

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Statement

HON DR BRAD PETTITT (South Metropolitan) [6.21 pm]: I will also be brief, noting that members have had a long day. I want to talk about a big week in climate change—a big fortnight, actually. Just over a week ago, the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report was released. I held off on talking about it last week because I did not want to be the only person in this space who talks about IPCC reports when they come out, but they are really, really important.

This one involved 300 scientists from 67 countries and is really significant, because this is the last time there will be an IPCC report this decade. Next time we get an IPCC report, it will be about 2030. By then either we will be on track for a safe climate at a temperature increase of 1.5 degrees or it will tell us that we are on track for a much warmer, much less safe climate. This latest report contains a real threshold. This is the last opportunity we will have to keep the climate within a 1.5-degree temperature increase.

I will provide a couple of quick quotes from an article on the report, because it is worth putting on the record. It states —

Climate Councillor, former IPCC author and Distinguished Professor of Biology at Macquarie University, Professor Lesley Hughes said:

...

... since the previous IPCC report came out where global emissions are rising once again, so the gap between where we are and where we need to go is increasing rather than decreasing.

“We have a closing window to drive global momentum towards getting us back on track for a safer climate.

That quote is very much in the same vein as what the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, said, which was something along the lines that we are on thin ice, and that ice is melting.

In many ways, we can see this latest report as being the final warning from the IPCC for this decade, and the central message from climate scientists is unmistakable, as Dr Simon Bradshaw from the Climate Council has said. He is quoted in the same article as saying —

... governments must rally to drastically cut emissions and cease the extraction and burning of fossil fuels this decade.

That, of course, brings us to the other big thing that has happened in the climate space over the last week: the federal safeguard mechanism deal between the Labor government and the Greens. This is actually a really important, pivotal moment. I was pleased to see that my federal Greens colleagues and the Labor government were able to come together to improve a piece of legislation that will drive down emissions. As everyone knows, the 215 biggest polluters will be required to reduce their emissions by 4.9 per cent a year, year on year, by the end of this decade. That is really important.

Of course, it is not perfect. I am speaking personally now, but I would like to have seen less use of offsets; the legislation relies very heavily on the use of offsets for some of those reductions. Nevertheless, it does create a fundamental shift. However, the bits captured by the safeguard mechanism are not the whole story; that accounts for about 40 per cent of the economy. The other 60 per cent sits outside the big polluters, and that is where we come in. A lot of those things actually now sit with the state government in respect of the emissions that we need to drive down. The other 60 per cent are not the big polluters but the small polluters—our households, cars and all the other little bits and pieces that we do. That is where we need to start bringing in policies, practices and changes that can rapidly drive these things down for the rest of this decade. The Sustainable Urban Resilience for the next Generation Initiative—SURGe—is underway and hopefully we will see something come out of that.

The last thing I want to quickly talk about is that I was part of a round table on Monday night as part of Perth Design Week. There were some great people—the best designers, architects and thinkers—in town all talking about how we can get Perth to drive down its emissions and become a net-zero city. Do members know what? I came away from that round table thinking, “We can actually do this.” There was so much excitement and passion about how we can do that and do it well. After reading the IPCC report, which was actually quite bleak, I had some pretty challenging conversations about federal Parliament and reducing emissions. I then left the Design Week round table thinking that we could actually do this, as long as we actually take those ideas, run with them, fund them and get them to happen.

On one level, we could say it has been a grim fortnight for climate news, but I actually think it has been a hopeful one. I hope this Parliament and government takes the spirit of those warnings and the spirit of hope at Perth Design Week to say: we actually can drive down emissions and do it this decade in a way that is consistent with the climate science. Thank you.