40 per cent will be turned into woodchips. It is a 300-year-old karri tree. It sprouted before European settlement and we are harvesting those trees —

Dr D.J. Honey: A new tree will grow.

Mr D.J. KELLY: A new tree will grow! The member for Cottesloe might glibly say that if we chop down a 300-year-old karri tree, it will regrow. The impacts of climate change are profound and it is absolutely arrogant for the member for Cottesloe, who is going to be on this planet maybe for another 50 years, if he is really lucky—

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maybe 40 years—to glibly say that the tree we will plant today will replace that 300-year-old karri tree. On this side of the house, we think that if trees of that age are going to be felled, there has to be a very good reason. There has to be a compelling case. Unfortunately, now with the yield as it is, the declining rainfall and the impacts of climate change, that case can no longer be made, especially when it is about eight per cent of the industry.

The evidence we are getting is that the dynamics have absolutely changed. If it was business as usual for the next FMP, we simply could not harvest the same amount of sawlogs as we are currently harvesting. We would have to greatly increase the number of hectares that were being harvested and it is just not compelling.

The member raised an issue about Parkside Timber. Parkside decided to come to Western Australia and purchase two mills that were on the brink of closing. They were almost finished; the Nannup and Auswest mills were virtually done. Parkside made a commercial decision to come to Western Australia and invest in those mills knowing that the forest management plan was going to run out in 2023. Parkside also has an investment security guarantee for some of its contracts, so it was in a slightly different situation from other companies. But it knew exactly what the situation was in Western Australia. It sought no assurances, and it certainly was not given any assurances from the government, for extended contracts. It knew that the FMP was up for renegotiation. When it made that decision and announced that it was going to buy those mills and keep those jobs in place until at least the end of the FMP, obviously we welcomed that because we were happy for those workers to keep their jobs. But we absolutely did not make any commitment beyond the contractual arrangements that Parkside already had. Notwithstanding the public comments Parkside made, it approached the government for a \$25 million grant and said that if the government did not provide that grant, the mills would close by the end of the year. That reinforces what we think about the state of the industry.

The government obviously takes fire risk very seriously. The forest will continue to be managed for that issue. There are a limited number of members on the other side who care about fire risk and communities. We are very attuned to that issue and the fire risk in the forest will continue to be actively managed.

Dr D.J. Honey: It has been a bipartisan issue for decades.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Everything that the member for Cottesloe said in his contribution sounded as though native forest harvesting is the only economic value of those forests. There is enormous potential in those forests. A lot of people in south west businesses have said to me that they want the south west to be known for its food production and tourism, and there are a lot of jobs in both those sectors. By preserving native forests, we are enhancing the clean green economic aspects of jobs that can be created in the south west. Completely devoid in the contributions of Liberals and Nationals today has been a recognition of the many jobs that can be created out of our native forests other than by chopping them down. Members of regional chambers of commerce and industry and small businesses tell the government that all the time. That is one issue we want to deal with through the native transition plan, which we will take seriously. The first meeting of that group is on Thursday. We will begin the process to fairly exit the businesses that want to exit the industry and help to grow jobs and other businesses and opportunities in the south west.

The member for Cottesloe quoted Paul Omodei. When I met Paul Omodei a couple of weeks ago, he said to me in a meeting with a bunch of other people that he had hoped that people would get one more FMP out of the industry. Whatever he said to the member for Cottesloe, it was quite realistic that at best they were going to get one more FMP out of the industry. Next time the member wants to quote him, ask him what he really thinks.

I have a couple of quick comments. I was really quite surprised at the savage attack on plantation forestry from the member for Cottesloe. He called it an environmental wasteland. I know pine plantations in Western Australia do not have the same biodiversity as native forests—that is why we want to keep the native forests—but pine plantations create a lot of jobs and they are also a very important food source for the Carnaby's black-cockatoo, which is an endangered species courtesy of the Liberal Party's management of Western Australia.

A few weeks back during private members' business, the Leader of the Opposition said that she left responsibility for forestry to the member for North West Central. It shows a lot about her judgement that she leaves an important industry like this to the member for North West Central. In relation to the declining plantation estate, rather than do what we are doing—that is, investing \$350 million in building up that estate again—he said that they were looking to New South Wales to buy some pine. That is what he said in this place about a week ago. It says a lot about the Leader of the Opposition. Firstly, she does not care about it; and, secondly, if she does care about it, it is a pretty bad decision to put the member for North West Central in charge of policy.

Mr P. Papalia: In charge of anything.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Or in charge of anything, even his own lunch money. I would not have him in charge of the jobs of forestry workers.

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In 2012, the previous government planted no pine at all—not even one hectare of pine plantation. Since we have come to government, we have spent \$25 million on pine plantations. We are now investing \$350 million over 10 years. When I spoke to the federal Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries, Senator Duniam from Tasmania, about our plan, quite frankly—I do not want to over-egg it—he was quite shocked at how much we were investing and he gave our plan 10 out of 10. The member for Cottesloe is shaking his head. After what he said about plantation forestry today, he should really hang his head in shame. Thousands of workers are employed in pine plantation forestry. It supports thousands of jobs in the building industry. For eight years, the previous government did sweet FA.

Dr D.J. Honey: That is an unministerial term.

Mr D.J. KELLY: It is a technical term! I understand that. But that is what the previous government did. We are proud of what we have done. We are proud that we are rebuilding the pine plantation estate. We understand the challenges for affected workers and businesses. We have had good engagement with the Australian Workers' Union on the employee front and good engagement with businesses. We intend to work through and support those businesses. Members opposite should stop being so negative and take a holistic approach to the decisions that we have made.

MS E.J. KELSIE (Warren–Blackwood) [6.52 pm]: To start with, I would just like to say to the member for Roe and the member for Cottesloe that I am actually fine. I am loving that they are concerned for me, but I am actually okay!

Ms S.E. Winton: And doing very well.

Ms E.J. KELSIE: I am doing fine, yes. But I thank them for their concern. Honestly, it is terribly nice.

Several members interjected.

Ms E.J. KELSIE: It is true—seriously.

Mr P. Papalia: Sarcasm does not work in *Hansard*.

Ms E.J. KELSIE: Sorry; that is being sarcastic, so let us add that as well!

I am really proud to be part of this historic decision. Climate change is real. It is happening now. If we do not act now, what are we going to do? From Denmark to Margaret River, I have been talking to people in my communities of Nannup, Pemby, Manji and Bridgetown–Greenbushes. Predominantly, those in the electorate are rejoicing. They are happy about the decision. I understand also that it is really distressing for people in the industry. My job now is to work with those people in the industry. The change is coming. That is not going to change. My job is to work with them to make sure that they get the best opportunity and the best outcome for those towns, businesses and communities.

Ms C.M. Rowe: Hear, hear!

Ms E.J. KELSIE: Thank you. It is not without concern for my community as well. On Sunday I went to an event organised by the new president of the chamber in Manji. I was asked on the Wednesday and I turned up and I sat and spoke to the business owners. I sat and listened to their issues and concerns. It was a bit confronting at times, but that is my job, and they understand that they need to transition from where we are now into a new space. We need to look at diversification of industry, hence we are working with different ministers, including the Ministers for Environment and Forestry, and Hon Alannah MacTiernan, the Minister for Regional Development. When would members opposite like us to have told the industry? They talk about giving the industry notice. Would they have liked us to have got to the end of this forest management plan and said, “That’s it; sorry, chaps, we’ve shut the door and we’re off”? We are saying it now. Now they have time. We have time to work with people and we have \$50 million on the table, which I know members opposite think is a sniff, and \$350 million for softwood plantations. We are also going to look at diversifying those towns. Now is our consultation. There has been a 20 per cent decrease in winter rainfall since the 1970s; that is a fact. It would be economically and environmentally irresponsible for us to continue the native forestry industry in its current form. That is where we stand today. That is how it is. As I said, my job now is to go out tomorrow and meet with the native forestry transition group, and there is a huge number of people out there on the board, across the industry, the union, shires and chambers. I can see the member for Cottesloe nodding his head there.

Dr D.J. Honey: I was reading the *Post*. Sorry, member.

Ms E.J. KELSIE: Carry on! Tomorrow, the journey begins, I guess, and we will start that consultation in earnest with that group and start talking in more earnest with the unions, as well. I continue to go out to the community and I continue to work with my communities.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [6.56 pm]: I get up to speak absolutely against this motion. In fact, it is a disgraceful motion. I must admit, on the day that I saw that we had banned the logging of native forest, I was immensely proud to be part of a government that was taking such bold steps, and I was immensely proud of our minister for doing what I think is a bold thing. Governments have to make tough decisions—that is what they do. That is what governments

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do. Governments are responsible and progressive. Unlike the opposition, we understand that climate change is real. We do not deny that we have responsibilities to address climate change and its impacts. The other side is always keen to say, “No, we believe in the science around climate change”, but I do not think there is a great deal of evidence that they do. In fact, there is no evidence that they do.

Ms A. Sanderson: Actions speak louder than words.

Ms C.M. ROWE: Absolutely; there is no action. This is a historic thing that our government is doing. Let us be honest.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo!

Ms C.M. ROWE: It is a historic decision to protect our native forests into the future.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, you are interjecting on your own member of the government. I will hear from the member for Belmont.

Ms C.M. ROWE: Member for Wanneroo, I appreciate your enthusiasm!

We understand the impacts of climate change, and that is why we have made this decision to protect these beautiful forests from 2024, and it is a historic decision. Not only is it aesthetically beautiful, but it is of cultural significance for our First Nations people, as well. It is also incredibly important from a diversity point of view, and both ministers have spoken at length about this. We do not want this left rebutted. The member for Cottesloe talked about how the industry uses the jarrah logs, and it is very important, because every element of the tree that is logged is used. A 300-year-old tree is used, and this is really important—except that a significant portion of those beautiful karri and jarrah trees is used for woodchip—woodchip!

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Ms C.M. ROWE: The member for Cottesloe is part of an opposition in which his federal colleagues are talking about nuclear power. That is their answer to climate change, so let us not go there! I do not think the people of Cottesloe would like to hear that, would they?

Let us ponder for a moment that a large part of every single karri tree ends up as woodchip to be exported overseas. As my note says here, it is sent offshore for paper manufacture or as biomass to be burnt.

Dr D.J. Honey: Yes, beautiful.

Ms C.M. ROWE: The member for Cottesloe says it is beautiful. That is a disgusting comment, but if he thinks it is beautiful, that says it all.

Several members interjected.

Ms C.M. ROWE: That says it all.

I would like to talk about what the government is doing. We are protecting an extra 400 000 hectares of karri, jarrah and wandoo forest to be preserved in perpetuity. Both ministers mentioned the capacity for carbon sequestration, but let us just ponder the fact that native forests are currently storing approximately 600 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. That is about 116 years’ worth of annual emissions for every car in Western Australia. That is absolutely significant. Our plan to protect nearly two million hectares in total of native forest will have a really positive impact on climate change. We do not want to see 40 per cent of our ancient karri forest, which has significant cultural history and importance to our First Nations people, turned into woodchip, thank you very much.

I think both the ministers here this evening should be incredibly proud of these initiatives. We are not only doing a fantastic thing for the forests and our environment, taking responsibility where we can for climate change, but also investing a huge amount of money.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm
