

Geoff Evans

29th November 2019

To whom it may concern,

RE: CLIMATE CHANGE DISCUSSION PAPER SUBMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the WA government's climate change discussion paper. I am deeply concerned about climate change and support strong and urgent action as a matter of highest priority for all levels of government.

Here in WA our carbon pollution is rising out of control, but we can do so much better. Real action on climate change will deliver thousands of new jobs and opportunities as we become part of the global solution.

I call for a comprehensive state-wide policy on climate change that includes the following at a minimum:

REMOVE CARBON FROM OUR TRANSPORT NETWORK

Investing in an electrified transport network is one of the most effective ways to increase our quality of life and reduce emissions.

The WA Climate policy should remove carbon from our transport system, by:

- Investing in a light rail or trackless tram network for Perth;
- Converting our fleet of diesel buses to hybrid/electric;
- Investing in bicycle infrastructure across our cities and regional towns;
- Offering a government subsidy for electric bikes (50%);
- Shifting freight on to rail;
- A phase out of all petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030; and
- Planning for the rapid adoption of electric vehicles through an incentive scheme i.e. reduced licensing fees and reduced stamp duty on new purchases.

CLIMATE ADAPTATION PROGRAMS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITIES

WA's climate policy must include:

1. Adaptation strategies, which are based on predicted climate hazards including bushfires, heatwaves, drought and floods. Plans that consider climate change across all levels of government decision making;
2. Adaptation programs, which are funded and support genuine partnerships with Aboriginal peoples' and communities, and investment into essential infrastructure, facilities and programs in Aboriginal communities;

3. State-wide climate risk assessment and increased emergency services funding;
4. Programs which assist low income and vulnerable groups, which are not prepared for climate change. Including social housing and rental housing retrofits for comfort, clean energy and energy efficiency.
5. Support climate adaptation programs and partnerships, including with farmers, local governments, businesses and other sectors.

PERMANENTLY PROTECT NATURAL CARBON STORES IN WA'S FORESTS AND OTHER ECOSYSTEMS

Protect forests as a carbon store.

WA's climate policy should:

1. Urgently protect native forests as biodiverse carbon stores;
2. Restore cleared and degraded areas to native forest ecosystems;
3. End the logging of native forests and transition the timber industry through a fair transition to sustainably managed plantations and farm forestry sectors with a focus on ecologically beneficial timber production and carbon storage;
4. Change the definition of Old growth to capture all high conservation forests and permanently protect them in national parks.

Land clearing and urban bushland

WA's climate policy should protect native vegetation and urban bushland from inappropriate clearing and habitat fragmentation, introduce permanent protection of the Bush Forever sites along the Swan Coastal Plain, and implement all 10 recommendations of the Auditor General's 2009 and 2017 reports on WA's biodiversity loss.

Prescribed burning

WA's climate policy should include an urgent review of current prescribed burning practices with the view to implementing a more strategic approach, in collaboration with local communities, climate and conservation scientists.

Peat extraction/mining

Governments world-wide are acting to protect peat swamps and rehabilitate areas that had been previously mined and to legislate to prevent any new mining proposals.

The peat areas that have been drained and mined become carbon emitters and the processing of the extracted material also produces carbon and the final use (historically burning) in Ireland, central Europe, Baltic nations and Russia, which produce carbon at 20x the level of coal. Canada and Australia have also been involved with peat mining for soil mixing, blending, improvement for the garden, horticulture and farming industry, which all release carbon.

Recommendation that all peat mining in WA be halted and that a rehabilitation process be undertaken. That all previous mined areas be tested and inspected for compliance in regards to rehabilitation techniques and ensuring that all environmental guidelines and regulations have been undertaken to ensure zero emissions. Examples of Peat Mining can be found in the Lake Muir region.

COMPLETELY REPOWER WA WITH RENEWABLE ENERGY BY THE 2030'S

The Electricity sector accounts for 29% of WA's total emissions and this sector is the cheapest and fastest to remove carbon of all producers.

The main challenges for removing carbon from WA's electricity:

A 100% WA Renewable Energy package should include:

1. A Renewable Energy Target for the SWIS and the NWIS with legislated interim targets of one third renewable share by 2025, 95% by 2030 and 100% in the early 2030;
2. A management plan to remove carbon from our off-grid energy;
3. Forward planning is required to accommodate removal of carbon from other sectors (such as transport, industry, buildings) by electrification;
4. To develop an ambitious Energy Efficiency program;
5. A staged, stable closure of fossil-fuel power stations based on emissions intensity, greenhouse gas emissions intensity and air pollution standards that will need to be developed.

CLEAN STATE JOBS AND INDUSTRIES INVESTMENT PROGRAM

An annual funding package could repower the economy and drive structural change, innovation and adaptation necessary for full removal of carbon from our systems by 2050.

- A WA Clean Industry Investment fund, similar to the federal CEFC, be established to invest in clean energy, low carbon start-ups and innovation, and sustainable construction and manufacturing;
- A Workforce transition package to ensure workers in WA's coal, oil and gas industries will have secure, permanent jobs in renewable energy and clean industries; and
- Dedicated funding for Western Australian scientists studying climate change impacts, mitigation and adaptation here in WA.

ZERO CARBON ACT

A 'Zero Carbon' Act could include:

- A legally binding emissions reduction target of net zero by 2050;
- Carbon budgets for each sector, with interim emissions reduction targets;
- An Adaptation strategy that is reviewed regularly;
- An Independent, expert body such as a Climate Commission to provide advice to government, deliver science-based interim targets and monitor progress; and

- A Greenhouse Gas Inventory (GGI) which is an open, transparent and real time report on WA emissions, where they're coming from, and progress being made.

CONCLUSION

The WA state government must act immediately to phase out all climate damaging fossil fuels, and prevent any new or expanded coal, oil or gas developments in WA including LNG and fracking.

That WA's biggest polluters must be held to account. It is time to introduce legislation in to Parliament that will require companies to reduce emissions and offset their climate damage by investing a portion of profits in clean industries, carbon farming and renewable energy.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Yours faithfully

Geoff Evans