

LIBERAL PARTY — PREFERENCES

Motion

HON DAN CADDY (North Metropolitan) [11.25 am] — without notice: I move, on behalf of Hon Shelley Payne, who is away on urgent parliamentary business —

That the Legislative Council notes Clive Palmer’s relentless attacks on Western Australia and condemns the Liberal Party for its preference deal with the United Australia Party.

Today I intend to educate the house on who Clive Palmer is, his interwoven relationship with the Liberal Party, and how that relationship is dangerous for Australia, dangerous for democracy and certainly dangerous for Western Australia. We saw a pathetic response to yesterday’s motion when only the final opposition speaker tried to mount a real defence for the Prime Minister, so I am hoping that today we will have a better, more passionate and more on-topic debate. However, I am pretty sure that some members opposite are closer to Clive Palmer than they are to Scott Morrison. Considering the extreme lengths that opposition members went to yesterday to distance themselves from their own Prime Minister, it would not surprise me if they all threw up their hands and said, “We don’t know who Clive Palmer is”.

On that note, who is this Clive Palmer guy? He would have you believe that he is a Queenslander and a self-made businessman. He is nothing more than a glorified landlord who uses the money he makes, based on some smart advice he received years ago, to try to wreck the country and, even more so, to try to wreck this state. Let us never forget that he tried to sue Western Australia for billions of dollars—that is thousands of dollars for every man, woman and child in Western Australia—and he was backed by the Liberal Party every step of the way. The Liberal Party has been backing him since day one, and it should be ashamed of that. Every Liberal member of every Parliament across this country should hang their heads in shame at the way their party has supported this man. It has supported this man, it has encouraged this man, and it has profited from the actions of this man; Hon Nick Goiran said so himself.

He tried to sue Western Australians. It was just like his university days when he first studied law, then studied journalism, but could not complete a course; he came up short again. He lists litigation as one of his favourite pastimes; he loves litigation. He even loves representing himself, so it is little wonder that he loses nearly every case he takes to court. Let us look at his business ventures. There was a lot of talk in here yesterday about jobs. The Morrison government has an ideological bent for driving down wages in real terms. Clive Palmer—the one-time darling of the Liberal Party and now close ally—went one better. Six hundred people lost their jobs at the Coolool Resort over the time he owned that complex, and then he mothballed it in 2015. That was also the year that he mothballed his plans to replicate the *Titanic*. Then there was his failure to pay entitlements to 800 employees of Queensland Nickel, who lost their jobs when that business went into voluntary administration. He was forced to fork out \$66 million, which was taxpayer-funded anyway, to cover those workers’ entitlements. The Townsville community is still reeling from the refinery’s collapse.

The stark reality is that he costs states in Australia and Australian taxpayers in so many ways. Financially he is costing the country in general, but he is also costing individuals all over this country a significant amount of money. With regard to job security, the cost is in the hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs. Why is it only Labor who is calling him out? Why is the Liberal Party so silent on Clive Palmer? It is because it has supported him every step of the way. It supported him on his appeal to get the hard border down. It supported him on the hard border in May 2020.

The reckless comments of the Liberal Party’s then leadership team in Western Australia were one thing, but the federal Attorney-General, the now disgraced member for Pearce, soon to be replaced by Tracey Roberts, a genuine advocate of the people of Pearce—Tracey Roberts, member for Pearce; it has a beautiful ring to it—joined the commonwealth in the legal proceedings in support of Clive Palmer. Where were members opposite? They were not sticking up for Western Australia, that is for sure. They were backing Clive Palmer all the way. The only voice of reason came from a Liberal from outside Parliament and that was former Premier Barnett. Let me read something, and for Hansard, this is from 16 June 2020. Colin Barnett is, in context, talking about China, but members will understand what I am saying. I quote —

... Colin Barnett warns Australia’s relationship with China is at risk of further damage if the Morrison Government backs Clive Palmer’s legal bid to pull down WA’s hard border.

The former Premier said —

... he would be “very concerned” if the Commonwealth “lined up” with the Queensland-based billionaire, who ... had done “immense” damage

Immense damage is what he said. It continues —

Mr Barnett commended the “hardline” approach of Mark McGowan, his former political adversary, and said most West Australians likely supported the border closure.

Hon Dan Caddy; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Darren West; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Sandra Carr; Hon Klara Andric; Hon Martin Pritchard; Hon Kyle McGinn

The former Liberal leader said he would be very disappointed—his words—if the commonwealth threw its support behind Mr Palmer’s High Court challenge of WA’s border closure.

Yesterday, Hon Nick Goiran argued with one of the other Acting Presidents on more than one occasion so that he did not have to stay on topic. He defied the Acting President rather than defending his federal colleagues. At all costs Hon Nick Goiran avoided defending his federal leader. In a speech on a motion specifically about the federal Liberal government, the greatest legal mind on the opposition’s bench—I think the only one left—could not mount a defence. He could not find the words to say Morrison was good in any way for the Liberal Party. Therefore, it might come as some surprise to members to hear him acknowledging Clive Palmer.

I take members to one of the greatest reads of 2021: the multiple volumes of the transcripts of the conversations of “The Clan”. I am about to read a short excerpt of a conversation with Mathias Cormann, Hon Nick Goiran and Mihael McCoy. For members who do not know who Mr McCoy is—Hon Nick Goiran and Hon Peter Collier know him more affectionately as “The Rev”—he was one of the looser preselections by “The Clan” in the 2021 state election, and, friends, that is saying something. Who can forget the absolute train wreck of a campaign launch that was hijacked—if memory serves me right—by someone dressed up as a giant black cockatoo? But that could have been one of the other campaign launches that went haywire. It had to be shut down by then leader Zak Kirkup, and even I felt sorry for Zak. It had to be shut down because “The Rev” was asked about his extremist hate views—this is not the first time Zak had to shut down one of these for the same reason—against the LGBTQIA+ community and his endorsement of an article labelling the community the “Gaystapo”. What a disgraceful excuse for a human being. This is the sort of candidate “The Clan” preselects. This is the sort of person that “The Clan” wants to see sitting in this Parliament. Back to the —

Point of Order

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Acting President, the opposition has been lectured repeatedly in the last two days about sticking to the motion before the house. As I now read the motion before the house, it refers specifically to Clive Palmer and the United Australia Party, so I am not sure where the member sees the relevance of this. I just think that given that we have been harangued for 48 hours on relevance, the member might like to adjust his approach back to his original debate.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: If the Leader of the Opposition had just listened, Hon Dan Caddy was just about to say—in fact, he did say—“back to the” before he was rudely interrupted, so he was in fact totally dealing with the motion before us.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Jackie Jarvis): Members, there is no point of order at this stage.

Debate Resumed

Hon DAN CADDY: Thank you, deputy leader of the government. I was about to say back to the WhatsApp greatest hits because this is really relevant; members opposite may want to listen to this. I will read a bit of the transcript; it is only short. It states —

MATHIAS CORMANN: ...You don’t think he helped us depress Labor’s primary vote?

MIHAEL MCCOY: Oh yes! He knew what he was doing.

...

NICK GOIRAN: Yes I agree we’ve benefited from his splash back ...

Have no doubt, members, that this is a genuine marriage between Palmer United and the Liberal Party, and even the Liberal Party in Western Australia. We should not be surprised at all because it is not the first time “The Clan” has dragged the Liberal Party into a questionable preference deal. I go back to the gift that keeps on giving, and for Hansard this is an article by Peter Law—my friend; some may say my twin—from 20 August 2021. It states —

The WA Liberals decision to enter into a preference swap with Pauline Hanson’s One Nation ahead of the 2017 election, a deal orchestrated in part by Mr Cormann, was widely viewed as a tactical blunder.

That was far from the view within The Clan, even after the arrangement was lampooned in the press.

Hon Nick Goiran said —

“What’s not good about it? If anything I’m surprised we got such a good deal! There’s no downside for us,” ...

Let us also remember that these are the same text messages that the members of “The Clan” used to denigrate women, call them sandwich makers —

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: You didn’t stay on the motion very long.

Hon Dan Caddy; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Darren West; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Sandra Carr; Hon Klara Andric; Hon Martin Pritchard; Hon Kyle McGinn

Hon DAN CADDY: — and that was just women in the Liberal Party. I will get back to it. Yet, they saved the most awful things, my friend, for women in the Labor Party.

Several members interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: It is disturbing! These are the same messages in which Hon Nick Goiran boasted about stacking branches. I quote —

Tomorrow I'm going to find a branch to stack, this is driving me crazy.

These are the same messages in which they labelled the Leader of the Liberal Party, member for Cottesloe, an embarrassment and finally I have something that I can agree on with “The Clan”!

I come back to the motion, Hon Dr Steve Thomas. If we want real proof about the depth of the connection between the Liberal Party in Western Australia and the Palmer United Australia Party, look no further than at the opposition's benches at Hon Steve Martin. Members will not believe what I have here. Earlier today, Hon Steve Martin said that he would like to give us a history lesson. Those were his words. He said he even had photos. Touché, honourable member; I have in my hands some fascinating documents taken from Hon Steve Martin's social media, and I will read them —

Voters in Cuballing, Wickepin and Kulin shires are now in the district of Central Wheatbelt. Rob Forster—Liberal for Central Wheatbelt is an outstanding local candidate.

Vote Liberal locally ...

I have another beauty here and it says —

Out door knocking and hearing about local issues ... with Rob Forster—Liberal for Central Wheatbelt

This one here has the Leader of the Opposition in it; it is a beautiful photo of him. It says, “With regional Liberals Steve Thomas, Shadow Agricultural Minister,” he is out again with this outstanding candidate.

I also have a beautiful photo here with Senator Dean Smith and Rob Forster.

I do not know whether members remember but some time ago there was a show on one of the commercial stations—I do not know which one it was; I do not watch a lot of commercial television—called *Where Are They Now?* It looked at people and looked at where they had gone. Let me tell members where Rob Forster is—the Liberal candidate in the last state election for the Central Wheatbelt, heavily endorsed by Hon Steve Martin and Hon Dr Steve Thomas, Leader of the Opposition. Where is Rob Forster now? I will tell members where he is; he is on the Palmer United Australia Party Senate ticket. That is where he is! We cannot even tell them apart. We cannot spot the difference. That is how it enmeshed the Liberal Party and the Palmer United party are with each other. That is where it is at. Hon Dr Steve Thomas, who are you going to vote for in the Senate? Are you voting for your party or are you voting for Palmer United?

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: I'll be voting Liberal, thank you very much!

Hon DAN CADDY: I wonder whom Hon Steve Martin will be voting for?

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: He'll be voting Liberal, too.

Hon DAN CADDY: Do you think he will? I am not so sure.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: Nobody within the Labor Party has ever shifted parties!

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members! I am having difficulty hearing. Let us just remember that Hansard are offsite and I am sure it is incredibly difficult for them.

Hon DAN CADDY: The question for all these current members of the Liberal Party who were so vehemently behind their man in Central Wheatbelt who is now running for the Palmer United party is: where is your loyalty? Where do you stand?

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: With the Liberal Party, where it has always been.

Hon DAN CADDY: Really? Members opposite are so enmeshed with the Palmer United party I struggle to see the difference. There is so much to talk about here I am going to run out of time.

Let me talk about the \$30 billion compensation claim, just briefly. I mentioned it earlier. Clive Palmer was going to sue Western Australia for \$30 billion. What did the leadership of the Liberal Party do? They questioned that amount; they questioned where that \$30 billion came from. Once again, they were sticking up for Clive Palmer—someone who wanted to wreck this state. As I mentioned before, fortunately when it comes to superior legal minds, they do not get much better than Hon John Quigley, the Attorney General. He tabled in the other place documentary evidence that showed that what Clive Palmer was trying to sue us for actually amounted to more than \$30 billion.

Hon Dan Caddy; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Darren West; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Sandra Carr; Hon Klara Andric; Hon Martin Pritchard; Hon Kyle McGinn

Scott Morrison has once again betrayed this state. He has betrayed the country with the deal that he has done with the Palmer United Australia Party. I am sure we will hear from members opposite, who will say, “Oh, but he didn’t do it in Western Australia.” Western Australia has 10 per cent of the federal seats. I will tell members straight that the only reason Scott Morrison did not do that in Western Australia is because the only person who is hated more in Western Australia than Scott Morrison is Clive Palmer. Liberal state members are completely wrapped up and enmeshed in this deal that Scott Morrison has done with the Palmer United Australia Party. Scott Morrison swore—he promised—that he would not do a deal with Clive, but he did. We saw the federal Attorney-General scurry along and try to explain it by saying, “Oh, but it doesn’t apply to Western Australia.” Pathetic—absolutely pathetic. He has preferenced the Liberal Party and the Liberal Party, importantly, has preferenced the Palmer United Australia Party ahead of Labor in the majority of the states across the country. It is a bit like what we were talking about yesterday in that this dirty deal with Clive Palmer just goes to show that the only job Scott Morrison cares about is his own. He cares more about saving his own job than he does about keeping his word, sticking up for Western Australia or about anyone in Western Australia.

HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [11.41 am]: I would like to also endorse the motion put forward by Hon Shelley Payne, who unfortunately is unable to be with us today. I am sure the rest of the team will carry the motion on her behalf, and I follow on from the excellent and strong words of Hon Dan Caddy.

How could the Liberal Party do a deal with Clive Palmer? How could it do that? It is electoral poison in Western Australia, and it will go down as such. Just like the Liberal Party’s deal with One Nation went down as electoral poison, this one will as well.

I want to talk a little about the man we are talking about in this motion today. I know that people are quite familiar with him. He is most famous for suing people and for his lawsuits. He sued every Western Australian for \$12 000 a head. Fortunately, he was unsuccessful in that. He then sued the Premier of Western Australia in a bit of a tantrum, because he can afford it and he does not care a jot about Western Australia or its people. That has been totally evident over the last couple of years. For the Liberal Party to do a deal with this person is just reprehensible. I have researched Clive Palmer and will quote from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which is a reasonable source. It outlines that he was born in Footscray, Victoria in 1954. He moved to Williamstown but suffered from asthma from the pollution in that area at the time, and then moved to Queensland in 1963. It states —

He studied law and journalism at the University of Queensland but dropped out in 1975 —

He then went into real estate. It continues —

In the early 1980s he claimed to have made some \$40 million ... through his company, GSS Property Sales. In 1984 he established the mining concern Mineralogy, which acquired gold and iron deposits in Western Australia that were formerly owned by American mining interests.

For much of his career, the notoriously cagey Palmer remained largely under the international radar, expanding his empire but attracting attention only in his home country. In 2006 he leased his iron mines to the Chinese-government-owned corporation CITIC Ltd. (formerly CITIC Pacific). The deal, which was initially worth nearly \$3 billion (Australian), included future royalties on any ore produced. Mineralogy further acquired coal mines in 2008 and a nickel and cobalt refinery in 2009. Critics alleged that Palmer’s mines contained only low-grade ores and produced little, if any, actual metal and contended that his public status as a “mining magnate” was tenuous at best. Beginning in 2014, his relationship with CITIC deteriorated, with both parties alleging financial misconduct on the other’s part and initiating a series of lawsuits against each other.

Palmer’s additional business holdings included the association football (soccer) team Gold Coast United FC (2008–12) and Palmersaurus, a theme park filled with animatronic dinosaur replicas that opened in December 2013 at one of his several resort properties; it later closed. Plans to build a replica of the RMS *Titanic* never reached the construction stage. External analysis of his holdings suggested that his own estimates of his wealth were greatly exaggerated.

Even those estimates, though, placed him in a rarefied financial echelon. As his wealth burgeoned, Palmer donated lavishly to conservative political causes. In 1983 he volunteered as campaign director for Australia’s conservative National Party, to which he had belonged since 1974. He became the party’s media spokesman during the 1986 elections —

For those who do not remember the 1986 Queensland election, that election returned the Joh Bjelke-Peterson government—a great combination right there! The entry continues —

and in 1992 he was elected to life membership.

Life membership of the National Party was awarded to Clive Palmer! A lot of people do not realise this, and I certainly did not until I did some research with the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. It continues —

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He departed from the National Party in 2012 following disputes with the federal leadership of the Liberal Party (under which the National Party functioned in Queensland).

I note that the National Party's annual report of 2014 still listed Palmer as a life member. The article goes on to detail his Palmer United Party and now United Australia Party days—days in which he significantly contributed to the 2019 federal election win, with \$60 million allegedly spent on advertising encouraging people to vote against Bill Shorten and Labor. I think he played a significant hand in what was a very unexpected loss for Labor after a tumultuous few years under the Liberals. Clive Palmer is back at it again with his new party. Every day, we see millions of dollars spent on advertising against Albanese and a federal Labor government. We now see a preference deal with the Liberal Party. How can members of the Liberal Party look at themselves in the mirror and in conscience think that that is a good thing to do?

We have seen the demise of the Liberal Party in Western Australia over the last decade. Some of us do not mind that that has happened. I think this deal with Clive Palmer across the country is an equal low point to the deal with One Nation. I think it is disgraceful. It needs to be called out, and I am really pleased that this motion is here today. The voting public of Australia deserve to know what cagey backroom deals the Liberals and Clive Palmer are doing together when they swap preferences. I certainly will not be voting for the Liberals at this federal election, not that I have done at any other election. I think that other members of the Australian public, and especially the Western Australian public, who voted Liberal last time will be horrified and shocked that there is a deal with Clive Palmer, because as Hon Dan Caddy said quite correctly, the only person disliked in Western Australia at the moment more than Scott Morrison would be Clive Palmer. I encourage everybody to take that into account when they turn up to their local polling booth over the next two weeks, and especially on election day, and put the Liberals second last and Clive Palmer last, because that is where Clive Palmer puts Western Australia.

HON PIERRE YANG (North Metropolitan) [11.48 am]: I am a bit disappointed that no-one from the opposition would like to seek the call and, like they did yesterday, defend their mates and the dodgy little deal with Clive Palmer, as well as with One Nation, I hasten to add.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: We are waiting to see whether you say anything intelligent first.

Hon PIERRE YANG: I will continue with the sentiment that I expressed earlier to the Leader of the Opposition during non-government business, when I said that I was not very impressed with his comments. I think I will carry that forward in this private member's business—I am not very impressed by the Leader of the Opposition and his comments. But I shall come back to this motion. We heard a number of points of order throughout yesterday and today, including a few from me, asking members to come back to the motion, so I shall do that.

I find the fact that Clive Palmer was a member of the LNP interesting. In fact, he was a life member of the LNP. What is he doing? He is supporting the Liberal National Party in this coming federal election. It is a blatant fact that he is still carrying his Liberal National Party sentiment. That is where his heart is. He is supporting the Liberal National Party at a federal level. That is fine. We live in a free country. He is free to do that. He is a well-known man. He is a multimillionaire. He can spend more money on candidates than all political parties put together. That is fine as well. We live in a free country. What is not fine is for this man to attack Western Australia. We have heard from Hon Dan Caddy and Hon Darren West about what this man has done to Western Australia. When the Premier of this state made a decision to close the border of Western Australia to the rest of the country, it was done with a lot of consideration and it was done for the benefit of the people of Western Australia. What did the Liberals do? What did Morrison do? What did Christian Porter do? When Clive Palmer launched a legal High Court challenge to WA's hard border, they jumped on the bandwagon. I will quote a few words from *The Australian*, the favourite newspaper of the Liberal Party, which is supporting the Liberal Party non-stop. The article stated —

Mining magnate Clive Palmer has “thanked” Scott Morrison for contributing to his court bid to dismantle Western Australia's hard COVID-19 border and says the ...

Commonwealth —

has played its part in his case, despite the Prime Minister pulling his support.

Mr Morrison wrote to West Australian Premier Mark McGowan at the weekend to end federal co-operation with a High Court bid to remove the hard border, saying he wanted to work with the —

Highly popular —

Labor leader to reach a compromise.

Federal officials —

This is the key —

already testified on Mr Palmer's case in front of the Federal Court last week, presenting facts to show there were alternatives to the border closure.

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Mr Palmer on Sunday said the federal contribution to the case would still help determine whether he won his fight to overturn the closure.

We all know the facts and the events that occurred after that. Thank goodness the judiciary made the right decision to support the decision of the WA government and the Premier to close our state's border. I find it difficult to comprehend that the Prime Minister for New South Wales, Scott Morrison, and his mob had a problem with Western Australia. His mate Clive Palmer had a problem with Western Australia. That is why they are constantly attacking the state and the Western Australian government. Their favourite newspaper, *The Australian*, reported that. Because of this cosy relationship between the two, this is the outcome.

I downloaded a document from the Liberal Party's website. It shows to the rest of the world the Liberal Party's preference deal with Clive Palmer's United Australia Party. In New South Wales, the Liberal Party is recommending people who support the Liberal Party to vote 3 for Clive Palmer's United Australia Party. In Queensland, it is doing this again. The Liberal National Party of Queensland is recommending that its members supporting their party vote 3 for Clive Palmer's United Australia Party. There is a real chance that we will see Clive Palmer returned to federal Parliament as a senator. In South Australia, the Liberal Party is recommending that people vote 4 for the United Australia Party after voting 2 for the National Party and voting 3 for Bob Day, the former senator for Family First a decade ago. I do not think any member would think that those two entities—the National Party in South Australia or Mr Bob Day—would return, so in fact, voting 4 in South Australia will give Clive Palmer a boost to have a senator elected in that state. Things are getting worse. In Tasmania, the Liberal Party is recommending people support Clive Palmer as their number 2 choice, so all surpluses of their vote would go to Clive Palmer. In Victoria as well, people are encouraged to vote 2 for Clive Palmer. The peculiar fact in this document is the Liberal Party's preference suggestion in Western Australia. The United Australia Party is nowhere to be seen in the Liberal Party's first six preference suggestions. I wonder why the Liberal Party would do that.

Members opposite are not denying there is a deal. It seems that they are not denying that because they know that they will be defending the indefensible. At least they put up a fight yesterday but they have given up today. No-one sought the call and probably no-one will.

An article published two days ago titled “Liberals to benefit from UAP preferences in many key seats” states —

Liberal candidates in key seats will benefit from Clive Palmer's preferences, with his United Australia Party recommending voters put the Liberal Party second or third place on their ballot papers in several close contests.

The development, which was evident on several how-to-vote cards collected by the *Herald* and *The Age* as pre-polling opened on Monday, came despite Palmer saying just weeks ago that his party would urge voters to put the major parties “last”.

...

UAP leader Craig Kelly said he had “no discussion whatsoever” with the Liberals.

I find that very peculiar and very interesting. What a coincidence. “Oh, no, we're not talking to each other; we are just going to vote for each other, probably because we were all from the Liberal Party in the past.” The same thing happened in the 2017 election. The Liberal Party in Western Australia shocked and surprised Colin Barnett with its preference deal with One Nation. The Liberal Party does not get it. Dealing with fringe parties is actually hurting the Liberal Party as a mainstream party. The Liberal Party is shifting more and more towards the right. It is missing the centre. It is missing the point. If Robert Menzies knew that his party would turn into this shambolic collective of people from all different facets of the extreme right, he would not have formed the party in the 1940s. The Liberal Party has totally lost the point, and it is a shame.

HON SANDRA CARR (Agricultural) [11.58 am]: I rise to make a brief statement in support of the motion raised by Hon Dan Caddy for Hon Shelley Payne. The point that we really need to understand is that the Liberal Party seems to be suffering from Munchausen syndrome by proxy, as it has been constantly fed toxic and poisonous medicine by the United Australia Party to maintain attention. It is shameful in Western Australia in particular that the Liberal Party is maintaining a close, loving and affectionate relationship with Clive Palmer, yet its members sit in shameful silence during this motion, and indeed well they should because they know that Western Australians do not support Clive Palmer. He is universally disliked in this state. He is not present on any of his slogans. He is not there with his face for all to see. He is hiding behind absurd catchcries around our state and across the city, saying “Freedom, Freedom, Freedom” in one of the most free states in the country and, indeed, the world at the moment. We have enjoyed incredible freedom in Western Australia, and we are all very blessed. I constantly hear that comment from my constituents. Western Australians are not the fools the Liberals would like us to be. We know that the preference deal is designed to ensure that votes flow the Liberals' way. We know that because it happened at the last election. We do not have amnesia; it was only three years ago that Clive Palmer was proudly touting in the media that the goal for the United Australia

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Party was to ensure that the Labor Party did not get into power. This has been achieved through the collective effort of the United Australia Party. Make no mistake, all those proudly spouting the “Freedom, Freedom, Freedom” slogan—the nonsense slogan—are voting Liberal. It is entirely designed to ensure that Scott Morrison and his Liberals get more votes and attempt to maintain their stranglehold on higher taxes, lower wages—lower wages by design, I might add, although that design is fundamentally flawed—not addressing the cost of living for Australian people, making sure that getting to see a doctor does not get any better, that Medicare is continually eroded, and that aged care remains in crisis. A shameful and embarrassing dodgy deal has been done to harm all Australians. There is no other way to say it.

We also know that that is the case because the UAP accidentally leaked it. It tried to keep the deal quiet, put it off and make sure that no-one knew that those preference deals had been done, and catch us off guard at the last minute once they had sucked a few people into the nonsense catchcry of freedom—the freedom we already enjoy. It is absurd that it was accidentally leaked, but that tells us also that the UAP is slightly incompetent, although “slightly” is probably a bit of an understatement. The party accidentally leaked its own preference deal, and we all saw it. It is not as though we did not know it was coming, but it emphasises for us once again that Clive Palmer, the United Australia Party and the Liberal Party have a really complicated relationship with the truth. They do not like to be transparent or accountable, and they do not like to lay their values and the truth out on the table for people to see.

Western Australians do not want Clive Palmer. We do not want him in our state. We know he does not have our best interests at heart. We know that he does not care about wages, and we know that he does not even care about his own workers. He will not look after them; he will not show up. He will take us to court. He will do whatever he can to entertain himself, it seems, at the expense of everyday Australians. It is disgraceful and shameful and I am not at all surprised that members opposite have absolutely nothing to say on the matter. What could they say—that it is not happening in Western Australia? It is not happening here, because they know that Western Australians do not want it, but it does not matter because it is going to happen across the country. We are talking about a federal election, not a state election. It will impact us all negatively. We are seeking a better future for Australians—no more lies, half-truths, mistruths or lack of accountability, and not being prepared to roll up our sleeves and use a bit of elbow grease to get the job done and look after the country.

A member interjected.

Hon SANDRA CARR: I did indeed say “elbow grease”; thank you for picking that up!

We want someone who is prepared to back us all. I have spent most of my teaching career telling young people that when they are afforded success and opportunities in life, like those that Clive Palmer has, they do not use that to hold the rest of the country’s heads under water. They should reach out their hands and pull people up with them, so that everyone gets to enjoy the same opportunities in life. Clive Palmer has had his opportunity to show us he can do that, and he has chosen the dark side. When the Liberal Party chose to align itself with him, it chose the dark side too. We do not want that for this country. Australia is a country that can do better. There should not be a single person in this country who places any number, other than the absolute last, alongside the United Australia Party. It deserves to disappear into the dark realms of history, and I will be the first one cheering along when that happens come the election.

HON KLARA ANDRIC (South Metropolitan) [12.06 pm]: I, too, take this opportunity to briefly speak on this motion moved earlier today by Hon Dan Caddy on behalf of Hon Shelley Payne. This is a particularly important motion right now as we approach federal election day. Western Australians are making up their minds about who they want to see in government. As members of this chamber are aware, they are choosing between another three years of the Morrison coalition government and a breath of fresh air with an Albanese Labor government. We have been incredibly lucky here in Western Australia not to feel the bite of the many failings of the Morrison government. I thought about listing those failings when speaking today, but there would be far too many for me to have enough time to do so. In order to make sure that I stick to relevance, I will leave out some of the key failings of the Morrison government today. Nevertheless, they are very significant.

As I said, we have been very lucky here in Western Australia under the leadership of Premier Mark McGowan. Because of the Premier’s leadership and the hard border, WA is in the situation it enjoys today. This brings me to the first instance of Scott Morrison siding with Clive Palmer. When Palmer threatened to tear down Western Australia’s hard border during the peak of the pandemic, Scott Morrison sided with him. He put the selfish desires of a narcissistic billionaire over the health and safety of Western Australians—yet another Morrison failure during the pandemic, except this one felt more like an attack than the sloppy nature of his other pandemic failings. He called us cave people. I for one was very happy in my cave. Some people think that we can forgive Morrison for this failure; it was in the past, and he has learnt his lesson—except that he has not. Morrison and his Liberals have signed a preference deal with Clive Palmer for the federal election. This deal is a slap in the face for all Western Australians. Even though the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, may think that he has outsmarted us by not preferencing the Palmer party here in Western Australia, he did preference Palmer in Victoria and Tasmania, where the United Australia Party is the Liberal Party’s second preference, and in New South Wales and Queensland, where it is the Liberals’ third preference. I would also like to note that the United Australia Party has not preferenced the Liberals in the Senate in any state. Did Morrison think that

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Western Australians would not find out? We may be cave people but we still have the internet, although, I must say, our internet would be much better if the Liberal government had not stuffed up the national broadband network, too.

Let us now look at a few policies of Clive Palmer's United Australia Party. Members may have seen some of its advertisements announcing that it is set to spend \$70 million—on election advertising, I might add. It has been spruiking a plan for a maximum three per cent interest rate for all home loans for the next five years. I note that low interest rates have caused the rise in property prices in Australia. Sharing this concern with me is Dr Janine Dixon, a senior research fellow at Victoria University's Centre of Policy Studies, who told the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 11 April this year that limiting interest rate rises would increase demand, pushing housing prices further higher.

It was also said in that article, "It's as if there is absolutely no rational thought behind this policy."

As though the housing crisis was not bad enough, the United Australia Party plans to make it worse. Clive Palmer and his attack on Western Australians had been bad enough before this policy revelation.

Another Palmer policy is to make Australian superannuation funds invest a set proportion of their assets exclusively in Australia. Super fund managers are not stupid. If there are favourable investments to be made in Australia, they would already be making them. Economist Nicki Hutley told *The Sydney Morning Herald* in April this year —

"It basically is just saying everyone could have lower returns for their superannuation. And given we have a problem already with too many people who don't have enough superannuation, that doesn't seem to be a rational choice."

Once again, it is a policy that is completely irrational.

Although I am all for increasing our investment in Australia, I do not think it would be morally right to meddle with people's retirement savings to do so. If Western Australians want a government that cares about them, Scott Morrison's coalition simply will not fit the bill. On the other hand, Anthony Albanese chose WA as the place to launch the Labor Party's campaign, showing his commitment to Western Australians. Unlike the other two parties, he has also consistently backed Premier Mark McGowan and his strong leadership—something that Scott Morrison could never truthfully claim.

HON MARTIN PRITCHARD (North Metropolitan) [12.12 pm]: I will speak briefly because I think Hon Dan Caddy would like to respond to the comments made in debate on this motion about the Liberal Party's preference deal with the United Australia Party, which I think is a very good motion. First, I want to ask the Liberal Party as a whole whether a deal has been done, or not. In some 90 per cent of the country the Liberal Party is asking the public to vote for a candidate for the United Australia Party ahead of the Australian Labor Party. It is either a deal or it has looked at the policies that the United Australia Party has in place and has determined that Clive Palmer, Craig Kelly and the United Australia Party's policies are better than the Labor Party's policies. If the Liberal Party believes that, it has every right to direct its preferences in that direction. As the previous speaker mentioned, there are a couple of policies one would have to question. One of those relates to home loans. The catchcry of Clive Palmer and his party is, "Save your homes; save your homes". In my view, it is a moronic approach to a policy. It looks at setting a maximum interest rate on home loans of three per cent. I wonder what would happen with the banking system in this country if inflation got out of hand, because of course it has to borrow money from overseas. If the world inflation rate did get out of hand and we returned to a situation in which the cost of money was eight per cent or nine per cent, heaven forbid, and the banks could charge only three per cent through an instruction by future Prime Minister Craig Kelly, that would see absolute bedlam within this country's banking system. It is a moronic, very simplistic policy and it would be interesting to see whether the Liberal Party believed that policy was preferable to any policy the Labor Party would put forward in that space.

Superannuation is an important issue for me, having fought very hard to get industry superannuation. I wonder what would happen to people's savings if all of a sudden, through a legislative requirement, superannuation funds in Australia had to withdraw money from all their overseas investments and had to suddenly invest a trillion dollars in funds in Australia, and whether they would get any returns that would see people's superannuation grow under those circumstances. I suggest to members that it would probably have a major impact on the account balances of Australians who hold superannuation accounts to look after their retirement. The other issue, of course, is that when managing superannuation fund investment, one tries to spread the risk. Having money invested overseas and in Australia is one of the ways people can spread the risk. Again, by instruction of future Prime Minister Craig Kelly and with the support of the Liberal Party, there may be some impacts on superannuation. The other interesting policy of the United Australia Party is to introduce a 15 per cent iron ore export licence. What effect would that have on the Western Australian economy particularly?

I ask the Liberal Party: is there a deal? If it is a deal and the party is not interested in the policies of the United Australia Party, it should be honest about it and say that it does not care about the policies or the candidates that party has. It would be interesting to think that Clive Palmer personally has visited every candidate around the country under

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COVID-19 restrictions to vet the sort of candidates who are running for his party. I suggest to members that he has not done so and that the quality of candidates would vary greatly, and probably not be known. It is interesting that the Liberal Party around the country would feel that the quality of the candidates was a guiding force as to why it would direct preferences to the United Australia Party rather than to other parties. The Liberal Party has either done a deal or it believes that the candidates, the quality of the United Australia Party, and the quality of its leader, Clive Palmer, and the things he has done to this state are good reasons to direct preferences to the United Australia Party candidates to get them elected above the Australian Labor Party or other parties that might have more common sense, ambitions and policies.

The issue with Craig Kelly is that he obviously had a long affiliation with the Liberal Party, although he has some dissatisfaction with it at the moment. I am sure that he has lots of friends in the Liberal Party and I wonder whether that relationship has influenced the Liberal Party at the national level to do some sort of deal with him and that is why the Liberal Party believes that it is appropriate to send its preferences to the United Australia Party. However, I do not think any of those things are right. It is a deal that has been done in a way in which, irrespective of the quality of the leader of that party, irrespective of the parliamentary leader of that party and irrespective of the concerns that if the Liberal Party actually gets some people elected through its preferences, that does not matter; the overall issue is to make sure that Prime Minister Morrison keeps his job. That is the guiding force behind this deal. It is not about whether the United Australia Party is putting up quality candidates at all. I think it would be appropriate for someone in this place to defend the Liberal Party's view, which I believe someone may do, and tell us whether the deal has been done because the Liberal Party truly believes that the United Australia Party is a party worth supporting, whether its candidates are worth supporting or whether it is all about trying to hold on to power no matter the cost to the country and to the Australian public, and certainly no matter the cost to the Western Australian public.

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [12.21 pm]: I have very little good to say about Clive Palmer, but I will make a couple of brief comments on behalf of the opposition. First, I make members aware that when the Mineralogy bill came through, the opposition supported what the government intended doing. Second, I looked back to see where Clive Palmer came from. This has been brought up a number of times, including, I think, by the mover of the motion. Clive Palmer was first elected in 2013 to the Queensland seat of Fairfax. There were three candidates left in the final rounds of that election: the ALP candidate; the Liberal–National candidate, Ted O'Brien; and Clive Palmer. The ALP candidate was removed because the ALP came third of those three. The ALP had 20 792 votes to be redistributed, of which 15 677 went to Clive Palmer and 5 115 went to the Liberal–National Party. Do honourable members know why Clive Palmer started his parliamentary career? It is because the Labor Party preferenced him in 2013 in Fairfax. Members should look up the history before they get very pretentious about their position.

Several members interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: You put him into Parliament.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Steve Martin): Order, members!

HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.22 pm]: What a laugh. I have two minutes and 52 seconds, so I will get to it. There have been a lot of comments about the Liberal and National Parties making this deal. The National Party does not exist in O'Connor and is not running a candidate. I am sorry to the honourable member who is sitting over there to be chucked into it because the National Party is not even participating in the process of actually running for O'Connor, which I think is a pretty obvious statement on where the National Party is at the moment, and in O'Connor especially. The National Party cannot even run a candidate there.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon KYLE MCGINN: Funnily enough, the candidate the National Party is running in Durack is Ian Blayney, who the National Party took off the Liberals. Let us be honest, the National Party is the real joke at the moment in this chamber.

I will touch on Clive Palmer. I cannot hear anything from the Nationals over there. They are very quiet, as usual. Everyone would be aware that Clive Palmer has been constantly putting the workers at the CITIC Pacific site on edge. He is constantly attacking CITIC Pacific. Honestly, I do not have much love for CITIC Pacific itself, but Clive Palmer puts pressure on with his money and the deals he does. When I was a union official on that site, the amount of stress and tension that put on the workforce was insane. There is only one other person who the Liberal Party supports who is more detrimental to workers in this country, and that is Michaelia Cash. What have Clive Palmer and Michaelia Cash done for Australian workers in this country? They have tried very hard to drive out the maritime workers, even though we are an island nation. I know that Michaelia Cash supported replacing the Australian crews on the *MV Portland* with foreign exploited labour. That is the exact stuff that Clive Palmer would

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support. When he did not support his workers in Queensland, he was sending out DVDs. I got six *Titanic 2* DVDs that were mailed to the same address while workers did not get their superannuation and annual leave. That is disgrace.

The Liberal Party at the federal level has a real question to ask itself. I know that the National Party does not play much in the federal sphere because it does not have enough members anymore to actually do anything in the federal sphere, but I say to the people of O'Connor to focus on Shaneane Weldon. The Nats are not there and the Liberals support Palmer—what a shame!

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.