

**Legislative Council
Hansard
Tuesday 11 August 2026**

[excerpt...]

The President, Mr Farrell, took the Chair at 11 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

MOTION

**Report of the 2024-25 Independent Review of the Climate Change (State Action) Act
2008 - Consideration and Noting**

[9.57 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Thank you, Mr President. I rise to make contribution in support of this motion. Absolutely. Because the world is burning. Half a decade ago, a statement such as that would have been decried as alarmist or histrionic or worse, and now, sadly, it's merely a factual observation.

The BBC has reported that UK drought officials declared on Monday this week that 71.3 per cent of England to now be officially in drought, including the entirety of Wales. In England, 45 million people are currently living in a drought and with at least 27 million facing water-use restrictions. Continental Europe is coming to terms with unprecedented wildfires, heat and dry conditions, as is Canada, and I'm just going to pause for a moment because just rattling that off sounds quite dry, and easy to dismiss, and easy just to skim over. But of course, it has a real human toll, and by that I mean a toll of human lives that we're talking about here. It doesn't take much to dig up some data on that. By all indications, and this is reports from *The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change*, that tells us that global heat related deaths have surged by over 60 per cent compared to the 1990s. Average annual global deaths have risen from 335,000 in the 1990s to roughly 546,000 in the most recent decade, from 2012 to 2021. The thing about that too is it's not dispersed evenly across our communities. The risk of death from heat, from climate change induced heat, it actually is, according to the World Health Organisation, that heat related mortality, specifically for people over the age of 65, has increased by roughly 85 per cent globally, comparing recent years to the early 2000s. That's just in the last quarter of a century, over 65 globally, you've increased your risk of death 85 per cent. My goodness me. Tasmania is an ageing population so far we seem to have felt lucky here about these impacts, but we can't be complacent about that, and we also know, apart from heat, in some cases there are areas globally and here in this country where we've seen locations subjected to equally terrifying floods and it feels over recent years that we're now ossifying our weather patterns, perhaps into mega seasons where in one half of the year we see one hemisphere in flames and vice versa for the other half of the year. The immediate and future ramifications for our planet, our communities, our biodiversity are nothing short of horrifying when we consider these facts which makes the motion before us now very, very timely.

Mr President, people may well ask how a state act of a relatively small island, 40° south could possibly impact on recent climactic events and global climate change policy. Well, I think it's apparent that the climate change crisis is contemptuous of complacency anywhere and everywhere globally. Every community, every jurisdiction must approach this global public policy of climate crisis as a collective responsibility with a mutual and shared agenda

where every little bit of action which can be taken must be taken but additional to that, I think another significant consideration for Tasmanians, and particularly Tasmania's young people, is the need to inspire hope.

A 2025 Royal Australian College of General Practitioner's (RACGP) article published in the Australian Journal of General Practice stated the following, and I quote this:

Climate change, with its escalating natural disasters, ecological degradation and uncertain future, is not merely an environmental phenomenon but also a psychological one. Unlike past generations whose understanding of climate change was limited and disconnected to their daily life, the youth of today are acutely aware of the implications of climate change for their futures. Over 50 per cent of individuals report the environment as one of the most prevalent issues in Australia today, with one quarter of those individuals reporting significant concern about climate change.

And of course, it's not just children affected by climate anxiety as the RACGP article acknowledges. However, it does emphasise that, and again I quote:

Evidence suggests that compared to adults, children experience more severe distress after climate events. Additionally, the constant exposure to alarming news of climate change can instil profound feelings of fear, eco-anxiety, and helplessness. The loss of biodiversity, extreme weather events, and the looming threat of environmental displacement cloud their formative years, shaping their worldview and sense of security.

As the Tasmanian Commission for Children and Young People also reiterates via its successful Ambassador Program, that many of us here will be familiar with, those ambassadors consistently raise climate change and the need to protect the environment as issues of concern for children and young people in this state.

Whether young or not so young, all Tasmanians, Mr President will be impacted in some way by the increasing climate crisis, either physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually as well as economically and socially.

Seeing Tasmania's parliament, government and other leaders roll up its sleeves and seek to do our utmost to mitigate and address the climate crisis in a coherent, socially just, accountable and effective manner will help turn despair into hope and the sense of being overwhelmed into a clear, focused sense of purpose for many across our community.

The fourth independent 2024-25 review of the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008* should provide a health check on our current and future to inspire that much-needed hope and focus, Mr President, as detailed by the honourable member for Hobart and I thank her for bringing this motion on for us to consider these things and to remind us to put this front and centre in most of our discussions in this place.

As detailed by the honourable member for Hobart, the Health Check identified via this review significant areas of complacency and concern. Complacency and concern, Mr President. These concerns include the over reliance on land carbon sinks rather than active decarbonisation across transport, industry and agriculture to maintain our net zero status.

Its complacency, Mr President, is resting on laurels of our wonderful forests and our decision some time ago not to log some of those areas. It's not active policy decisions by this

government in those other areas that have driven our net zero and maintain it.

Emission trajectories outside forestry and land use sectors have barely declined over the 18-year life of this act and fragmented adaptation planning has been identified. The independent review's seven key recommendations seek to strengthen the Act to drive better outcomes, increase public confidence and ensure real action on climate change is delivered. I'm not going to go into particular detail on the areas of concern raised by the independent review report or its recommendations in detail, as much of that has already been well articulated by the member for Hobart and I endorse her comments on them.

However, I do want to focus on one statement made in the Final Review Report on page 21, which states this and I quote:

Public trust and confidence in Tasmania's climate governance is limited due to a lack of independence in the administration of the Act. While the activities in the Act have been delivered, there is low confidence that real progress will be made. Limited direct oversight and accountability mechanisms have also contributed to a perception that Tasmania is not doing enough particularly to address climate risks.

Mr President, I believe there is a direct correlation between public trust and hope. Public trust and confidence in our local system of good systems of good governance helps foster and are essential to building a sense of hope and security across our community. Particularly in light of the devastating global images and statistics bombarding our airwaves currently. Therefore, Mr President, implementation by the government of the Independent Reviews, recommendation number 1 is essential. That recommendation, just to reiterate it here, is to establish an independent body to oversee implementation of the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008* and strengthen trust, transparency and accountability in Tasmania's climate governance.

Not only would the other six recommendations then flow from this new independent body, it would, according to the Independent Review, increase accountability, reinforce transparency, more aligned with public expectations in progressing the objectives and what also aligning the state with best practice models in other jurisdictions.

Mr President, I find it will be interesting to see the government's response when it comes out as promised this week as mentioned by the leader in her contribution, on the government's behalf. Will they adopt and embrace recommendation number 1 in its totality, as intended in this review? It will be very interesting to see. It was blocked here by the government when we're trying to do it as it came through in 2022 in this place. In fact, every single effort on that piece of legislation in this chamber to put in more accountability, more oversight like an independent body to oversee things, like putting specific targets, the requirement for specific targets into various aspects of that Act. All of them were blocked, so it will be interesting to see if the government has changed its tune in the last four years since we considered the reiteration that went through this place. It will be interesting to see whether it accepts that it does need to have more independent oversight and accountability.

Of course, Mr President, though there is no one policy panacea, however, additional to all the other considerations and ramifications already detailed in the Independent Review report and the contributions here in this place about it so far, it's important to recognise the clear correlation between public trust and confidence that our leaders are taking meaningful action on the climate crisis, with tackling other recognised physical, mental and emotional impacts felt by our wider community.

To conclude, Mr President, this is a timely motion as we consider the still minimal green vegetation compared to what we would normally expect to see during the final month of winter when travelling around this beautiful island, the low water reserves. Many of us are also mentally preparing ourselves for summer around just around the corner, while wincing out of the corner of our eyes at the seemingly endless images of devastation occurring elsewhere on the globe. Rather than allow that to depress us, it should serve to motivate, timely and tangible action.

Critically, we need leadership from the state government demonstrating responsible and effective protection of Lutruwita Tasmania's environment, communities, lives and livelihoods. There's no one simple fix Mr President, I think we all recognise that.

All seven recommendations, if implemented in a timely manner and reflecting the full intent of the Independent Review, could ensure the state is on a genuine trajectory to truly be net zero. where the five sectors actually reduce carbon emissions rather than have them plateau where they were 20 years ago, which is what we see.

A genuine, focused government delivery of the report's recommendations could help foster and build resilience across our communities while ensuring, as the report states, the health and well-being of Tasmanians and future generations.

Mr President, there can be no good excuse for delaying it. We have less than half of a degree within which to do our bit to turn around the greatest environmental, social and economic challenge we have faced as a state, as a nation and a member of the global village. I look forward to hearing, while I was pleased to hear the government's response and to other members responses, and I thank them for their stated commitment and support for this effort.

I thank the member for Hobart for bringing this for consideration in the chamber today, we do need to have it front and centre of mind, and I hope that we all think about how to include a climate lens in our consideration quite overtly of any business we do in this place. It's a commitment that we could all make as representatives of our community here. So, I certainly support the motion.