

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REDUCTION BILL 2020

Second Reading

Resumed from 19 March.

HON ALISON XAMON (North Metropolitan) [10.06 am]: I rise to speak in favour of the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Bill 2020. I have spoken many times in the past—in fact, even this week—about how critical it is that we address climate change, and address it in this decade. In order to have a chance of keeping global warming under two degrees, we absolutely have no choice other than to cut greenhouse emissions by nearly 50 per cent, at a minimum, by 2030. Just this week, even more reports have come out that once again advise us of the environmental, financial and social crisis that we face. This week, the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements—the Black Summer royal commission—found that Australia is on track for a four to five-degree increase in mean annual temperature. Even if we get to negative emissions by 2050, we are still looking at decades of a warmer climate and the corresponding increase in natural disasters. Deloitte Access Economics has predicted the loss of 800 000 jobs and \$3 trillion from the economy over the next 50 years if we continue to fail to address climate change. Conversely, we could grow our economy by 2.6 per cent and gain 250 000 jobs if we get on and finally do something about it. I am glad that I am here as the lead speaker on this bill to be able to finally talk about something that could address this.

Over and again, we have seen that we are past the point at which addressing climate change will be a drag on the economy. Indeed, the Retail Employees Superannuation Trust recently settled out of court with Mark McVeigh, a young man who sued it for failing to manage climate risks. This could and should have a huge impact on the Australian economy as that super fund currently has \$2.9 trillion invested in Australian companies. That settlement will have an effect on the investment strategies of super funds. As nice as a legal precedent would have been, this is a huge step towards at least forcing money away from climate-wrecking activities. This year's "Climate of the Nation" report showed that the vast majority of Australians are deeply concerned by the lack of action on climate change and that the number of concerned Australians and the level of concern continues to grow. Those are just some of the most recent reports. They follow decades and decades of reports. Honestly, how many more reports do we need before we see firm action? We have left it so late that we are already starting to experience the impacts of climate change. What we do now is critical and urgent, especially as WA has the capacity, and currently has the policy settings, to wipe out the efforts being made by the rest of the country. This is exactly the kind of bill that we need to effectively tackle climate change.

Climate change is not just some remote threat in the far-off future. We are already feeling the effects of a warming world. We are in the midst of a climate emergency. The climate crisis is putting at risk our planet and everything that we care about. At the start of this year, we witnessed a catastrophic bushfire in Australia. Across the country, fires burnt 18.6 million hectares of bushland, destroyed over 2 700 homes and killed at least 34 people. Maybe some members do not care about that, but I most certainly do. An estimated three billion animals were displaced or killed. The scale and severity of these bushfires was directly linked to global temperatures rising due to carbon emissions. Australians understand the link between climate change and worsening bushfires. Eighty-two per cent of Australians are now concerned that climate change will result in more bushfires. That figure will only go up. Last year, 76 per cent of people were concerned. Our local fire services are already under immense pressure during WA's fire seasons. A future rise in global temperatures will make future fire seasons even more overwhelming than the last one. WA absolutely needs a clear framework to transform its energy system to cut down emissions and ensure that successive governments focus on creating a healthier future. WA needs a climate change act.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated what we can achieve when we join together and act quickly in times of crises, and act on the public health advice. We need to tackle the climate crisis with the same determination and seriousness that we treated the COVID-19 crisis. Western Australia needs a coordinated response to the climate emergency. That involves the whole of government as well as non-government organisations, businesses and the community. The bill before us today will pave the way for such a coordinated response. It provides provisions for establishing statewide targets and strategies for emissions reduction, and renewable energy adoption. It binds WA decision-makers to treat climate change as a paramount concern.

State governments are well placed to be national leaders in Australia's response to climate change. As members know, electricity and transport are both under state jurisdiction. In 2018, those sectors together accounted for more than 50 per cent of emissions. It is time for the government to pass this much-needed legislation that the Greens have introduced into this house. Only then will we be able to start reducing emissions in a serious and systematic way.

I will put to bed some of the tired excuses that are put forward when we debate the issues of climate change. In particular, I would like to address the fallacy that the federal carbon pollution reduction scheme was somehow going to achieve anything of significance.

Hon Darren West interjected.

Hon Alison Xamon; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Robin Scott; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Pierre Yang

Hon ALISON XAMON: The member can be quiet and listen!

The 2009 federal CPRS is a good example of the sorts of unsatisfactory climate change reforms that Labor governments have tried introducing in the past. The CPRS was going to introduce measures that would have been ineffective at reducing emissions. It pursued an emissions reduction goal that was utterly negligible. The Rudd government was going to give billions of dollars in free permits to some of the biggest polluters, such as—unbelievably—the coal industry. The carbon pricing scheme would have locked in these subsidies for fossil fuel companies. The CPS would have cut the fuel excise; it would have muffled the price signal in the transport sector; it would have excluded several major emitting sectors from the scheme, such as agriculture and land use; and it would have given no incentive to industry to reduce emissions until well into this decade. At the time that it was proposed, it was not even the most cost-effective way to reduce emissions. A year later, the federal government, together with the Australian Greens, produced instead a far superior carbon pricing scheme that gave us the best chance we had ever had until that point to seriously reduce emissions. From the introduction of the carbon pricing scheme, until it was repealed, Australia was on track to reduce its emissions for the first and only time in our history. Since then, the federal government has been completely paralysed in the climate change space. We saw the spectacle when our Prime Minister brought into Parliament a chunk of coal, just to make it clear where his allegiances lie. In the absence of federal action, we need to act where we have the power to act, which is here and now in this chamber.

I fully expect that in reply the minister will stand up and point to all the things the government has done, as though somehow that will meet the targets that we know need to be met to address climate change. So far, the state government has introduced only a trickle of piecemeal measures to address climate change. It has announced a number of initiatives this year that will mean more conservation and more renewable energy, but when it is all put together, unfortunately it does not add up to very much. The government's most recent measures will remove only a few million tonnes of greenhouse gas from the atmosphere over the next 25 years. To give members some idea of the figures, WA emitted more than 91 million tonnes of greenhouse gas in 2018–19. Only a few million tonnes will be removed, as opposed to the 91 million tonnes that were emitted even just last year. To put the size of the job at hand into context, by 2030 we need to be on track to reduce emissions by 45 per cent of the 2018 levels, which means that we need to halve our current emissions in under 10 years. That will require urgent and legislated action.

The government is introducing measures that will give renewables and battery storage technology to a few thousand more homes, which is great, but we need to transition the whole electricity grid to renewables by 2030. The recent announcement of \$6 million for photovoltaic systems on 500 social housing properties is, of course, welcomed, and wildly overdue after the original pilot project ran in 2012–13. Another 42 000 social housing dwellings need this and we are also 15 000 homes short of what is needed simply to address the current housing waitlist during a homelessness crisis.

There have been a series of measures to expand conservation and revegetation efforts, but although changes in land use can sequester some carbon, such efforts alone will not be enough to reduce emissions. In 2017, about 10 megatonnes of carbon was removed from the atmosphere because of a change in land use in WA, yet in the same year the total annual greenhouse gas emissions from Western Australia's five LNG facilities accounted for 32 megatonnes of emissions. Members, it is always one step forward but two steps back. Even when we consider all of Labor's efforts to reduce emissions to date, these efforts are effectively being completely wiped out by rising emissions from the LNG industry.

We acknowledge the \$22 million to accelerate WA's renewable hydrogen industry, but we are comparing that investment with \$10 million just for the LNG Futures Facility project. The recent extension of the state agreement with Woodside has locked us into 50 years of emissions-intensive gas production. As an aside, the agreement failed to legislate an emissions reduction plan. We combine that with the ongoing hype about WA being an LNG hub for the next several decades while our major LNG export markets continue to set themselves legislated emissions targets.

WA emissions have continued to rise under this government's watch. WA was the only state in Australia to have an increase in carbon emissions from 2000 to 2016, and it was a substantial increase of 27 per cent. Over the last few years, a few other states have joined us on the wrong path, but WA emissions are increasing at the fastest rate. We increased our emissions by over 18 per cent in the three financial years between 2015–16 and 2018–19 and our share of Australia's emissions by 21.1 per cent. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has estimated that if our current rate of emissions continues, we could be 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer by as early as 2030 and start seeing sustained periods of over 1.5 degrees warmer from 2024. Members, this is a crisis. While most other states in Australia have been making solid commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, WA is lagging far, far behind. On 28 August last year, at a time when every other state had committed to a net zero emissions target, this government announced its greenhouse gas emissions policy. The policy outlines an aspiration for the state to meet net zero emissions by 2050. I aspire to one day be five feet tall but that does not mean that I will necessarily get there; there needs to be a bit of a plan behind these things. The policy also supports proponents of major new projects or project expansions that emit significant emissions to develop greenhouse gas and management plans.

Hon Alison Xamon; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Robin Scott; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Pierre Yang

In a recent open letter to the Premier, more than 30 scientists and academics said that an aspiration is not good enough and that the government should support the bill before us today. The letter stated —

... the climate crisis requires more than an aspiration. It requires urgent and coordinated action across all levels of government. It requires legislated targets and a detailed plan for how those targets will be met.

As my colleague Hon Tim Clifford has pointed out, WA Labor once had a renewable energy policy, but, disgracefully, this was scrapped just before the 2017 election. The government has not taken emissions reduction or renewable energy targets seriously. At a time when governments around the world should have been rising to meet the challenge of climate change, the WA government has failed to take decisive action. Over the more than three years that Labor has held government, instead of introducing a comprehensive climate change policy, it has reopened the state to fracking, it has undermined the Environmental Protection Authority's greenhouse gas emissions guidelines, it has refused to make big polluters accountable for their emissions, it has continued to support LNG, the primary source of WA's rising emissions—it is no longer a transition fuel—it has delayed the implementation of the 2019 National Construction Code that mandates better efficiency standards, it has invested in another 900 diesel-powered public buses when we could be transitioning the Transwa bus fleet to electric vehicles, it has locked in another 50 years of emissions-intensive gas production by extending a state agreement with Woodside, it has continued to accept political donations from big polluters and it has not incentivised the electrical vehicle uptake. That is the actual record.

By failing to take action, the government is exacerbating the impacts and costs of climate change that we are already seeing and feeling here in WA. It is very real and it is very now. We are already seeing the impact of climate change with coastal erosion, droughts, decreased rainfall and water shortages. We are already seeing an increased intensity of cyclones and bushfires, and increasing temperature extremes.

In the WA government's 2019–20 *Annual Report on State Finances*, no money was expressly allocated for directly impacting and mitigating the impacts of climate change. We are missing out on major development and job opportunities as well. The Conservation Council of Western Australia has collated research that shows that far more jobs are created in low-carbon industries than conventional or fossil fuel-based areas for each dollar invested. The government should not try to give me the jobs spin because if it does, it is just a load of rubbish.

We know that 85 per cent of Western Australians support stronger action on climate change. Setting hard legislated targets will not only signal that this Parliament takes its climate change responsibility seriously, but also create certainty for affected industries and companies that are looking to invest in renewable energy and clean technologies.

Last year, the EPA recognised that if the federal government will not take the steps needed, we in Western Australia must act. The EPA introduced the greenhouse gas emissions guidelines. I note that the government fell over itself to reassure the gas industry that it would never have to take any responsibility for the damage that it is doing to our climate and our future. It effectively forced the EPA to produce a watered-down version of these guidelines to have any hope that the government would accept recommendations from the EPA on greenhouse gases. The government missed yet another opportunity to properly address emissions with the introduction of the Environmental Protection Amendment Bill 2020 earlier this year. I spoke about that only this week. Although other jurisdictions have acknowledged the effect of emissions on climate change in their environmental protection laws, WA has not yet followed suit. In fact, there is not a single mention of climate change in the Environmental Protection Amendment Bill.

In 2017, Labor went to the state election promising to consider legislation that would support mandatory renewable energy targets. Good luck, because it is here, so it can do that now. It reaffirmed its support for the Paris Agreement and its commitment to keep the global temperature rise under one and a half degrees Celsius. Over three years have passed since then, but the government has done nothing serious about addressing climate change in that time. WA's greenhouse gas emissions have done nothing but rise since then. Time is running out for governments around the world to take meaningful action to curtail the worst effects of climate change. As I said, we are already experiencing it. We are trying to do all we can to offset disaster.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! I am finding it a little difficult to hear Hon Alison Xamon. Members may like to take their conversations outside.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Thank you, Madam President.

I note that earlier this year, tens of thousands of children involved in climate strikes recognised the urgency of our present moment in history. They are the people who will end up living with the true legacy of our failures. I think they showed an extraordinary level of gumption and initiative in demanding immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Frankly, I think they are putting the adults in governments around the world to shame.

WA's emissions have soared more than 23 per cent above 2005 levels, largely due to increased LNG production. Emissions from WA LNG facilities currently make up 36 per cent of WA's total annual emissions. If the proposed Woodside Burrup hub expansion is approved, opening up the Browse and Scarborough gas fields, emissions from WA's current and proposed LNG facilities will account for 47 per cent of WA's annual emissions and eight per cent

Hon Alison Xamon; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Robin Scott; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Pierre Yang

of Australia's total emissions. The WA LNG industry is directly and indirectly responsible for a total of 193.2 million tonnes of climate pollution every year, yet the LNG industry is still expanding under this government's watch. What will this bill do in response to all that? The implementation of section 25 will mean that no new development or expansion or existing development will be allowed if it exceeded the emissions threshold. It is an important provision given the effects of LNG on WA and Australian emissions.

A climate change act for Western Australia is long overdue. The bill before us is a very good bill and it is worthy of serious consideration and support. It does not introduce half-measures but treats the climate change emergency with the seriousness that it deserves. I am not interested in hearing spin from this place about how great the carbon pollution reduction scheme was because it was not, which is why it was rejected. I am not interested in hearing about all the wonderful things that this government has done because while some of those initiatives are worthy, on their own they are wholly insufficient and do nothing to address the major causes of emissions.

Hon Darren West interjected.

Hon ALISON XAMON: I am sorry that in this chamber we have apologists for the gas industry. I am sorry that we have a government that simply refuses to take climate change seriously. We have to move beyond the spin if we are genuine about wanting to address this matter. If we are genuine about wanting to create jobs, this is the sort of future that we need to contemplate—one that tackles climate change and moves us to a renewable energy future. We do not have a choice; we have to deal with this. I commend Hon Tim Clifford for introducing this bill to the house, and I wholeheartedly support it.

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Regional Development) [10.28 am]: We compliment Hon Tim Clifford for bringing the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Bill 2020 to this place because it is an absolutely critical issue for people in Western Australia, Australia and globally. No-one on this side of the house would not see that climate change is extremely important. We share Kevin Rudd's view that climate change is the greatest moral challenge that is facing us as a community. We completely and utterly understand that. I think the Greens have an important role to play in our society and, personally, I am glad that we have a Greens group that focuses on these issues. But I have to call out the extraordinary self-righteousness that permeates many, but not all, of its members in this matter. I know Hon Alison Xamon does not want us to talk about the carbon pollution reduction scheme. She does not want to hear —

Hon Alison Xamon interjected.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I am not saying that is the end of the story; this is part of a narrative I am trying to set out to show that whilst the Greens have a role, it is not going to be a pivotal role in getting us to the place that we need to go.

Hon Diane Evers: It is 2020; we need action soon.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: We are acting, and I am going to —

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, minister. The first speaker was heard in relative silence. I ask that members afford the same appropriate approach to listening to the minister on their feet. If other members would like to make a contribution, I will give them the call when the minister takes her seat again.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I acknowledge that Hon Alison Xamon said that she did not want to listen to our arguments and I accept that, but we have a right to put them. I want to put them not because of simplistic pointscoreing but because we actually really believe in this stuff. We absolutely believe that we have to deal with climate change but we also understand that we live in a democracy and we need to bring the community with us. If a party is only ever focused on getting 10 per cent of the vote, it can adopt a purist position that is not going to get the support of the majority of the community. It can continue to do that, but we are not going to do that because we understand that this is really important and that we can achieve this only if we bring the community with us. A lot of people out there are incredibly concerned about climate change but they are also concerned about their economic welfare. Our job—the real job we have to do here, involving real talent—is to make it clear that opportunities come from addressing climate change and they are not going to create chaos and disruption in people's lives.

On this side of the house, we are all celebrating that Joe Biden—I do not know whether the Greens are celebrating because they may think it is better to have Trump because it helps them —

Hon Alison Xamon: What a silly thing to say!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: Sometimes, you do not want the moderates in because —

Hon Alison Xamon; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Robin Scott; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Pierre Yang

The PRESIDENT: Order, minister! I have already said that people need to listen to what the minister has to say. If members want to make a contribution, I will give them the call.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: Sorry, I said that only because of that experience with the CPRS.

One of the most important reasons that we should be celebrating the likely victory—it is only likely at this stage—of Joe Biden is that we will once again be able to see some real progress being made on a global level. That progress has been absolutely stalled and sent backwards under Donald Trump’s disgraceful administration. We could legislate a set of targets that would close down many significant industries in this state. That would cause a great backlash, obviously, from many in our community. We are seeking to build alternative industries and show new opportunities while we are transitioning. We are deeply committed to that.

I want to go through some of the things that perhaps the member is not aware of. It is very evident in Collie, for example, that the last time we were in government, we took the decision to close Australia’s dirtiest coal-fired power station and we are clearly transitioning out of coal in Collie. We have made that very clear and we have put in an enormous effort in Collie to deliver a just transition so that we can move out of that space. There is no doubt that the LNG operations are offering a reduced carbon footprint compared with coal from Collie in particular. We are working with industry to really develop the alternatives and make real transitions.

The way in which these companies have a buy-in to the emission reduction is pretty extraordinary. It goes well beyond just making bland statements. There is absolute commitment out there and it comes from a number of perspectives. Some is shareholder activism, which I think is the most magnificent thing. Shareholder activism is really driving change and that is having consequences with financial institutions, including on investment policy. That is driving change. There is also what I call the “Greta Thunberg effect”. We can see that many executives are being confronted by their children. They want to be proud of the work that they do and they want their children to be proud of the work that they do. Questions are being asked in their households about where this is going to lead us. We are seeing real commitment.

The mining sector is one of the biggest sources of emissions in Western Australia. We import diesel. It comes down in ships, which gobbles up more bunker fuel. Then it comes into Fremantle and goes onto a truck. We spend more diesel moving that diesel up to the mining sector. We are making small gains by having direct shipping into the Pilbara. We are really focused on that to reduce the spend on moving diesel. But, more importantly, companies such as Fortescue Metals Group and BHP in particular are completely interested in, engaged with and investing in transforming their operations to use renewable hydrogen. They are putting real effort and commitment into it. Some of the early work we have seen at Christmas Creek is relatively easy stuff, but still requires significant investment. The bus fleets that carry around the mineworkers will now be run with hydrogen vehicles. The big game changer is obviously the work that is being done on the Haulpaks themselves—the substitution of diesel in the stationary energy and in the automotive energy being consumed on a mine. Companies such as FMG have brought forward their net zero emissions target to 2040 and it is putting real investment behind that. It is not just plucking a figure out of the air. It is working very closely with government and the many research institutions to achieve its target. We are actually investing \$28 million into developing hydrogen supply. This is about not only the grant money, but also the work that we are doing, as part of that process, to unlock all the regulatory blockages. About 140 pieces of legislation could potentially impact on that, so we are working with the sector on all those issues and providing some early seed money to get feasibility studies up. This includes the Yara project in the Pilbara. We have been assisting that company to develop its feasibility plans for a green ammonia plant that will convert the petrochemically produced ammonia found in fertilisers into renewable hydrogen. That is a potentially huge market as well.

The mining companies are seriously investing in this stuff. Woodside is investing. It knows that it needs a plan B. It knows that the world is moving. It is cognisant of the fact that two of its major trading partners in Japan and Korea have set a zero emissions target. It understands that it will not continue to be business as usual. We are working with Woodside to make sure that we have this ready to go as soon as it is technically and practically feasible. That is the important detail of the work. This is not about just coming in here with a piece of legislation and prescribing a target; it is about getting down to business and doing that detailed work. How do we make this happen? What do we have to do to get a massive scale of industry such as that happening? We have to work closely together on the detail in a disciplined way. We have to inspire people about opportunity.

I am going to address the carbon pollution reduction scheme because it is a complete demonstration. The CPRS was a modest scheme.

Hon Alison Xamon: It was terrible.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: It was not terrible.

Hon Alison Xamon interjected.

Hon Alison Xamon; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Robin Scott; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Pierre Yang

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: Any objective commentator would have said —

Hon Alison Xamon interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: — that this scheme would have locked in the notion of a —

Hon Alison Xamon interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Member, how many times do I have to reference the fact that the first speaker was heard in relative silence? You had opportunity. I ask that you sit and listen and not try to interrupt the debate.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: Madam President, I am not offended by the argy-bargy.

It is critically important for us to understand what actually happened. The sequence of events in Australian politics would have gone very differently had we had a CPRS. It was supported by industry at the level that it was. It would have entrenched the notion that a price had to be paid for carbon pollution and that the external impact had to be accounted for within a project. Was it the most perfect scheme? No, but it was about where they were at in Europe at the time. We would have got on board. We would not have seen the rise of Tony Abbott. This would have become commonplace in Australia and we would have been able to progress as other countries have. Even the United Kingdom does not have this left–right debate about the existence of climate change and the appropriateness of a price on carbon; that has been done. But, no, the Greens could have lost some votes and it might have made Labor look a little bit too good, so they had to chop this off at the knees and then at the next election insist on the introduction of a new scheme. That scheme was much stronger than the original CPRS; there is no doubt about that, but it did not last. These guys here might be Marxist; they might be the watermelons rather than the cucumbers and committed to revolution, but we know that that sort of change does not last. It is put in place and then there is an explosion and it disappears. We want to do those things that enable us to bring the community with us, so that we do not get the likes of George Christensen and whoever whipping up Trump-like support on the basis of creating fear. We want to inspire people and show them that there are opportunities.

The work that we have been doing in the hydrogen space and the degree to which the mining and the gas sector are coming onboard and embracing this is very significant, so much so that the targets that we had set for 2040 when we first launched this strategy in 2019 have recently been brought forward by 10 years. The sense of urgency that we have seen from mining and gas companies, and the sense of buy-in from investors, tells us that we can get there in a significantly quicker way. Minister Johnston has been working to promote renewable energy. His announcement outlined the many structural changes that he has made within the power sector. We are all very excited with his announcement on the development of a big 100-megawatt battery in Kwinana to help underpin and stabilise this vast expansion of renewable energy, in particular solar photovoltaic energy. This will enable us to deal strategically with the duck curve, which is that period during the middle of the day when we have an excess of energy production over demand that is driving down the price of renewables to often below zero. The large-scale batteries will, in part, deal with that problem. Minister Johnston sees this as being the first of a number of such batteries that will be placed on the south west interconnected system.

We recently approved a significant body of work through one of our Collie industry development funds. Some proponents are very serious about building another similarly scaled battery in the Collie area. We are doing those things that we believe will make a change and deal with that fundamental emissions level.

On another point, at a lower level, we are working on and investing in the Sheep Industry Business Innovation project at the Katanning Research Facility. We have done the capital upgrades and I have just approved funding for that facility to be a research centre for net zero carbon sheep farming. We have entered into an arrangement with Meat and Livestock Australia and, I think, the CSIRO on a similar MLA-led project on beef.

Members will be well aware of our commitment to carbon farming. After a pretty tough battle, we were able to get everyone within the mining sector to agree that we need to unleash the carbon farming potential of pastoral lands. I am very pleased to say that that project has been going very well. I think we have over 40 carbon farming projects in the southern rangelands and many more are underway. Interestingly, companies such as Woodside Energy want to be deeply involved in the development of more of these projects, particularly working with Aboriginal pastoral properties.

I know Minister Dawson has been working hard on putting together all the elements of our response—our strategy—for reducing emissions. We are absolutely committed to it, but we say this: we need to bring the community with us and do it in such a way that we do not undermine our ability to offer employment to the community. In 2007, we saw a great build-up of interest in carbon emissions, but once the global financial crisis hit, much of the, shall we say, “worry quotient”, moved over to economic issues. We need a strategy that ensures that we do this in such a way that we create more jobs. We agree with the Greens that there are extraordinary opportunities, but we cannot

Hon Alison Xamon; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Robin Scott; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Pierre Yang

achieve those opportunities by just moving a bill and putting some numbers in it. We have to get in there and do the detailed work. We have to redesign our energy systems and electricity profiles. We have to really drive the development of a renewable hydrogen industry and carbon farming. We are doing all of those things. We are doing more than just pontificating; we are actually getting in there, rolling up our sleeves and trying to get the job done.

HON DIANE EVERS (South West) [10.52 am]: I appreciated hearing the minister's contribution on the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Bill 2020. She ended up talking about community. I think she raised some very valid points about this issue. We need to look to the community. The community is saying loud and clear that it wants this; notably, by the shareholder activism that the minister spoke about. Shareholders are going to the corporations they are invested in and letting them know that they want action on this. They are saying, "We don't want you to keep emitting carbon. We want you to clean it up." Do members know what is happening? Again, the minister mentioned this. Companies are changing on their own. Companies know that communities want something because they are actively going to their annual general meetings and saying, "We want action on climate change." The community is driving the corporates. It is happening not only in Western Australia; as the minister said, our trading partners are aware that we need action on climate. Why are we not doing something?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: We are!

Hon DIANE EVERS: I know the minister has listed examples. The minister has had her time. She should let me continue.

The PRESIDENT: Order, minister!

Hon DIANE EVERS: Governments are here to lead and take action. Brave governments that know what the future requires will take action. They will step forward and do something. Yes, the government is acting as one of the players in this game. It is going out and tinkering a bit here and trying a bit there, and maybe doing something here. It is one of the players in this game, but it is definitely not leading. If the government were to lead and take action to take us into the future that we need to have, we would not have corporates wondering, "What's the government going to do about this? Where do we go to next from here? Should we invest in renewables or continue to invest in gas that will leave us with billions of dollars of stranded assets that will come back on the government of the day to fix?" That is not where we need to go. We need to take action now and give certainty to the corporates by saying that we expect to have 100 per cent renewable electricity generation by 2030. We can do it. We know we can. They know we can. But it takes guts. It takes the government putting it in place by saying that this is what we want. We can be 100 per cent renewable. Look at what is happening with coal. Everybody knows that it is on the way out and that we do not need it any more. Look at what happened with the fossil fuel industry not long ago, when the price dropped below zero. People know that we need to do better. People know that renewable energy sources are out there.

I have to say, it is wonderful that our own Western Power, after three and a half years, has figured out that renewable energy is a good thing too. It is now investing in renewable energy and planning for a future with more renewable sources coming in on a very distributed system. It knows that we can move forward with that.

Rather than fighting the tide of climate change, which we are realising is impossible, we need to acknowledge, address and work with it to come up with solutions that will carry us forward into a future in which our families can be safe, our businesses can thrive and our environment is healthy, resilient and doing the things that we need it to do. We need to look to the environment to draw down the emissions that we spew out into the atmosphere. Even when we are 100 per cent renewable, there will still be emissions from one source or another. We have to make sure that we get to net zero emissions by 2040, because we need to play our part in this world. In this chamber we can speak only for Western Australia, and in this country we can speak only for Australia. We could put in place regulations or limits that state that we want to deal only with trading partners that are actively striving to reach net zero emissions. Instead, we toddle along saying that we will invest in gas because it is less polluting than other fossil fuels. Actually, it is not. The fugitive emissions from gas are extreme. What are we doing about that? Not much. We are making some agreements and talking to some of the corporate donors that support the Labor Party to continue —

Hon Darren West: You get donations, too.

Hon DIANE EVERS: We do not take corporate donations.

Hon Darren West: You do so.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Look at it online. The member is admitting that the Labor Party takes corporate donations. I think, by his comments, he is suggesting that, yes, they influence its decisions. That is the problem. We continue to prop up corporates that are spewing emissions into the atmosphere and we have no target telling them, "Look, we're going to zero emissions. We really need to do that for the health of our country and the planet." If we cannot give them the certainty that they will know that the decisions they make today will still be valid tomorrow, next year and next decade, how can we expect them to go further in their drive to reach net zero emissions?

Hon Alison Xamon; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Robin Scott; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Pierre Yang

Interestingly, it is not only corporate mining and gas companies figuring it out, but also our banks. People—getting back to the community—are voting with their feet. They are telling the banks, “We don’t want you investing in gas and coal.” I think there is only one bank left that is still saying it might invest in the Adani mine. Maybe I am wrong. Maybe it has pulled out too. People in the community know this. We had a rally in front of Parliament House this morning. The rally was different. Even though there were a couple of hundred people in attendance, with the sunshine—I do not know—it was relaxing, happy and friendly. There was no aggression. It was just people fighting for what they believe in. Three, four or five grandparents who had just completed a seven-day hunger strike were at the rally because they want some recognition that this is important to them, their children and their grandchildren—some even to their great-grandchildren.

We were trying to draw attention to the issue of climate change but it is difficult because we were not out there waving our fists and screaming “power” and putting out an almost forceful and aggressive energy. We are just a bunch of people who are trying to do the right thing and get on with the world. We are trying to encourage this government to take ownership of this issue and to take ownership of its position as the government and lead the state forward in a way that makes a difference so that WA can stand proud in this country and say, “No longer will we be the worst emitter of carbon emissions and their equivalents. No longer will we stand for that. We’re going to put something on paper and say that this is what we believe in. We’re going to give certainty to the corporates and companies that want to invest and make a difference.” We want to make it that when a company emits, it has to make it up somehow. I do not care what terminology we use and I do not care how we do it, but we have to make the polluter pay. The person who is polluting has to pay for it and that may mean investing in carbon sequestration or carbon drawdown to get some of that carbon out of the atmosphere.

My view is that net zero emissions are not good enough. We are already over 400 parts per million. We need negative emissions, but I will leave that for another day because I do not feel that there is the understanding in this chamber to manage that. We need to start investing in drawdown to put carbon back into the trees so that we are no longer cutting down trees with stored carbon. As I have said so many times, we can put so much carbon back into the soil, which helps not only the climate but also our ability to grow more nutritious food. It will help the soil do the thing that we need it to do. We can do that. People know that that can be done. The best thing about those two issues alone is that they will provide so many jobs. We can grow plantations and draw down the carbon, and there are jobs involved in planting the trees and jobs involved in looking after them. The plantations would be cut down and the trees milled into timber—more jobs—and then we get to build houses with that timber, which means more jobs.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: That’s what the Forest Products Commission does, but you don’t want it.

Hon DIANE EVERS: The Forest Products Commission has done absolutely nothing on this. The minister knows as well as I do that the planation situation is appalling. We do not have enough timber to last us into the next decade. Does the minister know what is going to happen? We will end up importing timber. That is fine and good from a global perspective, because that is somebody helping somebody else, but only if it is coming from plantations. We do not need to be cutting down another country’s native timbers. We should be growing more plantations here. Oh, the minister has really baited me here! I am sorry, I will have to take a few more minutes.

Under governments of both persuasions, the Forest Products Commission has damaged our plantation industry by undercutting the farmers who have planted trees on their own land. What is the good of that? I have no idea how we ended up with a situation in which the Forest Products Commission can make a deal with a mill to sell it timber at a price that is below what the market is willing to pay, what the market is paying over east and what the market needs to pay to recompense the farmers who have put their land to trees. It has damaged the industry abysmally. If we do not see the end of the Forest Products Commission in the first stages of the government’s next term, you can bet I will be fighting more because it does not have a leg to stand on. It is disgraceful. If the minister wants me to go on and if she wants to bait me, I will talk about the sandalwood industry as well.

Let me go back to the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Bill 2020, which is asking the government to take action by giving certainty to the corporations out there that are willing to invest in this industry and are willing to invest in reducing emissions, but need certainty that the government is behind them. A government that continues to support the oil and gas industry is a government that cannot show its strength and ability to do something. It is not a leader; it is a player in the system and it is playing along and being guided by its corporate influencers. We need to take notice of the community and take notice of the shareholders who are putting pressure on the corporates. We need to take notice of our trading partners that are saying, “We want you to be operating with zero emissions.” The government needs to set something up to do that. As I said, there were not just a few people at the rally. Many recognisable groups were out there, such as the school strikers, which is a growing group. They would be out in their thousands if we could get this together and had it not been for the COVID situation that we found ourselves in this year, because students know. I hate seeing them feel somewhat dismal about their future because governments around the world are doing diddly about climate change. We need to take action and show that we have the strength to do it.

Hon Alison Xamon; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Robin Scott; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Pierre Yang

There were also grandparents at the rally, representing Extinction Rebellion. This is not the XR that members might see in other parts of the world, whose members get quite angry. They are angry, but they do not show it in an aggressive manner. They are just saying, “Please, do something for us. Show us some strength.” That is what we need to do. We need to listen to the community, including the WA Forest Alliance, the Conservation Council of Australia and Clean State, which came out with a major plan involving 200 000 jobs through investment in clean and green technology. We can do it. If this government had any strength of character, it would be able to stand up and say, “Yes, we believe in this.”

I was also baited on the United States election. It looks as though Biden may win. I hope that is the case; please do not tell me right now if that is not going to happen. It seems that Biden has already committed to the Paris Agreement. When Trump got into power, he immediately said, “No, we’re not going to be a part of that. It’s not good for us. If it’s not good for me, it’s not good for anybody so we’ll just keep it that way.” Trump’s administration did not sign the documents or whatever it needed to do to finalise the fact that the US is not going to be a part of it only in the last couple of weeks. Now Biden has got up and is beginning to feel confident. With any hope that I have left for the US, I hope that something good will come of this. One of Biden’s first statements was that under his administration, the US would sign the Paris Agreement. He needs to do that because 187 countries have already signed it.

We need unity and collaboration; we need to work together on this. Yes, COVID is an issue. It is a problem, but we are dealing with it, especially in Australia where we are dealing with it very well. Climate change is a thousand times more of a problem than COVID, and that is reflected in the budget, which refers to the construction of seawalls. We are also talking about how much money has to go towards bushfires because we know there will be serious fires, if not this year, then next year and the year after, which will be brought on by climate change. There is just no debate left on that. No, there is debate, because there are still governments that seem to sit on their hands and think that we have to debate whether climate change is real, whether humans are affecting climate and whether humans can do anything about it. We do not have to have that debate. We know that it is real, we know that it is affecting us and we know that we can do something about it. From the efforts of Julia Gillard’s climate bill, we saw that we can do much about this issue. We realised that we can make changes. Then what happened? It all stopped.

We have to do something now. We have to make sure that we do not end up with stranded assets. We have to make sure that the effects of climate change do not increase. Climate change will cause extreme weather events—fires, floods and rising sea levels—that will cost us \$3 trillion, according to Deloitte Access Economics. Personally, I think it will cost even more than that. I do not know how Deloitte could put a figure on it. If we do nothing, it will cost considerably more than that. At this point, I will take my seat and allow another member to speak.

HON ROBIN SCOTT (Mining and Pastoral) [11.08 am]: After listening to Hon Alison Xamon’s contribution to the debate on the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Bill 2020, I contemplated heading down St Georges Terrace to find a tall building to jump off because I was under the impression that I would choke to death on polluted air, be burned alive by rising temperatures or drown as a result of rising tides. This damning of the gas industry is absolutely ridiculous, as is setting a target of zero emissions by 2050. That is 30 years away. A whole heap of things could happen in the next 30 years. There were only about 20 years between the First and Second World Wars. Thirty years is a long, long time. We could even get a virus. That would be a bit of a stick in the spoke of the wheel of life! I am all for working together to get a cleaner and healthier environment, but we have to stop this panic. This absolute panic is just destroying young people’s lives.

Hon Alison Xamon interjected.

Hon ROBIN SCOTT: I never interrupted anybody, so please do not interrupt me.

I will give an example. A reverse osmosis plant was just installed in Cue by the Water Corporation. This was supposed to be a green RO plant, so along with the RO plant, a solar farm was installed. This solar farm is supposed to power the RO plant for all the hours it has to work. It also has battery backup. I was at the Western Australian Local Government Association meeting of the “Cue Parliament” and asked a question directly to the Water Corporation: how long will the RO plant run on the battery backup? Thirty minutes was the answer. It will hold up the plant for 30 minutes, so the Water Corporation has also installed a diesel generator. Once again, an unreliable power source has been built to run an RO plant and it is not going to work. I would like to think that there is a 14-year-old kid out in the suburbs somewhere who, 10 years from now, is going to come up with perpetual motion. That would be a wonderful thing. It might sound a little far-fetched, but it is a possibility.

I have a question about the 250 000 jobs that will be created by renewable energy. We keep being told that there will be 250 000 jobs, but what will these jobs be? Will they be cleaning solar panels or blowing into wind turbines?

The Greens spoke about 18.6 million hectares of land being destroyed by bushfires. If I have read the information correctly, part of the reason for those bushfires was that the Greens would not allow regular clearing to get rid of some of the fuel build-up.

Hon Alison Xamon; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Robin Scott; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Pierre Yang

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Dr Steve Thomas): Order! The member will be heard in silence.

Hon ROBIN SCOTT: Thank you, Mr Acting President. I do not want to dwell too much on this, but it is great that people were demonstrating outside Parliament House today. We need people like that, just as we need the Greens, because we do need to be kept on track with renewable energy. It is not going to happen in my lifetime. When I am dead and buried, coal and gas will still be used, because we do not yet have reliable renewable energy. We are now talking about an Asian Renewable Energy Hub up in the Pilbara. That is soul destroying to me. This renewable energy hub was originally going to be a six-gigawatt plant. I have printed out the company's own paperwork on this. It is going to increase it from six gigawatts to nine megawatts—they are not even proofreading the stuff they put out! It should have read “nine gigawatts” not “nine megawatts”. Basically, it will be 7.5 gigawatts of wind energy and 3.5 gigawatts of solar power.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Can I just clarify that for you? My understanding is that they have actually got environmental approval for 15 gigawatts.

Hon ROBIN SCOTT: Yes, it has. That is in the future.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: No, I think it is 15 gigawatts now. They are applying for 26 gigawatts.

Hon ROBIN SCOTT: That is right, but at the moment it is going to produce 7.5 gigawatts of wind energy and 3.5 gigawatts of solar power. The company is going to start building this plant. Initially, it will supply five gigawatts to the Pilbara.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: No, three.

Hon ROBIN SCOTT: I read “5” in here. I will stick to the notes that I have printed off the webpage.

Hon Darren West interjected.

Hon ROBIN SCOTT: The member is right. The renewable energy hub will initially supply five gigawatts to the Pilbara. I would like to know whether we will be paying for that five gigawatts of power. Are we entering into a power purchase agreement, which means that we will be paying for five gigawatts of power whether we use it or not? This will be absolutely devastating. It is just another solar farm that will take up 7 000 hectares of land. I believe that we will be charging rent for that land, and that is fine, but we are going to have this huge solar farm that will also have 1 200 wind turbines and will provide unreliable power. I would much rather see us spend money on just planting trees. I went and saw a film the other week. There was one member of the Greens there, but no-one else. It was called *Kiss the Ground*. It was absolutely fascinating how it explained how American farmers were changing their ideas about growing beef and other products. It was really fascinating. It made me really think that we are putting too many chemicals into the ground and doing lots of things wrong.

Several members interjected.

Hon ROBIN SCOTT: Look, I am not against renewables. I am not against the modern farming that you guys are talking about, but we have to make sure that we can still —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order! It would be useful if the member would address his comments through the Chair. I am happy for sensible comment to be made, but once it starts to become a general chorus, I think there is a problem. I suggest that in this case the honourable member should address his comments to me and not seek or take interjections across the chamber.

Hon ROBIN SCOTT: Thank you, Mr Acting President. I do not want to get into this debate too deeply. All I can say is that what Hon Alannah MacTiernan said made much more sense. The government is looking at it from a sensible position. We are not just going to knock down coal-fired power stations and build gas-fired power stations immediately, but we will have to build gas-fired power stations because renewable energy will never be able to support the baseload energy that is required for industries. The Kwinana hub itself requires lots and lots of power and creates lots and lots of jobs.

Let me say this: if we shut down the gas industry, it will affect not just Australia. It will be devastating for not just Western Australia in particular—that is one worry—but also other parts of the world. I do not know whether anybody here has been to Nepal. I have been there a few times now. The last time I went, I got up to 20 000 feet. Guess what I saw up there? Gas bottles! The people up there love gas bottles. There are no trees at 20 000 feet, where some people live. There are no trees after 12 000 feet, because that is where the permafrost starts. If those people want firewood, they have to come down 8 000 feet and start chopping down trees, which they must then cart back up 8 000 feet. From memory, Mount Kosciuszko is about 7 300 feet. If people in the Himalayas want some firewood,

Hon Alison Xamon; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Robin Scott; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Pierre Yang

they have to go down 8 000 feet and then come back up with it. That is just to collect firewood. They used to collect the yak pats to burn as fuel in the wintertime. That worked really well. However, the yak pats were supposed to help nourish the ground. There is only a very short growing period there in the summertime and they need the grasses to grow to feed their yaks. Gas is used 20 000 feet up the Himalayas. People use it everywhere. They use it in Indonesia and the Philippines. I have been to the Philippines many times as I have family over there. Most houses have only a very small power supply—enough to run one fridge and a couple of lightbulbs. They cannot use electricity to run a big five-kilowatt cooking stove or oven or a hot water system; they are limited in what they can use their electricity for, so they need gas to heat their water and for cooking. Let us not just damn the gas industry, shut it down overnight and create chaos throughout the world. Let us be sensible about this. Let the Labor government try to come up with a decent solution that will not harm our economy and devastate lives all over the world.

HON ROBIN CHAPPLE (Mining and Pastoral) [11.19 am]: In my contribution to the debate on the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Bill 2020, I want to try to focus on what I see as the substantive issue. When I came to this place many years ago, I was in receipt of an email from Jeroen van der Veer, the then chief executive of Royal Dutch Shell, that he had sent to all his employees. This was in 2008 at the start of this period of my time in Parliament. He made some comments about wanting to share the reflections of where we might need to be in the future. He said —

By the year 2100, the world's energy system will be radically different from today's. Renewable energy like solar, wind, hydroelectricity and biofuels will make up a large share of the energy mix ...

This was from the head of Shell in 2008 —

Indeed, the distant future looks bright, but getting there will be an adventure.

He then went on to refer to two strategies. The first was to scramble, whereby there was not really a planned future—a bit like crisis management, with everybody fighting amongst themselves—and the second was to take a direct approach, which he called “Blueprints”, whereby the world would come together and establish an environmental program for the future to decarbonise the planet. He also said —

Taking the path of least resistance, policymakers pay little attention to curbing energy consumption—until supplies run short.

We are already reaching that stage in the Pilbara. We know that the work that was done by Mark Chatfield a number of years ago for ACIL Tasman identified that we were going to reach a crisis point in Australia if we continued to use our fossil fuels and gas at the rate we were. We know that 43 per cent of energy in our state's south west interconnected system comes from gas, but the gas is not sustainable. It is a diminishing resource, and this was identified in the ACIL Tasman papers in 2012, which referred to the need to turn the mining industry towards using renewables. We are starting to see this, interestingly enough, with some of the mining industry moving in that direction. The reason for that is economics more so than the environment. It is economics, to a large degree, that is driving industry into the renewables sector, because it is economically cheaper.

It is really very interesting that this was based on what we called the business review and energy documents of 2012, which forecast the use of gas and identified what was going to come out of the Gorgon, Wheatstone, Macedon, North West Shelf and Pluto projects. It was pointed out that gas is very limited, that it was a false projection to hang our future energy needs on this, and that the mining industry would be the first to suffer, because, as I can assure members, at the end of the day, no government will cut back on power availability to the metropolitan area due to the votes and everything else. That was why, back in 2012, it was directing industry to decarbonise and go for renewables. That is a bit of an industry perspective.

The problem we have is that regardless of whether it is gas, coal, oil, shale gas or whatever, it is all stored carbon, and when it is brought out of the ground, it enters the atmosphere and affects greenhouse gas emissions. The key issue is that it takes approximately 100 years for the impacts of today to be felt, so we are talking about dealing with a problem that is 100 years hence. We need to grasp that principle and the words of Jeroen van der Veer that we need a long-term strategy to be developed now, not in 100 years.

HON PIERRE YANG (South Metropolitan) [11.24 am]: I did not know that I would have this opportunity to speak on the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Bill 2020, so I thank Hon Robin Chapple for giving me that opportunity. In the remaining one minute and 11 seconds, I want to address one particular issue. Before I do that, I want to praise Hon Tim Clifford for bringing forward this bill and having his heart in the right place.

Clause 3 of schedule 1 of the bill relates to remuneration. That has brought my attention to the standing orders of the upper house and the state Constitution and whether it is within the constitutional jurisdiction of this house to bring on this bill. After my research, I have concluded that, based on previous rulings of the President, we can do that; however, it may not necessarily be accepted by the Legislative Assembly. I hope during the second reading reply, or

Extract from *Hansard*

[COUNCIL — Thursday, 5 November 2020]

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Hon Alison Xamon; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Robin Scott; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Pierre Yang

maybe during the committee stage, the honourable member who brought forward the bill will provide some advice about how he wishes this bill to be dealt with when it arrives in the Assembly.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.