

NATIVE FOREST — LOGGING

Motion

HON STEVE MARTIN (Agricultural) [10.16 am] — without notice: I move —

That this house condemns the McGowan government for its ill-conceived plan to ban the logging of native forests, which —

- (a) was a rushed decision announced without any consultation with the forestry industry;
- (b) will shut down a sustainable industry resulting in the loss of thousands of jobs in the regions; and
- (c) will decimate the regional local communities of Nannup, Greenbushes and Manjimup and more broadly across the south west.

I rise to speak to this motion following on from the announcement by the government yesterday morning. I will come to various parts of the motion, but I will start with a discussion of the process that started yesterday, I assume in the lead-up to yesterday's announcement, but that is a little unclear, certainly to the industry.

At approximately 7.30 yesterday morning, Ian Telfer, the president of the Forest Industries Federation of WA, received a call from the Minister for Forestry, Dave Kelly, suggesting that there would be an announcement later that morning. There was no detail. Ian took the call. He was a little concerned. Shortly after that, the world changed for the forestry sector in the south west of WA. My phone and the phones of a number of other members started ringing with news of what had been announced. Ian and the sector were staggered at the announcement for all sorts of reasons, but mainly because of the lack of consultation in the lead-up to that announcement. There had been none. They were completely blindsided. I spoke to an official from FIFWA this morning who said that right about the time the announcement was being made, they received an email from Parkside Timber, one of the hardwood mills just out of Manjimup, discussing supply issues that had been ongoing for some months and wanting to know whether they would be resolved. Obviously, one of the largest mills and investors in the sector simply had no idea that this was coming. I find that process extraordinary. There was no consultation at all in the single biggest announcement for 20 years in the forestry sector. No consultation had taken place and the sector was completely blindsided. That was very disappointing.

I will look at the announcement and investigate that in a little detail. The media release states —

- South-West native forests to be protected from logging from 2024
- Forest Management Plan 2024–33 to end logging of native forests
- All two-tier karri forest immediately protected

By the way, Parkside Timber processes karri. I assume “immediately” means tomorrow and that Parkside will have to think about its staff, markets et cetera.

The media statement also mentions “a \$50 million Just Transition Plan” that will support affected workers and communities. In the words of the great HG Nelson: “We don't make this stuff up!” The euphemism “a just transition plan” clearly comes from someone who has never worked in private industry. It is a public servant definition of what it means to shut down an industry and evidently spend \$50 million. Parkside alone has probably invested \$50 million in recent years. I will come back to that and what that will look like.

Ian Telfer rang me this morning to explain what he knew about the just transition plan, which is precisely nothing. No details have been released. He has tried to find out what it means, but I assume that that will be worked out after the event, which again is disappointing.

It is important that members are aware of exactly what the forest sector means to Western Australia. The hardwood industry in particular has been a sustainable, long-term profitable business that has operated for 180 years in Western Australia. It has provided jobs and export income right across the south west and more broadly.

I will provide a few quick details about what the sector means to Western Australia. These forests are not old-growth forests. The logging of old-growth forests stopped in 2001, approximately 20 years ago.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: You opposed that one as well, didn't you?

Hon STEVE MARTIN: Twenty years ago, I did not.

The forests have been managed and harvested a number of times—two or three times—over the last 100—something years. They have been managed resources and re-harvested a number of times. The forestry industry is sustainable and provides jobs. I will provide a little more detail about what that means. A report entitled *Socio-economic impacts*

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of the forest industry: Western Australia by Jacki Schirmer and others, released in December 2017 by the University of Canberra, refers to some figures. It states —

In 2015–16, the direct value of output generated by the WA forest industry at the point of sale of primary processed products was \$649 million, increasing to \$1,405 million when flow-on effects generated in other industries as a result of spending by the forest industry are included.

...

Up to the point of primary processing, a total of 508 direct jobs were generated by the native forest industry ...

That independent report was done into the sector. I spoke to people in the sector recently who said that they believe the numbers in that report are similar to the numbers in the industry now and may have even increased due to the value of the timber resource. In small towns like Manjimup, Greenbushes and Nannup the forestry industry provides valuable jobs outside the agriculture and horticulture industries. This sector has been providing jobs in those communities for decades and now that investment is at risk.

Those employed in the forest industry are obviously aware of how the world has changed in recent years. Community expectations have changed and the industry has adapted and changed its practices. On a recent tour of the south west I was shown the new forest management strategies that have been put in place. People engaged in the industry are aware that they need to use every single scrap of valuable hardwood that is harvested. Laminated products and processed products are being produced. They are aware that growth rates are changing as a result of declining rainfall in the south west corner of the state and have adapted their harvesting strategies. The forestry industry is sophisticated and produces a valuable resource.

The industry recently trialled thinning to ensure it uses 100 per cent of the product and the results are very promising. I was completely unaware of some of the flow-on industries in this sector. Just outside of Bunbury is a business called Simcoa, which produces silicon. I am sure all members own at least one of these devices and benefit from the silicon chip that is produced by Simcoa. Production of the chip is a complicated and sophisticated process. Quartz rock is trucked from Moora to Bunbury. That quartz is then put under enormous heat through a process that uses enormous amounts of electricity to produce silicon. One of the key components of that process is charcoal produced from jarrah. Evidently, jarrah has the right or best properties to produce the purest silicon, which is then used in mobile phone chips and all sorts of industries around the world. Obviously, there are alternatives to the jarrah product. One of them is harvested in South America, shipped to Europe where it is processed, and then shipped to Australia. That is Simcoa's fallback if they are not able to access jarrah. Tucked away in the outer suburbs of Bunbury is this wonderful business that produces export income and hires locals but it relies very heavily on the use of jarrah.

There are lots of flow-on businesses like Simcoa that rely on the forestry industry, including trucking operators. I met a young guy recently who is involved with Parkside. He recently signed a contract to ship karri to the eastern states on his fleet of trucks. He has been upskilling his team, hiring new people and bringing new trucks in so they can ship timber from Manjimup across Australia. He has been hiring people who have moved to town. Their kids are going to local schools and small communities have been thriving.

There is another flow-on effect of this decision. Where will people get hardwood flooring and timber from if not from the south west of Western Australia. As I came into the chamber today, I stamped on the floor. I am fairly certain that there is timber under these carpets. I hope it is from the south west. I assume it is jarrah. When we build in the future, will that hardwood come from overseas? I am not sure that chopping wood down and processing it somewhere else and putting it on a boat and getting it all the way to Fremantle is a carbon-friendly process. Bunnings and other timber supply businesses will be forced to source their product from overseas.

I come back to the "just transition plan" of \$50 million. I believe that in 2001, when the decision to stop logging old-growth forests was made, the package was \$180 million. It is \$50 million now. I am not sure what that will look like in terms of investment in the region. If I was someone who is employed in a timber mill and I woke up this morning to that news, I would not be waiting for \$50 million. I would be thinking that my job was gone or is about to be gone, and I would be out looking for employment elsewhere and planning to leave town. Security in the sector has gone. Any future investment has gone. What kind of conversations will businesses like Parkside and those that operate mills have with their banking institutions when they are asked, "Where is the security in your business in the long term?" We simply do not know. The government can arbitrarily, overnight, shut us down and change the rules and the guidelines. I imagine those businesses would be very nervous about the future of their investment and probably will not make any more investment in that region. They certainly will not hire anyone, and they will be working very, very hard to keep their staff in town, but that will be difficult. Those communities will lose people. They will lose kids from the school and volunteers from St John Ambulance. There will be enormous flow-on effects right across the south west of Western Australia.

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Minister Kelly has his hands all over this. He has some form when it comes to industries in regional Western Australia. He recently had a crack at the crayfish industry, and that ended in tears. He thought that with his vast experience in private enterprise he would explain to the cray fishermen how they should run that sector or, more importantly, how the government should run that sector for them. That did not work well.

Minister Kelly and I attended the industry's fifth annual showcase dinner event in Fremantle recently, and he sat there smiling and nodding and made a nice speech about how wonderful the industry is. This was a very recent dinner. He must have known this was coming. He looked them in the eye and then a month later he did this. Member opposite, please do not give Minister Kelly any more portfolios that have an impact on regional Western Australia. The two that he has had a crack at have been a mess. One of the reasons Minister Kelly and the Labor government has had a crack at things, like the crayfish industry and the timber industry, is that it is quite clearly keen to paint the people in these industries as evil, and that plays well in the suburbs. That plays well in metropolitan Perth where the government is keen to court that left-leaning vote, which is a shame because those regional industries, such as the crayfishing and hardwood timber industries, are very sustainable, wonderful employers of people, and they deserve better than this.

Just on what plays well in the suburbs, I will digress slightly and talk about the government's keenness to stop cutting down trees in the forest industry. I will pose a question. Whereabouts in Western Australia is the easiest place to cut down a tree at the moment, and has been for some time? It is here in the suburbs. In the wheatbelt, where I live, farmers have been taken to court for clearing firebreaks to protect their property. Road verges in the wheatbelt and great southern are full of trees that are so close that if we stand on the bitumen, we can reach out and touch the white gums and salmon gums, but we cannot clear them. There are not many salmon gums along the Kwinana Freeway. New suburbs sprout up endlessly in the city and the native vegetation on those evidently has no value or, if it does, we can offset. Guess where we offset it. It is not here. It is somewhere out there. Again, that metro-centric view of the world does us no good in regional Western Australia.

The Premier talked about various topics and why this was a good thing. He talked about climate change. The foresters know full well what is happening in their part of the world. They are very, very sophisticated about how this industry works and what has changed. He talked about how this will somehow store extra carbon. This wood in the chamber is an outstanding storage of carbon. It is not going anywhere. It was harvested a long, long time ago. That is stored carbon. That is what forest-harvested hardwood does. I would like to see the maths for some of the Premier's suggestions about how locking up the forests somehow stores extra carbon. In fact, we would not use this as an argument, but I believe new regrowth sucks more carbon out of the atmosphere than very old, very mature trees. That is an interesting argument. That is a Western Australian view of the carbon world. Obviously, we are still shipping in our hardwood from Borneo or Brazil or wherever they cut it down so that we can use it in our ever-expanding suburbs in the city. We will still be using up someone's carbon storage, but not from here.

In the short time I have left, I would like to close by concentrating my remarks on the people of Manjimup, Greenbushes and Nannup and more broadly across the south west. I cannot imagine how difficult the last couple of days would have been for them when they heard the harrowing news when they work up or were putting their kids on the school bus. Someone may have just bought a house in Manjimup after coming to the town to take a job in a sawmill and read the news. They would be very nervous about their future and their mortgage. They would be having palpitations about sitting the kids down and saying, "Look, I know you're enjoying this school, we've settled into town nicely, but we are off. I haven't got a job." That is a very tough time and those communities will need our support. I do not think we can put a monetary value such as \$50 million on that support. The government has ripped up their industry and forced them to leave town, so that is very disappointing. The shire president of Manjimup had no idea this was coming. There has been significant investment in that community. The local government had been planning for this industry to be a vital part of its future, but that has all been ripped apart.

Members, please consider the people of Manjimup, Greenbushes, Nannup and Bunbury in your response today because they are really hurting. We are employed next week. The public servants who put together the Just Transition Plan will be employed next week and the week after. They are not nervous about their jobs. The people in Greenbushes, Nannup and Bridgetown who are involved in this industry certainly are. They deserve our thoughts this morning. Thank you.

HON JAMES HAYWARD (South West) [10.36 am]: I rise to speak about this matter. What has gone on over the last 24 hours is absolutely disgraceful. I refer to the issues around emotiveness and whether the timber industry is legitimate and the right of governments to change that. I know what I am talking about. Initially, I will talk about the way in which this was managed. In 2001, I was in Manjimup doing some work as a cameraman on the day that Richard Court announced an end to logging in old-growth forests. He got on a plane and flew down to Manjimup.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Richard Court? Sorry, sweetie, I think you've got yourself massively confused. It was Geoff Gallop from the other side—Labor.

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Hon JAMES HAYWARD: Sorry. I think the backflip on the RFA was done —

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: I mean, you guys opposed that.

Hon JAMES HAYWARD: I apologise. I stand corrected. It was in 2000, not 2001. The actual ruling came in 2001, but the decision was made in 2000. The backflip on the Regional Forest Agreement was done by Richard Court. He came down to Manjimup —

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: You're saying Richard Court ended logging in old-growth forests?

Hon JAMES HAYWARD: No, I am saying Richard Court came down and did a backflip on the RFA in terms of ending a large amount of logging, perhaps just before the Gallop government ended old-growth logging in 2001.

But the point of the matter is that there was a major decision made and he got on the plane and went there and faced the community on the day that it happened. He did not get a very positive response to that. In fact, he landed at the airport, drove down the road and there were probably 150 angry loggers standing across the road who would not let him pass. Paul Omodei, the member for Warren–Blackwood, spoke to those people and got them out of the way. Richard Court then went down to the mill at Pemberton and spoke to the people there. By the end of the day, someone had locked themselves on his plane and he had to drive back in a car from Manjimup. At least he had the guts to turn up and talk to the community about it. That RFA phase, like this one, came out of the blue and the industry was not expecting it —

Hon Dr Sally Talbot: Was not the RFA a commonwealth agreement?

Hon JAMES HAYWARD: The state was a party to the RFA.

Hon Darren West: I'm not sure who's doing your research.

Hon JAMES HAYWARD: No, my research is right. I was there. I was physically there when it happened. We can argue about it all you like and be pedantic —

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: You were there, but you didn't have your glasses on.

Hon JAMES HAYWARD: I was not wearing glasses in those days—thank you very much.

Honestly, who does that? I spoke to the Manjimup shire president yesterday and he said that nobody had even called him to say, “Look, there're going to be some fairly major changes in your community.” Who does that? Surely government members would acknowledge that although the government has the right to change the policy of the state, it should at least talk to the people involved. I spoke to the industry and the Forest Industries Federation (WA) Inc yesterday and, again, they had no idea about this. They got a phone call saying, “We're putting out a media release.” That was it! It was absolutely disgraceful.

Jane Kelsbie is the new local member down there. The other day in the local paper I called for her to go in to bat for south west timber communities. I attended an industry dinner in South Perth at which the minister spoke and I was so concerned by what he had to say that I thought I had better get on my feet and call the local member to get her involved in standing up for timber communities. I called on Jane Kelsbie, the member for Warren–Blackwood, to stand up for local communities among fears that the state government was set to pander to Perth-based conservationists. She replied, saying to the *Manjimup Bridgetown Times* —

... she had met with those in the forestry industry on a number of occasions and there was no way the drafting of the FMP would take place without the proper parties.

“(The industry) will continue to be involved in the consultation process as the new FMP is formed,” she said.

“The State Government will continue to work with the timber industry through each stage of the FMP formation.”

That article was published on 25 August. Just 14 days later, not in the paper but in a post on her Facebook page, she said —

Climate change has resulted in declining yields of timber in the state's native forest, slower than expected regrowth of native timbers and the loss of habitats and biodiversity. Which is why we can no longer continue large scale commercial logging beyond the end of 2023.

She said that 14 days later. Two weeks ago, people living in Manjimup would have got the impression from reading their local paper that their local member had their back and that they would be included in the process. Then, 14 days later, there was a Facebook post and news on ABC radio that said it is all over. The government is playing with people's lives.

I have not even started to talk about the realities and the science around sustainable logging, but let us talk about how businesses are run and how people and communities are treated. It was absolutely disgraceful. To be frank,

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I expect that government members will realise this has been a fairly big faux pas and that the government needs to put out an olive branch and reach out to these people and do its best from now on to include them in the decisions it is making. I never would have imagined the government announcing a Greens policy in Perth without talking to the people who are most committed to it; it is disgraceful. As Hon Steve Martin said, this minister has form in this space with the lobster fiasco, and now this is happening in our timber industry. It is a bit like the old live export decision made by the Gillard government in 2011. Last year, I think the feds spent or were expected to spend \$600-odd million fixing up that very, very poor decision.

We talk about carbon benefits. About 1.8 tonnes of carbon is stored per tonne of dry timber. It is stored for a lifetime. It is stored forever. I do not understand the argument that this is not a sustainable industry. The Shire of Dardanup is about to build a new building completely of timber. I think it had better get a hurry on because there might not be much of it left! I talked to the Master Builders Association last Friday night and was told that builders are desperately short of timber, of softwood. I talked to guys from Laminex and others that produce this softwood and they said there is a massive shortage. Funding of \$350 million towards softwood production is welcomed and needs to happen but it certainly will not replace the native timber industry. In 2015, a massive fire in Northcliffe burnt out 98 000 hectares of bush. The fire got so out of control because the equipment, people and expertise the timber industry brought to managing those forests was no longer there. It had been reduced to such a point that that fire could not be put out for a significant period; from memory, it was around 10 days.

We need timber and it is absolutely disgraceful that we think it is okay to cut down somebody else's forests overseas and not manage our own. Honestly, who does that? When we talk about global warming, that is the globe. That is everybody; that is not just us in Western Australia. The reality is that it is a good industry and it continues to do better, it provides a product that we need, okay, and despite the emotion of the argument, it is an industry that deserves to be supported.

I also want to say that this issue was never taken to an election. That is a bit of a theme we have going on with the current government; is it not? The Labor Party said electoral reform was not on the agenda and its first order of business is: let us get it on the agenda. Nobody spoke about this at all during the election campaign. There was no indication that this could possibly be on the radar. People in the Manjimup community and others had absolutely no idea this was coming. The government wants to outlaw native forest logging in 2024. I suggest that the government rejigs its plan to make that 2025, takes it to an election and is honest with the people of Western Australia.

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (South West — Minister for Regional Development) [10.46 am]: No-one in any way doubts the difficulty that this will present to people in the community who are involved in this industry, but, members, to say that people have been blindsided is absolutely absurd. We know what is going on with climate change. In the last few months, the last report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change showed us just how incredibly dire the situation is and that we need to take action to address climate change. This is not something that can be put off. Before the last election, the Liberal Party understood that and put out a policy to close down the coal industry in four years. That was the Liberal Party's policy. Before the last election, the Liberal Party recognised that climate change is an issue. Apparently, the position it took to the election has been forgotten, but climate change is real and action has to be taken.

I travelled throughout the south west during the last election campaign and everyone I spoke to was very aware that a review of the forest management plan was being undertaken. I contest Hon Steve Martin's proposition the government is doing this to play to the suburbs. No, that was the plan David Honey and Zak Kirkup had at the last election to save some of the furniture around South Perth. I think the opposition is completely out of touch with the people of the south west, because going from town to town, not just Margaret River, but also Manjimup, Pemberton, Albany and Denmark, there is an absolutely overwhelming passion for saving the forests and reducing the amount of forest logging going on. I am sure my colleagues Hon Dr Sally Talbot and Hon Jackie Jarvis had exactly the same experience. In 2017, a leading businessman in Manjimup said to us, "Look, there's been a change in this area. In 2001, everybody hated the Labor Party because it shut down logging in old-growth forests, but, do you know what? Now people think that was the right thing to do." It took a period of adjustment but leading businesspeople in Manjimup now recognise that this was a positive thing. It takes time and it takes a bit of courage. One has to make these hard decisions to do it.

We have been working through the forest management plan and it has become quite clear, with the massive decline in rainfall in the south west, that the rate at which we have been logging those regrowth forests is simply unsustainable. This government decided to come clean as early as possible, as soon as we were conscious of the evidence that this practice is unsustainable, and take action to deal with it. We were not going to let this thing limp on a little bit here and a little bit there. We said, "This is not sustainable. We need to deal with it. We need to fix up this thing." We are absolutely aware that it will impact people from the south west, but, we believe that a Just Transition Plan will work for the south west, just as it has worked for Collie. That concept was pooh-poohed by Hon Steve Martin, who is obviously completely unaware of what is going on around the world. This concept is about making sure

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that when there is to be a structural adjustment in an area, that new industries are put in place. They cannot be created overnight. I have overseen the delivery of the Collie Just Transition Plan. I know that it takes a number of years to get these new industries up and running and to put in place jobs. The government's decision to go early on is a recognition that we need to be working extremely hard over the next three to four years to put in place new industries. We have been able to establish a number of new enterprises in Collie and we are absolutely confident that we can do that in the south west, rather than limping along in a process of attrition with a reduction in the logging take because of the reduced rainfall and the scientific assessments around what can be done in that regard.

There are around 500 direct jobs in the native timber industry. We will still be actively managing the forest. A logging take will still continue that will allow various existing demands to be met, particularly for artisanal timber that is used to make things such as the furniture in this chamber. I want to correct the suggestion made by Hon Steve Martin that karri logging will shut down immediately. I am advised by Minister Kelly's office that karri harvesting will continue until the end of 2023. It is also important to understand that the bulk of the jarrah that is currently being logged is used for firewood and charcoal production. We think that the charcoal production path under Simcoa Operations will be able to satisfy the demand for timbers that are cut down as part of Alcoa's activity. Some logging will still be ongoing. We are not pretending that there will be no logging; there still will be some logging. But 400 000 hectares will be protected and will perform that incredibly important role of expanding our carbon sink. We estimate that around 100 of those 500 jobs will still be required as part of that ongoing work within the native forest industry. That leaves us with around 350 to 400 new jobs that will need to be created.

We are investing \$350 million into the softwood industry. Even Hon James Hayward acknowledged that the shortage of softwood is a problem and that there is a demand for it, particularly in the building industry. We have invested \$350 million in that area and we think that that alone could probably create up to 100 jobs. We also know that the expansion of the processing plant at Greenbushes mine is underway. We know that a lot of the mining operations in the south west are short of people. We also know, from our experience in Collie, that this injection of funding will attract new industries into the south west to create opportunities for those people.

No-one in government—the Premier, Minister Kelly or Minister Sanderson—underestimates how very confronting this is for those people in the industry, but this is a problem that we have to deal with decisively. We need to deal with it now. There is no point in letting this thing limp out, and then, in two years' time, say that we have got to fix it and we have not had that opportunity to put in place the Just Transition Plan that we need. I am very, very confident that we are going to be able to deal with this. It will be an adjustment. The team that we have in the South West Development Commission has learnt a lot from the work that we have done in Collie, and we will be able to use those skills to help us to deliver that Just Transition Plan.

I ask members to go into their community and to talk to the people in the south west. They feel more strongly about the forests than the people in Perth do. Members should ask themselves why someone like Jane Kelsbie was elected. She had six weeks to campaign. How was she elected as the member for Warren–Blackwood?

Hon James Hayward: She wouldn't have been if she'd been honest with the community and told them that this was coming.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I will tell the member that she was elected because people actually got the fact that she was in touch with the aspirations of the community. She was in touch with the people of the community. She was prepared to go around and listen to them. It is extraordinary! For her to become the member for Warren–Blackwood after having campaigned for just over six weeks with Hon Jackie Jarvis and me was an extraordinary achievement. She understands that this community is not the same as it was in 2000. Hon James Hayward harked back to 2000. People grow and people learn. This whole area has become immensely more complex in its characteristics, and people saw that their world did not fall off a cliff when we stopped logging in old-growth forests. I can remember the hostility, the anger and the protests that took place, but I can tell members that by 2017 that community had changed. Its whole view of what is important and where they wanted their community to go changed. I really feel very sorry for the opposition, notwithstanding that brief couple of weeks in the pre-election campaign when it was looking like it would lose the seats of South Perth and Nedlands, it had the suburbs in mind and said, "We're going to close down Collie. We'll close down in four years. We won't worry about a just transition. We'll close down Collie in four years." That understanding of the urgency for action on climate change somehow or other has vanished. I can tell members that it has not vanished within the Labor Party and it certainly has not vanished amongst the people of the south west of the state. They understand that they want an industry that is going to be sustainable. This is a hard decision, but it had to be made. Get your head around this fact: there is no way that we could have allowed the current volumes under the forest management plan to continue. There would, in any event, have had to be a very significant contraction just to get anything like a sustainable production. Of course, that would have undermined the business model, but not provided this opportunity to really put in place a properly thought through just transition. I know that members on the other side have form. They opposed the just transition process in Collie, notwithstanding the fact that it has been massively successful in bringing new industries about. We acknowledge that this is tough

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for those 400 or so workers whose jobs will be under threat, but we will be there working through it and providing a sustainable future for them and their children.

HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan) [11.01 am]: I mentioned earlier this week that I always pay attention when the Leader of the House speaks. Additionally, I always make it my business to pay specific attention when the Minister for Regional Development speaks because she is an experienced practitioner of her art form. One of her art forms is the defence of the indefensible, and we have just seen an absolute masterclass in that.

Today, we could have a conversation based on the merits of the policy. We could debate the policy position in a meaningful and intelligent way based on the scientific, ecological, economic and industrial facts, and also based on social expectations. That would be reasonable. We need to have a comprehensive debate, but today we are debating this decision after the fact. That is the very point of this motion, which I am here to stand and support. Despite the very interesting argument put in defence of the government's position, not one of the three limbs of this motion was answered. They were all evaded. There are three limbs to this motion. The first is that this plan —

(a) was a rushed decision announced without any consultation with the forestry industry;

That is true. There has been no consultation with the forestry industry. How do we know that? It is because the forestry industry has told us and it has told the media. There has been no consultation—period. The second limb of this motion is that the plan —

(b) will shut down a sustainable industry resulting in the loss of thousands of jobs in the regions ...

The full consequences will take time to play out, but the attempt to distract us from this point is to refer to the so-called Just Transition Plan. I might put a question across the chamber in a way that is meant to be constructive: is there actually a plan or does the government just have a catchphrase? I would expect this to be a clean sheet of paper. This is a \$50 million piece of paper that has not been filled in yet.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Like we started with Collie, and we put it together.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I will take that interjection, because that is a reasonably constructive interjection, so I will respond in kind. Will the government negotiate with the industry in the development of this plan, or will this just be a bureaucratic thing?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: No. We will develop it with the community, as we have done with Collie.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Once again, the industry has just been pushed to the side.

Hon Dr Sally Talbot: You have not even read the media release.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: There is nothing to read. The government has nothing to offer. It is just a media statement; it was a stunt.

Despite all the bluff and bluster here, the Labor Party did not have the guts to take this to the election. The Liberal Party has paid a price for brave policy at the election, but at least we took something to the election. There is absolutely no courage left in the modern Labor Party. We may individually decry our political circumstances, but the one thing I take heart from is that the government, the modern Labor Party, is so divorced from its working-class origins that it bears absolutely no resemblance to its former glory. I have not seen a party more divorced from reality than the one I see when I look at members opposite.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon TJORN SIBMA: It is not a shadow of its former self. It is an absolute shame.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Are you saying that working people don't understand climate change and it is only the people of Nedlands and Cottesloe who do?

Hon TJORN SIBMA: No. I am too experienced to fall for that trap. I will take that interjection. It might be the last one I take. The Labor Party does not care about the working class anymore and has not cared about them for 20 years.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: We do. We care about their children and their grandchildren.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I knew that would elicit a response.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Perhaps we might kindly refrain from stepping off the topic and get back to the motion.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Thank you, President.

Hon Steve Martin; Hon James Hayward; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Tjorn Sibma; Hon Dr Sally Talbot;
Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Sophia Moermond; Hon Neil Thomson

It is absolutely clear that this policy decision will have some consequences on the communities of Nannup, Greenbushes, Manjimup and, more broadly, across the south west. Because I take my colleagues at their word, I can only take it that there has been no consultation with those communities other than the 15-minute heads-up phone call from a minister or staffer to say, “We’ve got some news for you.” Frankly, I think that is an abysmal way to transact. The Labor Party is a transactional political outfit. It will use and abuse its power on a whim. This is the big fact: a Labor Party that controls everything does not even need to pretend to consult anymore. It will do what it wants. If an industry does not have the leverage over the government that the mining industry has, look out. Any competent board in this state that is involved in primary production will have to do a pretty serious risk assessment now. It will look at what the government is doing to the native timber industry and make plans to ensure that does not happen to their industry. I think there is a lesson here for everyone. It is a sad but necessary one.

In the remaining time, I want to speak, effectively, to the first limb of this motion about the lack of consultation. I put a series of questions to the Minister for Environment through her representative here about consultation. I was alerted at the start of this process to a survey commissioned by the Minister for Environment herself, which is quite an unusual way to commence the initiation of discussions about the next iteration of a forest management plan, but that is what happened. There is a media statement from 22 June 2021 titled “WA public invited to have their say on native forests”. That is fine. That is a reasonable thing to do, but it was geared towards informing the position that the government might adopt for the next FMP. I asked a range of questions about what consultation would occur with the industry and was informed that the formal drafting process of the next forest management plan is a detailed and thorough process spanning 12 to 18 months. I put that question to the minister on 3 August. At that stage, the Minister for Environment committed to at least 12 to 18 months of negotiations with the industry. That answer was provided to me five weeks ago. Something has happened in that five weeks that has absolutely accelerated the government’s decision-making. The Minister for Environment has a range of stakeholders to meet, but it appears to me that she has not met with the forestry people at all—or the first time she did was after she put out that media statement on 22 June. I think that is completely and utterly unreasonable and unfair, as is the process around it. We will hopefully examine this in more detail with questions I ask today. The survey to which I refer was not asked for by the department or industry, but originated out of the Minister for Environment’s office. She had three meetings with the Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute—I underscore that this is a respected organisation—basically to draft or to construct a survey methodology that obviously met with the minister’s satisfaction. It was a piece of work worth around \$56 000 to \$57 000—not an enormous sum in the scheme of things, but still the allocation of public resources. When I asked whether the minister would table the results she said no, she would receive a copy, but effectively no-one else would. Somebody appears to have received a copy of those results and that was Jess Beckerling from the WA Forest Alliance. I have respect for her. We have to respect our adversaries, I suppose, or people in the field when they are good at what they do. She is a first-rate activist. But yesterday she said that 17 000 submissions were received on that survey alone, and the majority of people supported the government’s position. How can she know that, but the forestry industry and the communities in the south west do not know that? How can it not be put up on a departmental website? How can an institute commissioned to do that work not do that? Something very, very scurrilous has gone on here, and it has been absolutely unnecessary and avoidable, but yet again, the government cannot resist the temptation to throw its weight around, and that is exactly what it has done to this industry.

HON DR SALLY TALBOT (South West) [11.11 am]: It is great to get the call on this motion to speak firmly against it—its style, content and substance. Honestly, when I first saw the business program today and the content of this motion, I thought that somebody had been doing some archiving in my office and had pulled out something from the mid-1990s. The Liberal–National coalition—or whatever it is called these days—really needs to get with the game. It really needs to be on the right side of history. There is an old saying: “When you are in a hole, stop digging.” When I saw this motion today, I thought that the opposition had learnt absolutely nothing. The key date in this whole debate is February 2021. How can the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA, which are in league with the Liberals, lecture the McGowan Labor government about consultation? How can they do that when their own people have been briefing behind the scenes about how they were hung out to dry in February 2021 with the closure of the coal industry in Collie? Yet they have the gall to come into this place and talk to us about consultation. I am not defending the McGowan Labor government’s decision on the basis that the Liberal and National Parties are worse than us—I will go into that in a minute—but I am saying that it is the height of hypocrisy, barefaced hypocrisy, to accuse us of not consulting. The Liberal Party put out a policy by press release that half its own party had not seen, and its own candidates had to take to the media to try to explain themselves. Unlike Hon Alannah MacTiernan, I never feel sorry for anyone in the Liberal Party. You make your choice when you sign your membership papers and you make your bed and you have to lie in it. But I have to say that the closest I have ever come to that was to feel sorry for the Liberal candidate for Collie–Preston during the last election campaign when she had to say —

Hon Steve Martin; Hon James Hayward; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Tjorn Sibma; Hon Dr Sally Talbot;
Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Sophia Moermond; Hon Neil Thomson

“During my campaign I have consulted with locals, the coal industry and Collie Shire, and have always given them my word that I will continue to work with them every step of the way, both as a candidate and local MP.

“Unfortunately, on this occasion, my ability to keep my word was undermined by a lack of consultation on the new energy jobs plan.

“I heard the details when it was announced at a press conference—the same time as the WA public.

Hon Steve Martin was not here then, so maybe he does not have to wear this guilt that hangs like a shame around the neck of the Liberal Party. But I say to the member that if he is the new face of the Liberal Party, if he is what renewal and regeneration represents in the Liberal Party and if he truly wants to stake his claim as being the face of renewal and regeneration, he has to come up with something better than a motion that is about 30 years old in both its style and content.

Let me turn specifically to the issue in front of us today. I thank Hon Alannah MacTiernan for her contribution to this debate. I was wondering where we were going. Eighty minutes feels like such a long time when we have to sit through half an hour of this mob on the opposition benches talking about stuff like this. When we talk about protecting the native forests in the south west of this state, I want to see a bit of energy and passion going to this debate, not this dreary recital of half facts and rambling on about something that we vaguely remember from—was it 2001? “Which Premier was it?” “I am not sure.” “Was it a commonwealth or state agreement?” There is all this rambling rubbish that seems to represent research coming from the Liberal–National opposition. It is just nonsense.

When Hon Alannah MacTiernan talks with passion, commitment and energy about this issue, I am proud to be on her team, and I intend to stay right here on her team and be part of the team batting for the whole south west community. Hon Alannah MacTiernan has only been a member for South West Region for a couple of months, but of course she is no stranger to the south west. I have always made the comment, having walked behind Hon Alannah MacTiernan on a number of occasions at processions, functions and all sorts of things, that we really need Alannah on our team. She is the greatest asset. Hon Alannah MacTiernan lives and breathes Labor values, and the community of the south west recognises and honours that in the contribution she has made over a number of years now, just as the constituents in her previous political roles have honoured and respected that. She is a fantastic addition to our team. Of course, she is also no stranger to the local communities in the south west, having a reputation, as Hon Darren West always says, as the finest Labor agriculture minister this state has ever seen. The bar was set very high with our former colleague Hon Kim Chance, so I am going to say we have equal first, with Hon Alannah MacTiernan right up there with Hon Kim Chance.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, Hon Sally Talbot has the call.

Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT: Hon Alannah MacTiernan knows those communities in the south west, because she has been pursuing those issues vigorously in her portfolio now for over four years. It makes me blind with fury when I hear my south west colleagues on the other side of this chamber, opposition spokespeople—whatever labels they might give themselves in opposition—bagging our south west communities like Manjimup, Pemberton and Nannup. Have they actually been there? I have worked with Hon Paul Omodei for many, many years, as communities like those three I have just named—Manjimup, Pemberton and Nannup—have worked their way through the diversification of their economies. I have such a short time on this motion, but I am looking forward to continuing these remarks, because this is a debate we can have over the next three and a half years. This is such a good policy setting to be pursuing. It will not stop when the bells ring to signal the end of debate on this motion today. Those towns in the south west have now been in transition for over 20 years. They knew exactly how things were going to go and they have looked to governments over the years to help guide and support them through that transition.

What we have heard from the Liberal–National party—I think I have to say “the National–Liberal Party”, because I think the Nationals WA is now the senior partner in the coalition—is that it has no idea what “just transition” means. Members opposite stand up in this place and say, “We have no idea what just transition means.” They did not even read the press release from yesterday. The press release had six dot points. They could have used that if they really wanted to do just transition 101, which translates of course to diversifying the economy 101. Just get with it, guys! Members opposite have to be able to talk the talk. We do not do it in terms of slogans. We have policies.

Hon James Hayward interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT: We have well thought out and consulted policies and procedures that are now rolling out in various communities all around this state, but particularly, of course, in the town of Collie. In February 2021,

Hon Steve Martin; Hon James Hayward; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Tjorn Sibma; Hon Dr Sally Talbot;
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when the Liberals announced that it was going to close down Collie, where was the National Party? It was very, very quiet on that day. We had hundreds of people on the streets in Collie saying, “This mob does not get it. They do not understand what it means. We know what the modern economy entails. We know that we have to diversify. We know that you can’t wave a magic wand, throw some money at a community and walk away. We want to work with Labor and the McGowan Labor team to work through this transition to get it right.” Of course, that is what Labor has been doing in that town now for years. I will have much more to say about that later.

Exactly the same is true in Manjimup, Pemberton and Nannup. I have been working with those communities for years, as has Hon Alannah MacTiernan, and our new colleague Hon Jackie Jarvis has now joined the crew. They have some very, very solid representation, along with their lower house members, as well.

Of course, a former hat I used to wear was as a shadow Minister for Environment. A colleague reminded me this morning that this is a demonstration of the fact that it is a marathon, not a sprint. In fact, Labor started talking about this issue in 1999. In 2013, we took to the election a platform to end the logging of native forests.

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [11.21 am]: Thank you, Deputy President, for an opportunity to address this very fine motion moved by Hon Steve Martin. I have had to listen to a fair bit of nonsense this morning. The problem is that there are all these glowing reports from those opposite about their knowledge of the south west, how much they know, and that the Minister for Regional Development is so wonderfully loved down there at the moment and knows all those communities. Members do not get to know those communities by flying over the top of them; they have to actually get out of the plane and drop by. But that is okay, because, in my view, nobody sitting on that side of the chamber has any expertise in this area.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: This was probably written by departmental people, but let us go to someone who has put their name to some comments in this area and might be attributed some expertise.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I will come to you in a moment. I will seek to table this in a little while. This is a press release from Dave Kelly, BA, MLA, Minister for Forestry, from 3 December 2019. Members should possibly listen to the words. I know it is hard for members on this side to listen to the words of Hon Dave Kelly—I think we want to take it with a grain of salt—but, in this case, a Labor Party member stood up and said, “This is what it means for the timber industry.” Let us see what Hon Dave Kelly said this might mean for the timber industry. On 3 December 2019, he said —

Local timber industry gets a boost as leading miller joins WA

- Parkside Timber purchases two South-West mills
- Plans to re-open the Manjimup processing centre expected to create local jobs
- WA’s forestry industry supports more than 6,000 jobs, particularly in regional areas
- McGowan Government committed to maintaining a sustainable forestry industry

That is the headline from the Minister for Forestry not that long ago. We get to the substance of the press release. It states —

More Western Australian jobs are expected to be created in the local forestry industry over the coming months with Queensland miller, Parkside Timber purchasing two South-West mills.

We might just jump ahead, because it says that the company will invest \$1.5 million. Since that time the company has invested significantly more than that, and we might have to look at that in a bit more detail. But I think that these couple of paragraphs in a Labor government press release should be noted by all members. The media release continues —

The change of ownership provides investment and employment certainty, and the potential to create local jobs in the South-West region. The native forestry industry injects \$220 million into the Western Australian economy each year and supports more than 800 jobs in the forestry industry.

This investment is another step towards native forestry’s transformation into a resilient, future industry that can deal with the challenges of utilising smaller logs from regrowth forests. This transformation started with the Gallop Labor Government’s decision to protect the South-West’s old growth forests.

This is a comment attributed directly to the Minister for Forestry, Hon Dave Kelly —

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Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Sophia Moermond; Hon Neil Thomson

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

I like the last sentence attributed to him, which states —

“The purchase follows the release of the McGowan Government’s —

I always have trouble with this one —

Djarlma Plan which set out the strategic direction for the future of the Western Australian forestry industry to support healthy forests and WA jobs.”

In December 2019, the Labor Party said, “This is a great industry. We support it.” Let us go back to the numbers again. It employs at least 800 people and is worth \$220 million to the Western Australian economy. Let us jump forward a little bit. What is the Labor Party saying now? “We had a plan in place; we put a plan in place; we consulted with the industry.” I remember the Forest Industries Federation WA coming out in support of the plan put together by the Labor government. FIFWA endorsed that plan. What is it saying about the plan the government released yesterday? FIFWA is probably catching up, because nobody consulted it in advance. I understand that it got a phone call at the last minute to say, “We’re about to announce the end of your industry, look forward to that”, but the reality is that there was no consultation. There was previous consultation with the industry for the first four years of the McGowan government, to the point that the government released a plan for the future of the industry, which I would have thought was a good model that it might use. But guess what the government has done now? It has form for this. It has now jumped in because it sees a political benefit in ending the timber industry in Western Australia—it probably gets an old barnacle! This is something for which the government has form.

It was interesting to see the Minister for Regional Development get up and spruik the transition plan for Collie. Having a transition plan for Collie is not a bad thing. I think \$100 million ended up in that plan. Some of that money got transferred across, because the Labor Party, with its weak ideology, came up with a \$20 million wind farm proposal and a \$20 million biomass plant for Collie. I agreed with the minister when she took that money out and stuck it into the transition plan for Collie, because they were dumb, foolish election ideas. I am sorry that the minister does not have the chance to respond to this, but maybe at some point she might make a ministerial statement and tell us how many permanent long-term jobs we can attribute to the transition plan for Collie and whether it will replace the hundreds and hundreds of jobs in the coal industry, because that is what we are talking about. That is the \$100 million plan.

Hon Stephen Dawson: Is this the coal industry that you’re closing down?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I was not. I have made significant comment on this. My position is absolutely public, minister. The government has a \$100 million plan for Collie, of course, and that is probably to some degree because Collie has been Labor heartland for a very long time, but members opposite should be careful because the union membership is slowly being abandoned by the Labor Party one by one. The Labor Party abandoned the forestry industry many, many years ago, despite the best attempts of Hon Dave Kelly in his plans and announcements to try to save the timber industry a couple of years ago. It was December 2019, so less than two years ago he was out there trying to save the industry. Twenty years ago the Labor Party still had some strength in Manjimup because a lot of timber workers in Manjimup joined the unions.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: We actually won the seat!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The Labor Party did not win Manjimup though. The minister should be honest with the people; the Labor Party did not win Manjimup.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The people of Manjimup did not vote for the Labor Party. Where did the Labor Party win a seat? It won in the seats of Margaret River and Walpole.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: What about Denmark?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: And in Denmark.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: That is where the Labor Party won a seat.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! I can no longer hear the Leader of the Opposition. Please cease your interjections.

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Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: It won votes where Labor Party members have their holiday homes. That is where it won votes.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Are you saying we stole the vote?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The minister should remember the Labor Party had held Manjimup until Paul Omodei came along. It was a Labor Party seat. But the Labor Party abandoned the forestry industry and the unions. It threw them to the wolves for political gain, and it is doing it again. It is doing it in Collie as well. There is a transition package in place, but it is not going to replace all the jobs. The transition package is more about media opportunities for the minister than it is about changing the genuine economy.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: It is shutting down Muja C units 5 and 6. I can tell members that there are some issues around Collie's Muja A station; it might shut that before it gets to units 7 and 8.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: As that transition occurs, the Labor Party continues to abandon its roots. The Labor Party is much more interested in getting into the leafy western suburbs and chasing the Green vote wherever it can. It is chasing that and abandoning the workers and the unions. It has no interest in its heartland.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! I think most other speakers whom I have observed in the last little while have been heard in relative silence. The Leader of the Opposition has only 20 seconds remaining.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Minister!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: It is no wonder, Deputy President. I thank you for your protection.

The Labor Party has lost its connection to its heartland and base. It will throw them under the bus for political gain. It has no capacity left for honesty. It is a sad, sad day for the Labor Party in this state.

HON SOPHIA MOERMOND (South West) [11.32 am]: I understand Hon Steve Martin's concerns and I appreciate his speaking out about financial stability and the community in the south west. As humans, we all like security and stability, but the fact of life, the very essence of life, is adaptability. Some of the most amazing things about us humans is our ingenuity and our ability to change and to evolve. A great example of this is Nokia. We all know about Nokia phones. It was originally a single paper mill operation. It changed with the times. Here is a great opportunity for WA and the south west to focus on the hemp industry. We have the space. We need sustainable, innovative economic empowerment that is also climate-change proof. Hemp provides all the materials and more that members have spoken about.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members. Hon Neil Thomson has the call.

HON NEIL THOMSON (Mining and Pastoral) [11.33 am]: This is a sad, sad day and a sad, sad reflection of the modus operandi of this government. Hon Dr Sally Talbot mentioned consultation and the case of a candidate. This government compares itself with that of a candidate in an election —

Hon Dr Sally Talbot: No; you weren't listening.

Hon NEIL THOMSON: That is this government's standard of consultation. The whole apparatus of government has set itself to the standard of a disappointed candidate in an election. That is the standard this government holds itself to in relation to consultation.

The common complaint I hear when I talk to Aboriginal people in my region is about the lack of consultation on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill, for example. That is a common complaint. When I talk to the people of Broome about the location of the Broome prison, they say that there has been absolutely no consultation. These things occur overnight after a decision is made. This is the way in which this government operates. On the notice paper at the moment is a matter about guillotine provisions. That is the form of this government on any decision it makes.

Let me look at the history of this matter. On 22 June, Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson invited people to have their say on native forests. Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson put out a survey on wabsi.mysocialpinpoint.com.au/wa-forests. That is the way in which this government consults. I am sure that when thousands of submissions came in—I am sure there were thousands from overseas and from various groups thrown in there—someone in the public sector will

Extract from *Hansard*

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Hon Steve Martin; Hon James Hayward; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Tjorn Sibma; Hon Dr Sally Talbot;
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have panicked and sent the results of the survey to the Minister for Environment; Climate Action; Commerce and said, “Look at all these numbers.” That is the way this government operates. It is not actually best practice. When it deals with an industry, the government should speak to that industry.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.