

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

Legislative Council

TEXT OF MOTION

Climate Action Review

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart)

Mr President, I move -

That the Legislative Council -

- (1) Notes the growing evidence of runaway climate change and the impact extreme weather events such as fire, flood and drought are already having on Tasmanian communities, the environment and economy;
- (2) Acknowledges the Tasmanian Risk Assessment for Climate Change 2024 warns of future increases in the severity of acute extreme rain and flood conditions, acute bushfire and wind conditions, more frequent and/or intense periods of extreme heat, and declines in rainfall across the state;
- (3) Further notes Tasmania's Greenhouse Emissions Report 2025 confirms carbon emissions across all sectors are not falling and that it is business as usual, despite scientists warning us of a climate in crisis;
- (4) Recognises the report in a graph on page 8 further confirms the state's claim to net zero status is the result of avoided native forest logging and burning from 2012, through the Tasmanian Forest Agreement;
- (5) Expresses its disappointment that the Tasmanian government is in breach of its obligations under the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008* to 'reduce greenhouse gas emissions';
- (6) Notes the current review of the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008*;
- (7) Agrees the Act needs a substantial overhaul to deliver emissions reductions and prepare Tasmanians to adapt to the intensifying impacts of climate change;
- (8) Calls on the Tasmanian government to work with scientists, the community, farmers, business and industry leaders, and the parliament, to ensure the Act is strengthened to reflect the urgency of the times; and

- (9) Agrees this demonstration of leadership will give more young Tasmanians hope for a safe climate future.

[excerpt]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Madam Deputy President, I rise briefly to speak on this motion. It warrants a much bigger contribution, and so I apologise to the member for Hobart for the brevity that my contribution will have.

I appreciate the comprehensive contribution from the member for Hobart. The topic of this motion is something that I think all of us should be deeply invested in and should be having a view on, and bringing to this place an awareness of in relation to most of the tasks that we do here; whether it's legislative, whether it's our scrutiny roles, or whether it's much of the work we do through committees.

As the member for Hobart quite rightly pointed out in her contribution, the effect of climate change and the need for climate action are not confined to a single area of policy or one portfolio. It stretches into every single facet of our lives. When we talk about an urgency for action, we are talking about something that applies not just to the government of the day, but to each and every one of us, in our roles in this place, and every facet of those roles, and in our roles as members of the community as well.

I suspect - certainly I feel this myself - that there's a certain overwhelmedness that comes with that. It can become difficult to really engage in a practical and pragmatic way with how to incorporate consideration of this into all those different aspects of what we do here, and also in our lives as community members.

I understand that not all members at all times are ready to get up and speak on this, or give voice to our views on it or what we prioritise in relation to it. However, I hope that it becomes something that we can do more readily and feel equipped to do more readily.

It can be really easy, particularly in this state, in a funny way, in our political environment, to say, 'Climate change or climate action, oh, that's something to do with the Greens.' I really appreciate that the member for Hobart, the Greens member in this place, brought this motion, but to some extent I also hope that hasn't contributed to the idea that people might not want to speak to this motion, or support this motion, or align with the sentiments in this motion, because of the way things can become politically siloed into being owned by someone and not others, or people being receptive to certain things because they are seen as aligned with some and not others.

Certainly, as an Independent in this place, I am receptive to and hopeful to speak on motions relating to this topic that, I hope, come from all sides and all members of this Chamber. This is not to take away from the Greens member for Hobart bringing this motion, but to hope that this is actually an issue that is seen and embraced and occupied by all of us.

I am very concerned for our state in relation to what we know are already being experienced as impacts relating to climate change and climate challenges. Our risks are high. Much of the electorate that I represent is significant in terms of, particularly, bushfire risk. Many members here will have

other sorts of risks - whether bushfires, flooding or coastal erosion and all sorts of things - in their electorates that they will be mindful of too. They will likely turn their minds to those in relation to this.

I also believe we are not, in any way, living up to our responsibilities with our current act. I am pleased it is being reviewed. I hope that results in more tangible and accountable requirements on the government and on all of us here to meet post-review. We aren't cutting emissions. We just simply aren't.

We are sitting back and relying, basically, on our forests to provide us with a net-zero scenario and it is a false complacency that that lulls us into then, because we simply must cut emissions. So far, there's no evidence that this government has an inclination or the ability to accept that that's what needs to be done. That's unfortunate. I am quite happy to stand here and agree that a really important way that we can continue to move forward here is to end native forest logging and to protect our carbon sinks in that way. That is the inevitable direction that we are taking as a country. That is an inevitable direction for our state. There are all sorts of conversations we should have constructively and productively around that. It should not necessarily be a point of contention. It should be a point of collaboration in terms of seeing that outcome achieved.

I thank the member for Hobart for the motion. I would not necessarily have written all the points in the same way that they are written here, but I think they are all important ones to discuss and to recognise.

I particularly note that point (8) of the motion calls on the Tasmanian government to work with scientists, the community, farmers, business and industry leaders and the parliament to ensure the act is strengthened to reflect the urgency of the times. I agree with that 100 per cent. There could not be a more inclusive and positive and collaborative proposition for us to consider. In terms of a call on the government of the day, I cannot see any reason why the government would not embrace that call. It would be quite extraordinary, quite frankly, if it didn't.

I agree in terms of point (9), which invites us to agree that this demonstration of leadership will give more young Tasmanians hope for a safe climate future, and it is a conversation I have had with young people in different contexts at different times, both in my personal capacity and also in my professional capacity as the member for Nelson. Hope for young Tasmanians is something for us to be mindful of.

I know the government is quite happy to trot that out as an imperative when speaking on other issues like infrastructure proposals, but I think there's something incredibly fundamental about the need to have us as leaders of our state here in this parliament, and within the government, from the government, for us to demonstrate leadership in terms of effective climate action. We must show young people that we are mindful of the prospects for their future and that they can have hope that we will hand over something where we have done the best we can and taken the greatest efforts we could to mitigate for that future.

I do not think that's what we can claim or point to doing at this time. Young Tasmanians definitely deserve a greater response from us in order to deliver the opportunity for more hope for them on the climate front. I support that sentiment in the motion most certainly.

It was a somewhat scrappy and brief contribution from the member for Hobart, but at the end of this sitting day, we're tired. However, this topic is important. It is comprehensively interwoven into every aspect of what we do here. I hope we might all think about ways we can bring our consideration of issues relating to climate action to any work we're doing here and not just rely on some members of this place, or some members of parliament more broadly, or the government indeed, to be the ones always to be acting. We can all act on this. **I support the motion.**