

NET ZERO EMISSIONS — 2050 TARGET

536. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Can the minister update the house on the work underway to transition WA's energy system to higher levels of renewables, and can the minister advise the house whether he is aware of anyone who opposes a sensibly managed transition to a lower carbon future?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

I am very pleased to take the question from the member for Thornlie. I remind the chamber that his job prior to coming to Parliament was as leader of the Conservation Council of Western Australia, and he did a great job in that role before joining us here. He demonstrates his continued commitment to the environment. The Labor government in Western Australia has a deep commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. As a government, we are playing our role. We are investing \$3.8 billion to get Synergy to reduce its carbon emissions by 80 per cent by 2030 based on the 2020 levels. That is an extraordinary achievement. It is much more ambitious than what is being done in other energy systems. I was pleased to be with the Premier the other day in the Deputy Premier's electorate to watch the first of our big batteries being craned in. That is an example of what we need to do as we transition to a lower carbon future. Synergy already has a team of people working on wind and battery projects and on pumped hydro right across the state because we are committed to seeing lower carbon emissions. Of course, we welcome the federal government's decision to set a target of reducing emissions by 43 per cent. We are not alone in doing that. I draw attention to the Business Council of Australia chief executive, Jennifer Westacott, who said —

“It's time to move beyond the debate about targets and get on with the ‘how’ ...

I cannot believe that I am actually quoting from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Western Australia, which said —

CCIWA has today released a comprehensive position statement on climate change, which supports the Federal Government's 43 per cent reduction target by 2030 ...

I can also draw the chamber's attention to comments from Rio Tinto in an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, which states —

The backing of Rio Tinto, the nation's largest producer of iron ore, marks a significant endorsement of Labor's climate agenda ...

That just shows members the extent and breadth of support, which is why I am surprised that the shadow Minister for Energy opposes the Labor Party's ambitions. What did he say? Quoting from *The West Australian*, he said —

My concern is this target is so aggressive that it will only be achieved with enormous harm.

That is his position. Is he talking about harm to the environment? Is he talking about the harm to the members represented by the National Party who are being impacted by climate change more than anyone in this chamber? They are now having big swings in their climate, with long periods of dry seasons impacting the performance of their farms, followed, like this weekend, by flooding that knocked out the electricity system. Does the member for Cottesloe sympathise with the victims of cyclone Seroja that crossed the coast that far down? That shows what happens due to global warming. Or is he going to support us to fight to reduce the impact of human-induced climate change? It is ridiculous that this is the only person in Australia, apparently, who is opposed to action on climate change. What a dinosaur! We all thought that when Tony Abbott was defeated in Parliament, that was the end of the climate wars with the Liberal Party. I went to the national Energy Ministers' Meeting last week at which Liberal, Labor and Greens ministers were all together supporting action on climate change. There is only one Luddite left, and that is the member for Cottesloe.