

Hon Tim Clifford; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Pierre Yang; President; Hon Aaron Stonehouse; Hon Alison Xamon; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Jacqui Boydell; Hon Rick Mazza; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Colin Tincknell;
Hon Charles Smith; Hon Robin Chapple

CLIMATE CHANGE

Motion

HON TIM CLIFFORD (East Metropolitan) [1.29 pm]: I move —

That this house —

- (a) acknowledges the climate crisis and declares a climate emergency; and
- (b) notes that climate change will increase the likelihood of extreme weather events, including more regular and intense bushfires and drought, and cause extreme disruption to Western Australia's biodiversity, coastline, water and food security and economy, and to its people and their livelihoods.

This motion is a simple one. It acknowledges the crisis faced by Western Australia and the world. We are in a climate crisis and it can no longer be ignored. By declaring a climate emergency, we would be acknowledging that this crisis must be at the core of all decision-making. Today I am asking this house in the WA Parliament to think about our future and the future of our loved ones. I am asking each member to ask themselves here and now what kind of legacy they want to leave behind. Will it be one of leadership, compassion and conviction?

I have met with mums and dads, students, grandparents, doctors and health professionals, lawyers, community organisers and just everyday people, some of whom are in the public gallery today. I thank them for being here. I have met with people from all walks of life, each sharing with me their concerns about the future. They have attended rallies, written letters and signed petitions. Perhaps a few such letters have come across members' desks. Each and every one of them is calling to be heard, and they are calling for action. As public servants, it is our duty to serve the public—we must act in the best interest of our communities, and that is what I am asking of members today.

Every week that we sit in this place, the chamber is full with members relaying their concerns about inequalities in our community—how pensioners are struggling to pay their electricity bills and how young families cannot afford to pay rent or buy groceries. The reality is that inequalities such as these will only worsen as emissions increase and our climate changes. We are already experiencing the impacts of climate change here in our backyard. A drying climate in the south west is causing extreme water shortages. There are more frequent and severe storms in the north west, an increasing regularity and intensity of bushfires and growing erosion along our entire coastline as sea levels rise by more than double the global average. As we face more extreme temperatures, our heating and cooling costs will soar, especially if the transition to clean, cheap and reliable renewable energy continues to be undermined by the state's big polluters. Food prices will rise as agricultural industries face growing uncertainty with the intensity and frequency of hot days, heatwaves and changing rainfall patterns. Our water supplies will diminish as the severity of drought increases. As rising sea levels erode our coasts, families, pensioners and members' children and grandchildren will bear the cost of replacing and rebuilding infrastructure to protect our coastal cities. Our gorgeous Perth hills and its residents and visitors will be at an increased risk of devastating bushfires and our people will be subject to more and more health-related issues. Just yesterday, the Australian Medical Association declared that climate change is a health emergency. Climate change is affecting us and it will continue to affect our people, society and livelihoods.

Before I go any further, I note that the government is working on a climate change policy. It has just released a greenhouse gas emissions policy, which was conveniently dropped days before the Environmental Protection Authority's greenhouse gas guidelines submission period ended and during the contentious debate on the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2019. That being said, Western Australia is still without an emissions reduction target. We need to remember that an aspiration is not a target.

I also note the announcement of the climate change issues paper, which was dropped during the community rally calling for support for the motion. Given that the 40-page issues paper was announced only hours before this debate and has been available to view only in the last hour or so, I cannot comment on it today. I hope that this government does not make it a key focus of its debate given that it is the only one that knows what it contains. Too often the message is spruiked that WA should not have to reduce its emissions because we are only a small player. Not only is that a lie; it is an absolute cop-out. We have an international and local responsibility to reduce emissions. Australia is not on track to meet the meagre international target of 26 per cent under the Paris Agreement. Emissions have been rising steadily for the past five years and Western Australia is a major contributor to this.

Since 2005, Western Australia's domestic pollution has soared by 23 per cent. This can be directly attributed to the unchecked LNG industry, which has been allowed to pollute without consequence. To effectively address climate change, we must immediately transition from dirty fossil fuels, but first we must acknowledge the situation we face. Members may remember that I first brought this to the table in May when I asked the Minister for Environment whether the McGowan government would declare a climate emergency. The answer was a short and

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significant no. Since then, the community has rallied behind the call for this government to declare a climate emergency. I have moved this motion to provide all upper house members the opportunity to declare a climate emergency. Declaring a climate emergency is more than just words. Recognising the climate crisis will set the intention for real and tangible action on climate change. It will demonstrate to the community that reducing emissions is a key priority.

Climate change is not going to disappear. We need leadership in this space. We must actively reduce emissions and increase our renewable energy uptake. We must invest in new technologies and industries that reduce our carbon footprint. We must reimagine our future as safe, clean and reliable, and this is the first step in doing so.

Contrary to what many members in this house believe, declaring a climate emergency is not revolutionary, but it is a global movement, with 965 jurisdictions in 18 countries having declared a climate emergency, including the United Kingdom, Canada, Portugal, Ireland, Argentina and cities such as New York and Paris. Here in WA, more recently, the Cities of Vincent, Swan, Fremantle, and Bunbury and the Town of Victoria Park have all declared climate emergencies. This is a movement and it will continue to grow.

I know that some members in this chamber think this is a hollow motion but I disagree. This is a very small, simple step, but it holds extreme significance. In declaring a climate emergency, we are acknowledging the seriousness of the situation and, in doing so, we place climate change at the centre of all government policy and planning decisions. This is exactly the action that all governments that claim they are serious about climate change should be taking.

I have kept this speech short to allow time for a debate. Our communities deserve to know where their MPs stand on addressing climate change. Before I end this speech and open up the debate, I will leave members with this thought: What legacy do they want to leave behind? What will people remember when they look back on this Parliament? This motion is not about me and it is not about other members; rather, it is about intergenerational equity. It is about ensuring that future generations have the same access to a safe, clean planet as we do. It is about ensuring that they do not bear the economic, social and environmental costs of our apathy. Please support this motion in its entirety. We are in an emergency and it must be treated as such.

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West) [1.38 pm]: It is a very popular motion today! I have been a passionate advocate for action on climate change for many, many years. In 2007, the then state Liberal Party—not many of those members are floating around—released a draft policy document that I authored. The introduction was on page 3 and the following page was titled “Climate Change”. The opening sentence of the draft climate change environment policy released by the Liberal Party states —

The Western Australian Parliamentary Liberal Party recognises climate change as one of the key environmental issues affecting Western Australia in the twenty first century.

It then goes on for some pages after that describing the impacts of climate change and some of the things we need to do to mitigate it. It might come as some surprise to members of the house to hear that not every member of the Liberal Party was overly supportive of that policy—the Liberal Party at that time had some members who had some significant questions about climate change—but it was still released as a draft policy 12 years ago because it was an important issue.

In my view, the motion before the house today is a motion in two parts. I think we should debate and continue to debate frequently the second part of the motion; unfortunately, paragraph (a) of the motion is one of those political stunts that alienates the community rather than bringing the community together in debate. I will explain that in some detail, because the gallery does not seem to understand —

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I was finding it very difficult to hear. There seem to be little eruptions of noise elsewhere.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: We actually had a very good debate on climate change two years ago, on 14 and 21 June 2017, on a motion moved by Hon Robin Chapple. That was an excellent debate on a motion that was designed to talk about the impacts of climate change. The motion was —

That the house notes the impact of climate change and give consideration to measures that may be introduced to ameliorate its damaging and long-term effects on Western Australia’s social, economic and environmental prosperity.

That was an excellent motion by Hon Robin Chapple, and it was an excellent debate. I gave in great detail the position on climate change that I have held for some time, followed by the Minister for Environment, and a contribution from the Minister for Regional Development, who also has a passion for this area. The important thing was that all of us agreed that action was required and we found points of commonality and, respectfully, points of difference.

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The Minister for Environment turned out to be a far bigger believer than I am in broad-scale renewable energy projects; I am a believer in individual small-scale renewable energy projects, but we found lots of commonality as part of that process. That was an excellent debate.

If Hon Tim Clifford had come up with only the second part of the motion before the house today, we might have had another excellent debate, because I could talk about this all day; do not worry about filibustering. I could literally talk about climate change for 22-plus hours, because it is an issue of great passion, but I am restricted to a short period within which to try to answer the motion before the house.

This is not the first time. On 21 March this year, on a matter of non-government business moved, I think, by the same honourable member, Hon Tim Clifford, I said —

First, I want to deal with the contrived opportunistic outrage of the Greens ...

Unfortunately, when the honourable member moves something like paragraph (a) of today's motion, we are back to "contrived opportunistic outrage". The reality is that we need to have a sensible conversation. We need to be able to bring the community with us. I have said in this house before that too often the debate is between the noisy minorities at both ends of the argument—climate deniers at one end and extreme alarmists at the other. I understand why the Greens go down that path; extreme alarmism is a great political tool to use. It gets its vote up, because its vote was a bit crashed in the federal election. It is not doing very well in its vote and it needs this boost, and a bit of contrived outrage is a beautiful tool to use. We can tell that the contrived outrage is being encouraged. I received —

Hon Alison Xamon interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Member, I know you are enthusiastic, and I am sure I look forward to giving you the call in due course.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Thank you, Madam President; time is limited.

I have received a number of emails. At a time when I am receiving thousands of emails on the euthanasia bill and on legitimate concerns, as mentioned by Hon Tim Clifford, about the government's carbon emissions policy and the Environmental Protection Authority debate—which I will come back to, because it is important and critical—those emails are being snowballed by emails like this one, which I received yesterday —

I am a relatively new resident in WA. As such I have been contacted by the office of one of the Green parliamentarians in the Legislative Council and asked to send you a letter urging you to support a motion ...

Greens members of the Legislative Council—I do not know whether it is one or all of them—are out there, writing to people in the community at a time when we have all these other things happening, urging them to bombard members of Parliament with this as well. As if that is going to make any difference. Surely that is an absolute contempt of the political process. The Greens should come and debate the issue. I love debating climate change; we could do it all day. I am happy to help the Minister for Environment in that process; I am happy to correct him when he occasionally gets it wrong. We are here to help, minister. But to play these sorts of political games to get this contrived outrage happening is of no benefit to the community.

Hon Tim Clifford mentioned the need to declare a climate emergency, so I did a bit of research on this to talk about where it has been declared and who is responsible for declaring it. It seems to be coming from Council Action in the Climate Emergency—the CACE. I presume that is the group that Hon Tim Clifford is using as a reference point, because it has some similar things on national and local declarations on its website. Bear in mind that it is nations that actually have to find a solution, not local governments. The contribution of local governments is hopefully to minimise their own emissions, but although local government policies on climate change can help, they will not do anything to assist with the problem, so it is easy for local governments. How many nations have declared? The CACE website tells us. In April this year, the National Assembly for Wales—which, by the way, is not a national Parliament, but a subsidiary Parliament; we call it the United Kingdom or Britain, and it is pretty easy to understand that it is Britain that has to address climate change—declared a climate emergency. It states —

On 1 May 2019, the **United Kingdom** Labour Party got unanimous support for a non-binding motion ...

I guess that is the bit, as proposed by Hon Tim Clifford—a non-binding motion. But Hon Tim Clifford jumped up and down and said that the government's climate emissions announcement of 28 August was non-binding. What a terrible thing, but the Greens are happy to promote non-binding things.

That was followed by the Gibraltar Parliament, the Republic of Ireland and the Isle of Man. It might surprise members to know that not only is the Isle of Man not a nationality in its own right, but also its emissions are very low. The Portuguese Assembly of the Republic followed that, and this is the one I find interesting: the French Parliament declared a climate emergency on 27 June 2019. When we get to Portugal and France, we start to get to significant economies and significant emissions. Let us have a look at why France might be particularly interested in declaring

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a climate emergency, because I think this is fantastic. Where does France get its energy from? The electricity sector in France is dominated by nuclear power, which accounts for 72.3 per cent of total production. Three-quarters of France's energy is from nuclear power—nice, low greenhouse emissions, unless we count the construction phase, but let us not get bogged down in that for the time being, because my time is very limited. Three-quarters of the energy in France is nuclear, and what else? It is also one of its biggest exports. When other countries in Europe that rely on more diverse energy systems need to purchase energy, guess who the biggest exporter is? France. Where does its energy come from? Nuclear power. I am the first to say that we do not have enough capacity in Western Australia to build a nuclear power station, unless fourth-generation nuclear power is developed, which is not highly prospective, but let us see where it goes; the eastern states possibly could do so. I would love to see the Greens have a uniform position on why this declaration is so good. France has a vested interest in declaring a climate emergency, so it can sell its nuclear power to as many countries as possible. I think that is hilarious.

Britain has also declared a climate emergency. Guess what sort of energy Britain also produces? Nuclear energy. In 1990, 17.7 per cent of energy consumed in the UK was nuclear; by 2017, it was 22.2 per cent of energy consumed. Some conspiracy theorists believed that Margaret Thatcher was such a big supporter of the climate change argument because she was such a big supporter of the nuclear industry. I am no conspiracy theorist, so I am sure she had the purest of intentions, but it just goes to show. The capacity of the United Kingdom in nuclear energy is 9 000 megawatts, which is two and a bit times the total consumption of the south west interconnected system on its peak day for the state of Western Australia. No wonder those declarations are made. The group that has the most representation in those that make a declaration, apart from those that are so small that their emissions are negligible and those with a vested interest in selling their nuclear and alternative energies, is made up of those that have almost no capacity to respond and play a purely local role—as they should—to concentrate on minimising their emissions, including a lot of local governments and other bodies.

The other thing that the member who moved the motion has not explained to the house is under what piece of legislation is a climate emergency defined. I looked up the entire Western Australian legislation database and the words “climate emergency” do not exist. There is no constitutional place for it. There is no legislative place for it. It is a made-up name.

Hon Tjorn Sibma: It is almost like a virtue signalling.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: That is a new word. Perhaps we should use the words “virtue signalling”. We might as well move a motion saying that we believe in the protection of unicorns because this motion has no legislative standing. This comes back to the Greens needing to pick up some moral outrage to boost their vote. I fully understand that and I absolutely get it. The Greens obviously think that this topic is a winner, and that is great. I just wish that we could have a sensible conversation about climate change in the middle of the argument—not on the left or the right wing, not with a need for the Greens to grow and not with the climate change deniers, but in the sensible middle.

I want to make some comments about the sensible middle because Hon Tim Clifford raised this in his opening address, particularly when he spoke about the release of a new policy. This has been debated before. This is a new government policy on emissions. Members might remember that not that far in the past, Hon Tim Clifford moved a motion to debate this policy, and that was a very good debate. Hon Tim Clifford raised his concerns about what the government had done with the Environmental Protection Authority. The minister and I responded and I think the minister got quite heated at that particular point. The EPA's greenhouse gas guidelines discussion period has closed. I put in a submission back in June, so it has been sitting there for three months. I was very keen and very excited to make a contribution. I did note, as did Hon Tim Clifford, that on 28 August—effectively two working days before the close of submissions—the government put out a statement on emissions. It was not released by the Minister for Environment, which I thought was a bit surprising, but rather B1—the big banana—the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, Hon Bill Johnston. Obviously, B2 is Bill Shorten but B2 is back in the —

Point of Order

Hon PIERRE YANG: The member should know full well to refer to ministers and members by their correct title.

The PRESIDENT: I am sure he does, Hon Pierre Yang. I was just thinking that the minister might have another title as well.

Hon PIERRE YANG: I find it appalling when ministers are referred to as B1 or B2.

The PRESIDENT: Member, I am not going to give you a point of order on that one. You know that debate in this place gets robust from time to time. Things get said. If I found that to be offensive, I would have pulled him up on that. It is not an uncommon term and also not one that I would encourage people to use, but I am sure the member

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was not using that term in a derogatory or an inflammatory fashion. He was just trying to be amusing. There is no point of order. Hon Dr Steve Thomas is on this feet and he will speak to the motion in front of him.

Debate Resumed

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I have great respect for Hon Bill Johnston. He came to Collie when other ministers would not —

Hon Stephen Dawson: I am offended I was not B2.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The minister is going to get me into trouble. There is still room for a rat in a hat.

Hon Bill Johnston turned up to Collie. He is the minister who made an announcement on the government's emissions policy. He said, and this is the good bit —

The Western Australian Government's long-held position is that it supports the Federal Government's target of reducing emissions by 28 per cent by 2030.

I think it is 26 to 28 per cent. I agree. We agree. There is lots of agreement when we get down to the debate. He also stated —

... the State Government will work with all sectors of the Western Australian economy towards achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

He says that this is the state's aspiration. It continues —

The policy supports proponents of major new projects or project expansions that emit significant emissions, developing greenhouse gas management plans that details their contribution towards achieving the State's aspiration ...

A couple of things jump out there. The first is that it targets only new growth. The press release states that the state has a target of net zero emissions by 2050 but only new projects will make a contribution. If that is the case, any new projects have to cover not only their own emissions, but also the emissions of existing projects, otherwise the policy announced by Hon Bill Johnston on 28 August is a complete nonsense. I would love to see that explained. Effectively, it means that every new project has to cover its own emissions as well as pick up the emissions of a previous project. That is obviously not going to work. It just does not function. I find that absolutely bizarre, as I did when we debated the original guideline presentation.

The Minister for Environment's office was briefed three weeks before the guidelines came out, which were not a draft by the way. The guidelines never said "draft" on them but, rather, that they were the guidelines to be implemented. It was a furphy every time the Premier of the state announced that they were draft guidelines. It was rubbish. They were guidelines that were to be put in place. They then had to be rescinded. If they were not a draft, they would not have to be rescinded. The minister's office was told three weeks earlier. The minister and the Premier were told two weeks earlier. The minister is the Minister for Environment and his job is to look after the environment. I understand that he might want to have a very strong climate change greenhouse gas emissions policy. The Premier is the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade. It is his and his office's job to look after industry, and they were woefully inadequate. I wondered why in the last debate and I wonder why now. Speaking of conspiracy theories, here is my suggestion that I am going to throw out to the house today: I think that the Premier of this state was determined to have immensely tough guidelines put in place so that he could effectively blackmail industry into contributing to major funds that he wanted to announce in the climate area. He thought that industry would buckle and hand over hundreds of millions of dollars. Industry did not buckle, so instead the Premier of this state threw the EPA and Dr Tom Hatton under the bus. I will be very interested to see Tom Hatton's response to that in a couple of months when the EPA releases its response to the submissions we have made.

HON AARON STONEHOUSE (South Metropolitan) [1.58 pm]: The previous speaker, Hon Dr Steve Thomas, did a pretty good job of questioning exactly what "climate emergency" means. It leaves me a little confused. If it were not for paragraph (a) of this motion, I would be inclined to support paragraph (b), which is fairly sensible and hard to deny. I take issue with paragraph (a). What is a climate emergency? What are the requirements if such an emergency is declared? What actual substantive change is made by the Legislative Council making such a declaration? I have a lot of questions, but rather than focusing on that, as I am sure other members will, I would like to focus on some of the folks involved in the push to have a climate emergency declared. I do not mean to speak disparagingly of Hon Tim Clifford. I quite like the honourable member. We get along quite well but some of the company he keeps is perhaps questionable. I do not mean his company in this chamber—I would not speak disparagingly of any member here—but perhaps that which he keeps outside this chamber.

I am reminded of what occurred a few weeks ago when the folks from the self-styled Extinction Rebellion were causing all kinds of trouble on the steps of Parliament House. I take issue with how these activists are going

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about their business. Correct me if I am wrong, but there was an election in this state a little more than two and a half years ago, and correct me if I am wrong again, but that election, to my mind, did not produce a sizeable majority of MPs who favour declaring some kind of climate emergency or taking some kind of radical action on climate change. I make this point because when members look at the images of these people who were standing on the steps of Parliament House a few weeks ago, it is very easy to think that they represent the popular will of people in Western Australia. But bear in mind that these folks had the opportunity to persuade the majority of Western Australian voters to take the action that they seek on climate change, and they failed. In other words, they do not represent the popular will of voters. If they did, they would no doubt be sitting here amongst us now.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Members, it is not an interactive game. Hon Aaron Stonehouse is on his feet, and he is the only one with the call.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: Thank you, Madam President. I may tolerate interjections towards myself, but across the chamber it gets a little confusing to keep track of what is happening.

Rather than being gracious in defeat, these rebels engage in a guerrilla war of disruption and nuisance, preventing the rest of us from getting on with our day-to-day business. The business of the Legislative Assembly was disrupted. There was even vandalism against the black boy trees out the front of Parliament and the seed —

Hon Jacqui Boydell: Grass trees.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: Sorry, it is politically incorrect to call them that. The seed spears of the grass trees were snapped off by the protesters and waved around. It is disappointing that climate change activists would commit their own acts of environmental vandalism. It is very disappointing for Hon Tim Clifford, who has noble intentions, but, through association with some of these groups, perhaps attracts a few oddballs. The point is that this rabble of ageing hippies does not represent the will of the electorate in WA, nor do the impressionable children who they have taken under their wing and pushed into the limelight through civil disobedience.

This is not me railing against civil disobedience. We all have a right to protest and a right to free speech. I think it is fantastic that protests can happen on the very steps of Parliament in this state and that they are not only tolerated but also encouraged. I have even seen staff of Parliament House bring public address equipment to people who are holding rallies on the steps of Parliament. That is fantastic. If someone wanted to, they could walk up to the windows of the parliamentary dining room and bang the windows and hurl abuse at the Premier. They may not last very long before protective service officers take care of them, but that is very different from how it is done in other countries. I think that is great, and something that should be protected. But let us keep some perspective here. No doubt members have been bombarded with emails and we have seen the rallies, but it is not representative of the majority view of the electorate of Western Australia.

While I am on that point, I will take aim at the media because I think the media in Western Australia is equally complicit in this in that it gives airtime to these childish tantrums. Normally, a handful of costumed weirdos would be ignored; however, the media gives them prime-time television spots. It makes a group of maybe 100 people, at a stretch, seem to be some kind of movement, with great momentum, that everybody is in agreement with when that is really not the case.

Hon Charles Smith: You're saying it's fake news, member.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: It is—that might be one way to describe it.

I do not deny climate change. I do not deny anthropogenic climate change—I think that is the phrase. I think that we can put policies in place to mitigate climate change, and I am absolutely in favour of discussing the details of those policies.

If the sea level rise is of concern to members, I would just leave them with this message: I would be more than willing to take their seaside property off their hands for them. If they are concerned about the sea level rise—I think the Premier has a house very close to the beach in Rockingham; I would be more than happy to trade with him. I have a home on a hill in Baldivis. It will be very safe from the sea level rise. We could do a swap, perhaps. I would be willing to take his house to ensure that the Premier is safe and dry on high ground. Therefore, if anyone has a seaside property, come and see me; I am willing to take it off their hands for them. That is how generous I am.

Hon Jacqui Boydell: There are a few islands in the Pacific.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: If Fiji wants to sell me some land, I would be more than happy to it off its hands.

I more than happy to support paragraph (b) of the motion, but paragraph (a)—not so much. Therefore, as it stands, I will not be supporting the motion.

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HON ALISON XAMON (North Metropolitan) [2.05 pm]: I rise to indicate that I will absolutely be supporting both parts of this motion because we have a climate change emergency and it is up to governments of all persuasions, including this government, to acknowledge that this is the case. What is the purpose of being able to declare a climate emergency? Once we have acknowledged the seriousness of an issue, it enables us to at least try to figure out the solutions to address this. It is actually everyday Australians who really give a damn about climate change. It is not true to say that it is just people from the far left who care passionately and people from the far right who are climate change deniers. I believe that the majority of Australians are starting to have increasingly grave concerns about climate change, the impacts of climate change and what the future actually holds. I am one of these people who has been talking about climate change since 1988. I remember when I was talking about that, it was about global warming. People were saying that it was not a thing. Now, at least, people acknowledge that it is a thing, but people are saying, “Oh, well. It’s too late. What can we do?” I refuse to accept that that is the case. I refuse to accept that all hope is lost, and I do not think that we have a choice other than to take it seriously.

I remind people that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has been extremely clear about this. It has talked about the causes of climate change, the potential impacts of climate change and what is needed to reduce these impacts given that it is already too late to completely avoid them. As a planet, we have been faffing around on this issue for nearly 40 years. We know what is coming and why, but we are, seemingly, unable to take any sort of serious action to try to deal with this. I hope that nobody in this room needs a climate change 101 talk, but to simply summarise the key findings of the Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO report “State of the Climate 2018”, we know that: Australia has already warmed by just over one degree since 1910, which has led to an increase in extreme heat events; the oceans around Australia are acidifying; winter rainfall across the south west has decreased and the usual wet months have seen the largest decrease; and there has been and will continue to be a long-term increase in the extreme fire weather and the length of the fire season across Australia. Just the other day, we heard the news that the outlook for the Great Barrier Reef is very poor. The federal Minister for the Environment apparently considered this to not even be a problem. It should be inconceivable to anyone in this room, just as I believe it is inconceivable to people in the street, that this is an appropriate response to losing one of the natural wonders of the world. We are already seeing the effects.

Let me remind members that we have yet again set heat records and have had the hottest winter day ever. General insurance premiums in areas that are already feeling the effects of climate change are increasing, or in some areas are becoming unobtainable. These are straight business responses. Coastal erosion has already closed one metropolitan beach and threatens a range of infrastructure and private property around Western Australia. Our agriculture department is providing information about how to adapt and diversify as rainfall patterns change—less rain overall, but increases in heavy rainfall—and the weather warms, including more hot days. The Water Corporation has been trying to work within this realistic framework for decades. This says nothing about our neighbours who, despite the incredibly offensive offer of fruit picking in Australia, would rather not see their homes swallowed by the sea, so thanks very much, Michael McCormack.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that we could hit 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming as early as 2030 at our current rate of emissions. I have said before in this place that I am more than comfortable using the language of “climate emergency” because this is an emergency. Even the AMA recognises this. We are well past the point at which we can tiptoe softly and swap out one source of carbon for another and hope that that means we will have done the job.

What is needed? This week is Asia-Pacific Climate Week 2019 in Bangkok, in preparation for the Climate Action Summit on 23 September. The United Nations special envoy for the 2019 Climate Action Summit, Luis Alfonso de Alba, has pointed out that emissions must be cut by 45 per cent by 2030 simply to ensure that we are on track for a 1.5 degree Celsius increase in heat. We have already hit 400 parts per million carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. I remind members that 350 parts per million was what we thought would be around a safe-ish maximum, so we are already above what was considered to be possibly, maybe safe. Do members remember 350.org? That campaign has been well and truly bypassed now. We have already used more than our buffer. We can no longer give the future, or really even just our older selves—some here in the chamber are younger people who will be around for a very, very long time—the world and climate that we were lucky enough to inherit. Even if Australia and the other G20 nations were to meet their Paris Agreement targets, global emissions would still be too high to even keep warming below two degrees Celsius. Under the 2030 target, global emissions increase from the current 53.5 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent to 56 gigatonnes. If we want to keep warming below two degrees Celsius, that needs to be a global figure of 40 gigatonnes. If we want to keep warming below 1.5 degrees, that figure needs to be 26 gigatonnes by 2030. How is that not an emergency? Members, it is—it is an emergency. That is how far gone we are. Western Australia’s emissions have increased 23.4 per cent since 2005. We cannot afford to keep failing like this. We cannot afford to let the big carbon polluters set policy on this critical public issue. We cannot let the politicians do this either.

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I understand that this is challenging news for the Western Australian Labor Party. There has been absolutely no appetite by Labor MPs to represent the urgency of the climate crisis felt by the ordinary members of their party, or to even match federal Labor policy, which, members might recall, was also to reduce emissions by 45 per cent by 2030, because that is what is needed. Instead, I note that WA Labor is merrily accepting the federal Liberal Party climate targets that we know will not meet Australia's obligations under the Paris Agreement. How could people be anything other than furious and scared and, I think, beyond frustrated with the response from both state and federal governments? How could this be anything other than an emergency? Declaring a climate crisis and acting on it is the very least we can and need to do. This is especially so for a government that has shamefully attempted to muzzle the Environmental Protection Authority, both in March and in its recent announcement of its 2030 and 2050 aspirational targets. The smugness of the WA government adopting below par emissions standards and expecting the EPA to fall into line is beyond belief. Should the EPA actually do so, expecting the public to shrug its shoulders and simply resume business as normal is, frankly, ridiculous. People will not cop it.

While other jurisdictions in Australia are starting to lower their CO₂ equivalent emissions, here in WA we are putting more pollution into the atmosphere, and we are choosing to do it while sanctimoniously declaring that carbon from liquefied natural gas is better than carbon from coal. We are already at 400 parts per million carbon. Carbon from anywhere is not better; it is actively making the situation worse. Total net zero emissions by 2050 is, of course, a nice aspiration, but nobbling the EPA's attempt to get it started by sorting out the big polluters that are most able to pay is self-contradictory nonsense. Of course, there is strong pushback from the carbon-dependant industries, particularly the LNG industry. Who do they think they are kidding? Gas production is the fastest growing source of carbon pollution in Australia and is effectively wiping out the gains made by moving to renewable energy in the electricity sector. What we are doing in Western Australia by allowing Gorgon to continue operating while it is utterly failing to meet its operating conditions is effectively cancelling out any of the gains made in other states. Half of Australia's increase in carbon dioxide emissions is from the failure of that one project, Gorgon, to meet its conditions. If we make the mistake of fully realising the projections for fossil fuel expansion in Australia and the other countries actually meet their Paris Agreement targets, our little state will be responsible for about 13 per cent of global emissions by 2030.

Moving towards net zero emissions right now on the path to decarbonising the economy is essential. Concerns are often raised about how jobs will be lost if we make even the smallest attempt at reining in carbon emissions. However, multiple sets of modelling by numerous bodies show there are more jobs in renewable energy generation than in coal or gas electricity generation. In some industries, such as the carbon-intense alumina refining industry, it is difficult to see a path towards decarbonisation, but those industries can still be required to move towards net zero emissions, and they can do it faster than 2050. There will be a bonus. Guess what, members: there are a lot of jobs in carbon offsets as well.

The kicker of this is that while some of our largest polluters in LNG claim they are all about investing in the state, they pay very little tax, they pay no royalties, and they do not actually employ many people either. The Australia Institute made this interesting comment —

Oil and gas extraction employs less people per dollar of value added than any other industry, including other parts of the resource sector. If employment growth is the policy goal, then investment in virtually any other industry will deliver better results.

The worst part is that the economics means that once the capital is committed to these large projects, the only sensible economic thing to do, even though it is going to destroy the planet, is to get as much money back on the sunk costs as possible. Even as prices fall, because we are flooding the markets with carbon, it is making our carbon crisis worse. I am sick of hearing the old chestnut of outdated nuclear technology. It is fascinating that it comes from people who would not tolerate for one second having a nuclear reactor in their backyard. There are different ways that we can do this. We do not have to look at outdated technologies that are dangerous and that produce nuclear waste. I am yet to hear one person in this place stand up and promote nuclear energy who can also give me the long-term solution to deal with nuclear waste. If anyone can do that, I would be very interested to hear about it, apart from the option of just choosing to bury it in the traditional lands of the First Nation people of Australia.

In my remaining time I will talk a little about donations. Concerns are always expressed about donations to political parties that are paid by large carbon polluters. As I have raised previously in a debate in this place, the tricks of the legislation provide the space for huge amounts of money to be hidden from view.

We know that in 2017–18, plenty of money went to both major parties as donations from the LNG sector. At least the industry reported it, even though neither of the major parties did. That is because the loopholes in our reporting arrangements enabled that to occur. Despite the fact that one LNG company reported donating more than \$20 000 to each of the parties, we know that that was never reported by those parties. We also know that huge amounts of

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money coming in are simply not required to be reported, so we know that they are not being reported. Just the other day, we saw reports of a \$10 000 per head dinner in the eastern states, which would not show up in any reporting of donations. That is just one of the ways to avoid transparency about who is paying for access to MPs.

In conclusion, members—I am keen to hear what other members have to say about this; hopefully, their contributions can be a bit better than they have been so far today—the Morrison government's targets for carbon reduction are wildly insufficient. They are appalling. The WA Labor Party should be desperately ashamed of itself for adopting those same appalling targets. We know that 2050 is far too late to be aiming for net zero emissions. The fact that we are using words like “aspirational” is just distressing beyond belief. The year 2030 is far too late to be aiming for a reduction in CO₂ equivalent emissions that is not nearly enough. The time for action was decades ago. The time for emergency action is right now. This is what Australians want. They want to see leadership from our Parliaments and from our governments. We have to act on this. We do not have time to stuff around anymore.

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Environment) [2.21 pm]: It is my pleasure to rise on behalf of the government to speak on this motion this afternoon. At the outset, I thank Hon Tim Clifford for bringing forward the motion. It is a good motion. As Hon Dr Steve Thomas pointed out, we had a similar debate on this issue a couple of years ago. I congratulate Hon Tim Clifford. I appreciate his passion. He continues to raise this issue in this place and I encourage him to keep doing so. I do not always agree with what he has to say, but I certainly appreciate and support his right to say it and bring issues such as this to this place to debate.

The McGowan government recognises that climate change is real. It is here and we all need to work together in acting to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, but also to protect our environment and, indeed, the economy and the community. In her interjection, Hon Alison Xamon alluded to me as being shouty because of my previous comments in debates on this issue. It is not about being shouty. I, too, am passionate about this issue. I have not up till now been, and I will not be, pontificated to by the Greens on this issue. It is two months away from 10 years ago when their colleagues in the Senate had a chance to fix this issue—10 years ago!

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Only one person is on their feet. He does not need to raise his voice and get you all excited. Only one person has the call.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Ten years ago almost to the day, on 2 December 2009, the Senate tackled this issue. Greens members should hang their heads in shame. Their colleagues had a chance to fix this issue 10 years ago and what did they do? They voted against it. Greens members should be ashamed of themselves.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I am trying to hear the minister.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes, it is great that Greens members have brought this issue forward today, but not once did either of the two speakers apologise—there are potentially two more speakers from the Greens, so perhaps they might get up and do it—to Western Australia and to Australia for their lack of action 10 years ago.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am doing my best not to be shouty, Madam President, but I am passionate about this issue.

The PRESIDENT: I know. Minister, I just remind you that it is not an interactive game; it is a debate and you are the only person who gets to speak. Go for it.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Indeed, so I can raise my voice a little bit to express my passion.

Ten years ago, this issue could have been fixed by the Greens party, but not one of its members has stood and apologised to this house or to Western Australia or to Australia because they voted against the emissions trading scheme. It is to their great shame.

As we heard Hon Dr Steve Thomas mention earlier, last week the McGowan government announced its commitment to working with all sectors of the economy to achieve net zero emissions for Western Australia by 2050. Our commitment sends a clear signal for new investment. It creates certainty for business and it positions our state for the global low carbon transition. Hon Alison Xamon talked about—again, I am paraphrasing—us closing down the LNG industry. We cannot. In what serious world can we do that? It has to be about balance. LNG is better than coal. We are moving in transition. Yes, in a few years' time, there will be new technology and perhaps LNG will not be around, but for now it is here and it employs thousands of Western Australians. It is short-sighted not to

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take that balance into consideration. Absolutely, we have to protect the environment for future generations, but we also have to protect jobs in this state and we have to be sensible about it.

Under the new policy, new major projects that will be assessed will be required to do their part to contribute to the state's aspiration for net zero emissions. Although Western Australia's transition to net zero emissions must reflect our energy-intensive economy, we all have a role to play in responding to the challenge of global climate change. As my colleague Hon Bill Johnston, the Minister for Energy, said—he has no letters or numbers next to his name, as Hon Dr Steve Thomas used—this is a sensible, balanced policy that will allow industry to harness innovation. The policy responds to calls from across the community for a statewide approach to reducing emissions, because it is not just activists who come to the front steps of Parliament looking for action on this issue; industry is also calling for action on this issue. We believe that Hon Bill Johnston's announcement last week is sensible. It responds to those calls from the community for a statewide approach. It is sensible and balanced. I think we all agree—certainly most members who have spoken so far agree—that climate change is real and action is warranted. Those people who have spoken thus far agree with the second part of Hon Tim Clifford's motion in that they note the risks associated with climate change, whether that is extreme weather events or more regular and intense bushfires and drought, and that it may cause extreme disruption to Western Australia's biodiversity, coastline, water and food security and economy, and to our livelihood.

We say that the policy that Hon Bill Johnston announced last week is sensible and balanced. We have to act, but we have to do it in a way that does not disadvantage the people of, and indeed industry in, Western Australia and does not have a significant impact on both existing and potential jobs into the future. Hon Alison Xamon talked about the potential jobs associated with other energies. Hopefully, they come to fruition, but at this stage we have jobs in the LNG industry and we need to ensure that we keep them, because thousands of Western Australians are employed directly and, indeed, indirectly by that industry. I am happy to say that, and I will continue to say it. I know that certain environmental activists do not like it, but this industry is here to stay for the foreseeable future and it employs Western Australians.

Prior to the announcement last week, the state government announced that it would have a new climate policy for Western Australia. In making that announcement, I acknowledged Western Australia's vulnerability to climate change impacts, and the exposure of our energy-intensive resource-based economy to national policies and international agreements. I also acknowledged the need for the state to address these challenges in a coordinated way. Of course, in a statement to Parliament earlier this year, the Premier made it clear to the other place that climate change is a key priority of government. In developing our response to climate change in the new state climate policy, we will focus on both adaptation, which is about adjusting to those changes that are inevitable, and mitigation of or reducing greenhouse gas emissions and playing our part in contributing to national emissions reduction targets.

Today, Hon Tim Clifford again alluded to a document that has been released. He should bear in mind that the government does not respond to motions that he brings to this place; the government puts out policy when it thinks it is appropriate to put out policy. Today, we released the "Climate change in Western Australia" issues paper, which will be up for public consultation for the next three months and will allow all Western Australians to participate in discussion about climate change, the types of actions we should take, the types of risks associated with climate change and where we go from here.

Hon Alison Xamon interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am not taking interjections. There are a great deal of opportunities in here and it will give the community something to think about and respond to. We all need to play our part. I certainly look forward to the contributions of Hon Tim Clifford and other Greens MLCs in this place to this debate over the next few months and to their response to the issues paper.

The government is committed to progressing its commitments to climate change because it recognises the overwhelming body of scientific evidence that says that climate change is happening, and that we need to respond and that there is no time to waste. We simply cannot wait for a coordinated bipartisan national approach before we act on this important issue, because we have waited thus far and have seen very little, I have to say, from our national colleagues.

Climate change presents some particular challenges for Western Australia. As many members would be aware, the south west of the state has been hard-hit by climate change. Since the 1970s, there has been a steady decline in rainfall, with about a 60 per cent reduction of inflow to metropolitan dams over this period. We have also seen changes occur because the south west of the state is particularly affected by the south-westerly fronts that used to bring our winter rain. These fronts have shifted further to the south, which means that climate change for this part of Western Australia means a drying climate. There is no doubt that climate change is likely to bring further reductions in rainfall in the south west, along with increased temperature. As I have alluded, our state has experienced an increased risk in fire over the past four decades, with fire seasons lengthening due to warm, drying

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conditions. Data compiled by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology shows that the 2018–19 summer was the hottest on record for Australia by a margin of 0.86 degrees Celsius. It was also the hottest for Western Australia, along with New South Wales, Victoria and the Northern Territory. Of course, during the last summer, in the north west of our state, in my electorate, in places like Fitzroy Crossing and Kalumburu in the Kimberley, there was a record number of days over 40 degrees Celsius. In fact, between October and December last year, that area experienced four of its eight warmest days on record. Marble Bar, again in my electorate, had eight consecutive days of 45 degrees Celsius late last year. So temperatures are rising and communities are being affected.

The sea level is also rising. The rate of sea level rise on the west coast is almost three times the global average. Information provided to me by my department shows that recorded sea levels in Fremantle since 1897 indicate a mean rate of sea level rise of 1.5 metres a year. Rising sea levels are amplifying the effects of high tides, coastal erosion, storm surges and associated inundation of low-lying areas. We are seeing this stuff happen—absolutely—and we need to work together to make sure that we tackle the issues.

In the future, climate change will result in increased average maximum temperatures. It will worsen drought and lead to more extreme weather risks for people, the environment and infrastructure. Increased temperature, rising sea levels and challenging rainfall patterns present clear challenges for us in the management and protection of our ecosystem communities. There are additional issues for our thriving agricultural sector and planning systems, which will need to address the requirement for more resilient infrastructure. These changes have the potential to adversely affect our community. It will also adversely affect business and primary industries in Western Australia, and will have implications for a range of issues, from biodiversity conservation to the delivery of essential services.

The other challenge for Western Australia is in relation to our energy and emissions-intensive economy. The resources sector is a key driver of our economy—that should be no surprise to anyone in this room—but it is also energy and emissions intensive at present, as well as being trade exposed. This means we need a sensible, balanced approach to transition our economy. To close off industry today by closing down the LNG industry would be appalling. It would not help us; in fact, it would send us backwards. This industry creates jobs in this state—it provides livelihoods for people. Closing it down would not be the right thing to do. We all have to work together to make sure that we reduce our emissions. That is something that our greenhouse gas emissions policy for major projects will help to do. This policy creates a clear signal that we want industry to innovate. We want them to move to more efficient ways of using energy. We want them to make more use of the state's renewable resources. We expect them to be accountable for the way their greenhouse gas emissions are managed when they do business in this state.

Although we face significant challenges, the good news is that Western Australia has world-class renewable energy options and resources. The emissions intensity of our economy is declining and the transition to lower carbon energy supply is already underway. We can already see the beginning of that low-carbon industry transition. In fact, projects in the north of the state are showcasing some of the most innovative off-grid renewable solutions in the world. But we need more of it and we want it to happen faster. Our greenhouse gas emissions policy for major projects will help to deliver that.

By addressing climate change, we will make our economy stronger and our communities and businesses more resilient in the face of both physical and financial risks. That is why this document is important and why we need to have a conversation with the community about what we all can do. But I have to say there are people on the fringes—on the margins out there. A few weeks ago, when there was a rally here—I have not seen the evidence, but I heard this—one of the protesters glued themselves to a bench that smokers use outside Parliament House. That may or may not be true, but where does that get you? It does not get anyone any nearer to addressing this issue. By all means, have a voice and express that voice, but doing lunatic things like that does not help anybody. In fact, it sends us backwards and turns off the mainstream community from what is a very important debate. Absolutely, let us talk about it, but let us do it in a sensible fashion.

I have plenty more to say, but I did see that many other members want to make a contribution to this debate this afternoon. It is important, but I think we need a sensible motion to pass in this place. Therefore, I have an amendment to the motion.

Hon Alison Xamon: We don't need yours.

Amendment to Motion

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I want to make sure that a sensible motion is passed in this place this afternoon that the community can be proud of. Therefore, I move —

To delete paragraphs (a) and (b) and substitute —

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- (a) acknowledges the reality of climate change and calls on the federal government to take action to ensure Australia meets its obligations under the Paris Agreement; and
- (b) notes that climate change has increased the likelihood of extreme weather events, including more regular and intense bushfires and drought, and may cause extreme disruption to Western Australia's biodiversity, coastline, water and food security, and economy, and its people, their health and livelihoods.

HON TIM CLIFFORD (East Metropolitan) [2.38 pm]: I am really disappointed in the Minister for Environment for attempting to water down the motion.

Hon Alanna Clohesy: Strengthening the motion.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Tim Clifford.

Hon TIM CLIFFORD: The minister may not be aware, but we face a crisis across the globe. There are serious issues. The Amazon is on fire, billions of litres of ice are melting into the oceans, there are droughts in this state, and there is coastal erosion, which the minister acknowledged. Watering down this motion will go against everything we have put forward. It will go against everything that the community expects of us. The minister also alluded to working with the federal government, but so far the federal government has been an embarrassment when it comes to action on climate change. It was federal government members who carried a piece of coal into Parliament and joked about islands going under the ocean. The state government is not taking climate change seriously when it seeks to water down a Greens' motion. It basically signals to the community that the government would rather water down a motion than take climate change seriously and take effective action on it, and that is really disappointing. The Greens will vote against this amendment to our motion. This is embarrassing.

HON JACQUI BOYDELL (Mining and Pastoral — Deputy Leader of the Nationals WA) [2.39 pm]: Very quickly, the Nationals WA will support the amendment moved by the Minister for Environment. I think it presents a sensible option for the house to consider, because, as other members have said, no member has said that climate change is not real. There are effects on our coastlines and to our agricultural, mining and resources sectors. We do not want to see any impacts on those industries, or on the land or coastlines that people enjoy and have residential properties on. The federal government needs to show strong leadership on this issue because climate change is an issue that faces the globe. I do not think this amendment waters down the motion. I think the concept of the state government working with the federal government adds strength to the motion. It will ensure that the government meets its obligations under the Paris Agreement. We will be calling on the federal government to do something that it is on target to do. I would have thought the Greens would support the state government working with the federal government to achieve the outcomes and obligations of the Paris Agreement, because that is taking action and recognising that climate change is an issue for Australia. Nobody in this house today has denied that.

I agree with paragraph (b) of the motion, as originally moved by the mover of the motion. As other members have said, calling on the house to suggest that there is a climate emergency is not helpful to the debate on climate change. I think it incites emotion and all sorts of expectations of unobtainable responses that the government cannot achieve or measure. Emotive terms such as "climate emergency" do not achieve assurances. What is the response to that? I note that Hon Alison Xamon said that declaring a climate emergency means that we can do something about it. I suggest that the state and federal governments, and previous governments, have done something about this issue. It is a complex issue. People feel very emotional about it, and I understand that. I think calling on the federal government to ensure it meets its obligations under the Paris Agreement is a step that everyone in this house should support, because if the federal government was not meeting its obligations, we would all be outraged. I do not understand the mover of the motion's position not to support the amendment, because I am pretty sure that if the federal government was not meeting its obligations under the Paris Agreement, he would be outraged. The National Party will support the amendment to the motion.

HON ALISON XAMON (North Metropolitan) [2.43 pm]: The Greens will not support this amendment, because it would effectively allow the state government to renege on its obligation to address climate change. That is the problem here. I think it is really important that this place realises that we are dealing with a situation that is an emergency. We are dealing with a situation that has already got to the point of crisis. Those two words—"emergency" and "crisis"—will effectively be removed from the motion by this amendment. I have to say how disappointing it is, but utterly predictable, that once again in this place we are looking at amending a motion in order to, in this instance, water it down while our planet burns. I think that is hugely problematic. The Greens have never voted to support amendments to motions. People here know that. We will certainly not tolerate the sort of amendment being contemplated here. This amendment is designed to wipe the state government's hands of having to take responsibility for its contributions to carbon emissions. Do we think the federal government needs to lift its game? Oh, my goodness,

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yes! We have been saying that consistently and will continue to say it, but the state government has a role to play as well.

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West) [2.45 pm]: As much as it pains me to come to the defence of the Minister for Environment and the government, I have to say that the amendment would make the motion the one that we should have debated from the start, because it would make it look like a motion moved by Hon Robin Chapple two years ago and allow us to have a significant debate about climate change. I would have loved to spend 20 minutes talking about climate change, but because the first part of the motion was entirely about politics rather than climate change, I spent most of my 20 minutes, which would have been far better spent elsewhere, talking about the sheer politics of it—the lack of any official recognition of what a climate crisis and a climate emergency look like. We could have had a very positive, sensible debate if the motion had started a little bit like that. With all due respect to the Greens, the suggestion that the amendment to the motion lets the government off the hook is rubbish. The only thing that lets the government off the hook in relation to climate change is if the Parliament does not do its job to hold the government to account. In the bit of the debate in which I did not have to focus on paragraph (a) of the motion but on the bit about the government's announcement on 28 August, I said it was a nonsense. The minister did not answer any of that. He did not answer whether new projects would be subsidising all of the old projects. That is the debate we should have been having. That is the debate that would have been of value to the state of Western Australia, not the bit about sheer politics and the vote-buying exercise in paragraph (a) of the motion. The opposition and I will support the amendment.

Just before we get too petty about amending motions and this idea that we are not allowed to amend anybody's motions, again, what nonsense. Amendments can make improvements to motions, which might allow sensible debate and for them to be supported. Let me remind members that the motion moved by Hon Robin Chapple in 2017 was supported on voices by all sides. In my view, the motion moved by Hon Tim Clifford would have failed. The motion, as amended by the Minister for Environment, if we get to that point, is supportable. It will not allow the mover of the motion to put out his press release quite as strongly—that the dirty opposition and the government voted him down and he was the hero of the day. The amendment would not allow him to put out that press release, which he might have done otherwise, but it is an actual improvement. I wish we had amended the motion about where the saving grace for the state's finances came from, because that would have improved that motion as well. We would have disagreed on it, but it would have made the motion better. We can get petty and say that no motion is allowed to be amended, but that is not covered by the standing orders. The standing orders do not say that a motion cannot be amended. If we do not use debate in a smart manner, what on earth are we here for? The opposition will support the government's amendment and partially defend the government, but we will hold it to account for the things it says it will do. When it does things badly, the opposition will jump on it, which is the role we have in Parliament. Amending the motion allows us to continue to do precisely that.

HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural) [2.48 pm]: I rise to say that I will also support the government's amendment. Even though I do not totally agree with it, it is certainly a step up from the original motion. The biggest problem I have with the original motion is this declaration of a climate emergency. It is a bit like a dog that chases a car: we declare a climate emergency and then what? What do we do with it? Do we stop liquefied natural gas production? Do we stop driving cars? Do we stop running power stations? At the end of the day, if we are going to make changes, as previous speakers have said, we need to have cool heads. We need to start working somewhere in the middle on ways to change the way we live our lives. If we declared a climate emergency tomorrow and reduced our emissions, what difference would it really make in the overall climate change situation? Australia emits about 1.1 per cent of the total amount of carbon dioxide emitted internationally. The biggest polluters are China, which emits 27.2 per cent, and the United States, which emits 14.6 per cent. They contribute a lot to CO₂ emissions, but the fact of the matter is that Australia is not its own microcosm with a dome over it. The whole world contributes to CO₂, so I do not quite know what we would do to declare a climate emergency. The Greens surprise me. I do not know what they do. They must get down there in Fremantle, that little hotbed of green activism, and have their double-shot decaffeinated soy lattes and dream up these alarmist issues to get more votes by frightening people into voting for them. I will support the amendment. I am interested to hear what other members have to say.

HON AARON STONEHOUSE (South Metropolitan) [2.50 pm]: I will be very quick, because I know other members want to speak on the proposed amendment to the motion. I just spent five or so minutes making fun of the Greens' activists, but in this case I actually side with the Greens on the question of whether we amend the motion. I do not think the amendment would necessarily completely derail the intent of the motion, but it would certainly water it down somewhat. I quite like the amendment to paragraph (b) because it balances the statement. Rather than saying, as a matter of fact, that there will be extreme disruption to Western Australia's biodiversity, the amendment provides that it "may" cause extreme disruption to WA's biodiversity. That is a little more balanced.

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The amendment to paragraph (a) calls on the federal government to take action to ensure that Australia meets its obligations under the Paris Agreement. Putting aside whatever members think about the Paris Agreement, the amendment removes all responsibility from the government and Parliament of Western Australia. I can think of no more bloated or ineffective bureaucracy than the one in Canberra. The Western Australian Parliament is mostly sovereign and can solve its own problems and tackle complex issues. We should not abdicate our responsibility to Canberra. It is incredibly lazy. I do not think the federal government should be setting energy policy. Western Australia is not connected to the same grid as the eastern states so there is no need for us to call on the federal government to do such a thing. I do not think the federal government should be in the job of protecting the environment and setting climate change policies. It is something that the states can and should do on their own. Perhaps for completely different reasons from my friends in the Greens, I will not support the amendment to the motion.

HON DIANE EVERS (South West) [2.52 pm]: I will say just a few words to explain why the Greens will not be supporting this amendment. Hon Aaron Stonehouse referred to the small word “may” and I finally understand—I have got it! Everyone in the house seems to believe the first part of the motion that notes that climate change is happening. That is great. The climate is changing and all this is going on. But it seems to me that nobody believes that climate change will change stuff, more than just the climate. Yes, we will have colder days, hotter days, wetter days and dryer days, but it is also going to cause disruption. The penny has not yet dropped. We need to leave “will” in the motion because it is so important to the statement. The wording of the motion has to remain as it began, without this amendment. Inserting “may” will make a mockery of the reason that we are here. The reason why the Greens, Extinction Rebellion and student strikers are asking for change is that disruption is going to happen. We may be dead by the time it happens, but others will not be and that is why we need to leave “may” out of the motion. We have to acknowledge that that stuff is going to happen. We cannot debate the same motion that Hon Robin Chapple moved because we all agreed to it. Okay, fine—you guys all say that climate change is happening. Whoopee, thanks, that is wonderful! But then we go back and keep doing everything that we have been doing. That will not do it. There will be disruption. We must acknowledge that this is an emergency. The word “emergency” is used in law. In fact, in a Brisbane courtroom today, four Extinction Rebellion members who were charged in a protest have used the extraordinary emergency defence to plead not guilty—they had to act to stop the cataclysmic effects of climate change from hurting us all. That will be debated in court next month. We will find out whether the court acknowledges that they had to act because of an emergency and whether they had extraordinary reason to act in the way they did. It is similar to when a person breaks the law when they drive in such a way as to avoid an accident. That is fine; it is an extraordinary emergency. That is what the climate strikers are doing. They have broken the law because they have to get their message across. The Greens will not be supporting the change to insert “may” because it is useless and makes a mockery of paragraph (b) of the motion. The first paragraph of the amendment, which seeks to place responsibility with the federal government, is just useless. The federal government is doing nothing to address this issue, which is why the states should do it. If the states will not do it, people will ask their local government to do it; they are representatives of the people and they should be representing their wishes. Right now, a lot of people acknowledge that climate change is happening. They can see changes happening around the world and they are asking us to do something about it.

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [2.55 pm]: One Nation will be supporting the amendment for reasons similar to those outlined by Hon Rick Mazza. Paragraph (a) of the motion is not reality—it is crazy stuff. As Hon Dr Steve Thomas said, the motion takes away from the debate because it is just not reality. The climate is always changing, but the motion claims that the situation is a crisis. We do not believe it is a crisis at this stage. We will be supporting the amendment.

HON CHARLES SMITH (East Metropolitan) [2.56 pm]: I certainly will not be supporting the proposed amendment. We are here today to debate the motion moved by the Greens, not by the McGowan Labor Party. We are here to debate the Greens’ motion, pure and simple. It is a binary decision, a bit like a male and a female. It is very simple. I therefore do not support the amendment.

Division

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result —

Extract from Hansard
[COUNCIL — Wednesday, 4 September 2019]
p6348b-6364a

Hon Tim Clifford; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Pierre Yang; President; Hon Aaron Stonehouse; Hon Alison Xamon; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Jacqui Boydell; Hon Rick Mazza; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Colin Tincknell;
Hon Charles Smith; Hon Robin Chapple

Ayes (25)

Hon Martin Aldridge
Hon Ken Baston
Hon Jacqui Boydell
Hon Jim Chown
Hon Alanna Clohesy
Hon Peter Collier
Hon Stephen Dawson

Hon Sue Ellery
Hon Adele Farina
Hon Nick Goiran
Hon Laurie Graham
Hon Colin Holt
Hon Rick Mazza
Hon Kyle McGinn

Hon Michael Mischin
Hon Simon O'Brien
Hon Martin Pritchard
Hon Samantha Rowe
Hon Robin Scott
Hon Tjorn Sibma
Hon Matthew Swinbourn

Hon Dr Sally Talbot
Hon Dr Steve Thomas
Hon Colin Tincknell
Hon Pierre Yang (*Teller*)

Noes (6)

Hon Robin Chapple
Hon Diane Evers

Hon Charles Smith
Hon Aaron Stonehouse

Hon Alison Xamon
Hon Tim Clifford (*Teller*)

Amendment thus passed.

Motion, as Amended

HON ROBIN CHAPPLE (Mining and Pastoral) [3.02 pm]: I rise to speak to the amended motion and I want to put on the record some of the fundamental facts that I believe have been missing from the debate thus far. Is there a climate emergency? We seem to have taken that out of the debate, but for many years we have been aware of a runaway train heading towards us. That train has been trundling down the track and in 2001, when I was elected, it was probably a kilometre away.

Hon Simon O'Brien: A coal-powered train?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: The member should well know that I am slightly deaf, so his interjections will have little or no effect on me!

That train is now merely metres away, and we are still looking in the wrong direction. The emergency is that we need to turn around, face the train, try to get on board, apply the brakes and, with a bit of luck, turn the power off. If we are really lucky, we might be able to get the train to reverse back up the track.

In 1990, the benchmark year for the Kyoto Protocol, Western Australia's emissions were 52 million tonnes of CO₂ per annum. That was established in the Western Australian Greenhouse Strategy of September 2004. By 2010, this had grown to 74.3 million tonnes of CO₂ per annum. The research we have done shows that by 2012 that had risen by approximately 85 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per annum. Projects coming on stream since 2017 that have not been accounted for will possibly lift that by an extra 83 to 128 million tonnes of CO₂ per annum. Last night, I went on the internet and had a look at what the National Greenhouse Gas Inventory stated for 2017. It had WA at 96 million tonnes of CO₂ per annum. That is virtually double what we signed up for under the Kyoto Protocol in 1997.

In 1997, Australia gave itself eight per cent exceedances, which was something that was not available to any other nation. Every other nation in the world except Canada was actually looking to reduce their emissions. We were allowed to increase our emissions by eight per cent. We did this largely by saying, "Well, if we stop land clearing, we're going to claim that extra amount of CO₂ emissions that would have happened had we done the land clearing", so we discounted our emissions in WA by 10 million tonnes of CO₂ per annum. We do that as part of the original agreement.

I turn to where we are at the moment, and I am sorry to say I will have a different position from my colleague Hon Alison Xamon. Our emissions today are 96 million tonnes per annum, and that is an 85 per cent increase on our 1990 figures. That is an appalling situation, but we know that projects coming on stream—I will list a few of them—will increase that figure by nearly a further 123 million tonnes of CO₂ per annum.

Let us look at some of the issues that are not covered in the 2017 NGGI figures. Those figures did not include the expansion of Pluto, which accounts for about four million tonnes of CO₂ per annum. The Browse Basin project, which will be coming down to the North West Shelf joint venture, is responsible for a further two million tonnes of CO₂ per annum. BHP's Onslow Scarborough development, which will now be coming in through the Pluto facility, will produce an extra three million tonnes of CO₂ per annum. Pluto LNG on the Burrup peninsula will increase to eight million tonnes of CO₂ per annum. The Gorgon gas development, which interestingly was not included in the 2017 NGGI figures, will go up to a further 11 million tonnes of CO₂ per annum. Assuming we can do some geosequestration of a very limited sort—I see Hon Dr Steve Thomas smiling!—that might reduce it by three million tonnes of CO₂ per annum. Chevron at Onslow's Wheatstone LNG facility is producing a total of 14 million tonnes of CO₂ per annum.

This is Western Australia; it is a friggin' emergency—I think "friggin'" is a permitted word—and that is why we moved the original motion. We have a massive amount of emissions occurring in Western Australia that we are

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not being held to account for and about which we are doing nothing. We then hear the almost trite comments by the Minister for Environment when he says that we cannot disadvantage our economy or our people. Climate change is going to disadvantage humanity, and in my view, that is the fundamental issue. We are like Luddites; we are burying our heads in the sand and failing to address the significant issues that face this planet.

That is why the Greens are here. We are here as your conscience, to remind you that you have to do something, otherwise you will be held accountable and history will show that you did nothing.

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [3.09 pm]: Before the motion was amended, much of what I was going to talk about was based on the crisis side of things. I will still make some comments in that regard. The climate is always changing. We know that that is a natural occurrence, but there is no crisis at the moment, and that is the issue. What should Australia be doing about this? Australia produces 1.3 per cent of the world's carbon emissions, it contributes 0.3 per cent to the world's population, it contains 5.12 per cent of the world's land mass and its makes up 1.75 per cent of the global economy. Australia is not the main contributor to the world's greenhouse gases. We are not the main part of the problem. This talk of a crisis makes it sound like we are, when that is not the reality. The Greens love to throw around a lot of figures and selective facts to make the argument seem more dramatic than it actually is. The scientific argument is often lost and taken over by hyperemotional hysteria. The argument of the same selective facts has become so repetitive that it is literally propaganda, and our children are the victims. No logical argument is being put before them, only emotional headlines to guilt them into accepting a crisis as fact. We face many other crises, such as pollution. I would like to challenge the people of this place to look at serious issues. Plastics are clogging up our oceans and rivers; that is a real issue. Salinity and drought exist in our regional areas; that is a real issue. Cane toads are spreading across the north and killing native flora and devastating natural ecosystems; that is a real issue. We cannot even get people to take up jobs in regional areas. If these people are that committed to climate change, why are they not helping our rural communities by getting jobs that are beneficial to the world? These are the real problems of today.

Many people say that we are having a crisis—that is the word they use—yet they do not have solar panels on their roof, they have not bought a Tesla car, they do not have self-sufficient water recycling systems and they do not have double-glazed windows in their house or fibrous insulation in their roof. How many of them have installed skylights in their houses; and, if not, why not? It is fine for everyone else but not for them. Why? Because there is no crisis, and that is why government is not doing everything possible to change the situation. There would be a crisis if we acted in that way. It is not economically viable to make such dramatic changes in such a short time.

We heard the minister talk about this. He is right. I do not agree with everything he says, but he is 100 per cent right on this. People want to clean up our environment and to make changes to get rid of pollution. However, if we acted like the Greens are asking us to act, none of us would be left. We would all be out of jobs. I have not taken up all these measures, and the reason for that is exactly the same: it is not economically viable. I have made some of the changes but I cannot make them all in such a short time. The world is learning to cope with this issue and to make the changes as we grow. We want to make these changes. If we make these changes at breakneck speed, where will the money come from? Nowhere in this debate have the Greens stated where the money will come from to make these changes. Will the money come from health or education? Will we reduce the number of police officers and nurses to free up some money? The money will have to come from somewhere. Right now, the federal government does not have a lot of money—it has not had great years—and neither does the state government, so where will the money come from? The federal and state governments are working with a deficit.

Once again I would like to point out the hypocrisy of the young. If we are facing a crisis, as we are told we are, young people should be doing everything they can to reduce their personal footprint. If this next generation want to make a difference, doing something as simple as charging their phone only once a day instead of three or four times a day would make a difference. Much less electricity would be used. While this generation of kids are screaming at us to take action, they are using more electricity per capita than the generation before them. Often they are not the ones paying the bill and, for the most part, they do not practice what they preach; that is the truth. Why are these young people not helping the people of the north to get rid of cane toads? The ecosystem there is fragile but, no, they are too busy to help. Why do kids protest on a Friday? Friday is a school day. They do not protest on a Saturday. There is no-one in Parliament on Friday so why are they on the steps of Parliament on a Friday? Because it is a school day. Why are they not there on a Saturday instead? Because it is not a school day. Parliament does not sit on Fridays. It does not make sense. Their agenda is not real.

Australia as a nation cannot afford to convert the entire economy to carbon neutral by 2025, as has been touted so often. It would break the economy completely.

The PRESIDENT: Member, you are not reading from a speech are you?

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: No, I am just looking at notes, occasionally.

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I have some figures here from 2016. As mentioned before, China is responsible for about 6 million gigawatts of electricity; the United States is responsible for 4.5 gigawatts; India, 1.5 gigawatts; and Australia, 256 000 gigawatts. The big polluters have a responsibility to reduce their emissions—I understand that—but they also have a population to protect, look after and put to work. If the Greens were really serious about the climate, the only way to decarbonise the world would be to go to a nuclear industry; that is a fact. They are the biggest supporters of coal in the world! Due to the lack of baseload power, coal is available and being burnt in increasing amounts all over the world, including in China and India. Although China and India have built more and more coal-fired power stations, they are now building nuclear power stations. They do not have a choice. In Beijing, when a person puts their hand out in front of their face, they cannot see it. Members should just go to Beijing next summer and they will see what I am talking about.

As mentioned before, Australia's economy makes up 1.75 per cent of the global economy. We should not be investing major amounts of money on renewables until they are proven and reliable—in other words, unless they are worth the investment. We should invest in it, but we should not throw the kitchen sink at it. Our economy is a living, breathing thing. If it is not kept in balance, it will bring about death and destruction to our society. We have seen it happen many times in human history. Society does not thrive in areas such as research and development unless there is peace, stability and a thriving economy to fund it. Where is the money coming from? Government cannot afford to pay for renewable infrastructure if it is busy dealing with mass unemployment and homelessness, and chaos. The original motion was not realistic; it was not a true reflection of the situation. Climate is changing all the time and we need to continually clean up the pollution in our society and work as hard as we can to reduce pollution.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the motion, as amended, be agreed to. I will give the call to Hon Diane Evers, but at five minutes before the expiration of this debate I will give the call to Hon Tim Clifford if he chooses to provide a reply. He may say no, and that will enable Hon Diane Evers to continue.

HON DIANE EVERS (South West) [3.20 pm]: I must first express my support, my admiration, my love, my care and my joy for the youth of this world who actually want to be here for the rest of their natural lives, living to the same ages as we are able to do. The children, as they are in some cases, stand up and say, “Not on my watch. I cannot believe what has been done before.” They want to stand up and make change. They know that the cost to this world is much greater if we do nothing. The arguments are that we cannot afford this and we cannot afford that; it will hurt the economy. Members can go right on saying that until the day they are in their bed, hoping that we have passed the voluntary assisted dying legislation, because it will be painful and horrendous. There will be war, famine, flood and pestilence. I am not prepared to stop and not do something for my children, for other people's children, for the grandchildren, great-grandchildren and so forth. I believe humans can do better. We are talking about an emergency. The students striking for climate change have employers backing them up, telling their staff to go out on strike and join them because we need to make change. I am looking forward to 20 September and seeing many, many people out there, supporting those students.

In addition, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its report on 7 August 2019. It was a special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems, because the IPCC knows that our landscape is at risk. The report notes that about a quarter of the earth's ice-free land area is subject to human-induced degradation. Soil erosion from agricultural fields is estimated to be currently 10 to 20 times to more than 100 times higher than the soil formation rate. That is only one aspect of this issue. We do not have just the soil degradation from trying to get as much out of the landscape as we can; we are getting desertification in areas where we have cleared unnecessarily more than the earth is capable of repairing. We have acidity; we have erosion. When those rain events happen, it is not like we just get a lot of rain and it goes off into the river and we miss out on it. It takes a lot of our soil with it. These events are happening because of climate change, yet we sit here and want to debate something we already have agreed to—namely, that climate change is happening. Great; okay. Now what? We say that we will do other things to fix it, but we are doing that very slowly. We are doing that at a snail's pace. The youth of our country and of the world know that. That is why they are asking us to act, to do something now and to make change. When we say we should get out of liquefied natural gas, we are not saying that we should stop it tomorrow, as was once done with live animal exports. That is not the way we do it. But we need to put in place the measures to plan for that no longer existing. Do we see that happening? No. We see an aspirational target for 2050. Great. How about 2030? How about a target to be 100 per cent renewable for our stationary energy by 2030? It is possible. Every day it gets a little more difficult and a little more expensive, but it is possible. That is the sort of target we are looking for. We want to see something that is actually going to change things so that tomorrow we are looking for more renewable energy opportunities, avoiding the whole nuclear debate altogether because it is just a furphy. It is useless and ridiculous and the only ones it will support are those who want us to build nuclear energy plants.

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The PRESIDENT: Member, at that point I will interrupt in accordance with the standing orders to offer Hon Tim Clifford the opportunity to reply.

HON TIM CLIFFORD (East Metropolitan) [3.24 pm] — in reply: Before we end this debate, I will make a couple of comments about the contributions of members to the motion I moved on climate change before I address the amendment and what we are left with. Hon Dr Steve Thomas talked about opportunism and this being a political stunt. Unfortunately, the situation in the Amazon and rising sea levels are not as a result of political stunts; they just happen, and climate change is not going to go away. Going through the motions and talking about political stunts and vote buying will not erase the fact that we have to address the issue of climate change and we have to do something about it. By the way, I am still looking forward to seeing the opposition's climate policy come forward. The nuclear issue is the same old chestnut being trotted out again. Hon Aaron Stonehouse talked about majority popular rule. If that were the case, Hon Aaron Stonehouse should pack his bags and walk out the chamber right now because those comments were not helpful.

I turn to the government's contribution around 2009. The carbon pollution reduction scheme did not go far enough. A meaningful carbon package was introduced by the Gillard government and it changed the landscape of renewable energy in this country. If that carbon package had been retained, Australia would have reduced its emissions. They would have been going down now and there would have been billions of dollars of investment in renewal energy in this country.

Hon Rick Mazza said that we play only a small part in carbon emissions. Currently, Australia contributes five per cent of global carbon emissions, including export emissions, and that is projected to be 17 per cent by 2030, so I do not see that as a minor contribution. I see it as woefully embarrassing that we are not putting anything in place to reduce those emissions or taking into account our export emissions, which drives the worst effects of climate change.

Hon Colin Tincknell mentioned the cost of moving to renewable energy, but what about indirect costs? A report was released a couple of months ago that stated it would cost real estate in this country \$524 billion because a lot of properties would not be insurable due to coastal erosion. There will be structural and economic costs for that. Nuclear power is being phased out in Germany and the United Kingdom. It is not economically viable to build a nuclear power plant. It is an absolute joke to suggest that we could have one here in this country.

I return to the government's position and the amendment moved. It is a huge handball. Every question I have asked since I have been in this place has been about what the government is going to do. The answers always seem to point back to the federal government. As I said before, this absolves Western Australia from responsibility to do anything about climate change. Of course we need to call on the federal government to do more, but at the end of the day, we are calling on a federal government that is driven by people who are willing to bring pieces of coal into Parliament to show where they stand. I note that former US Secretary of State John Kerry was in Melbourne the other day. He made a comment that is pretty apt. The news article states —

“We just can't sit on our ...

He uses an expletive —

and leave the political process to neanderthals who don't want to believe in the future,” Kerry told the audience in Melbourne. “We have a dearth of leadership, but this will turn.”

I am pretty sure that this will turn. We will continue to have protests. We will continue to see industry call on our government to do something about climate change, because it will impact on us at all levels. The community expects more of this government. Watering down my motion did not do anything to address the issue.

Question put and passed.