

29 November, 2019

### **Comment on the Climate Change in Western Australia Issues Paper | Personal Submission**

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for seeking public comment on the WA government's climate change discussion paper, I look forward to actively participating in further discussions leading from this initiative.

I am an Ecologist currently working in sustainable tourism development research at Curtin University. I am overjoyed with the opportunity to contribute to the health of our precious ecosystems and communities through my work and personal choices, and am therefore equally concerned about the progression of anthropogenic climate change, as it impinges serious threats to the health both of the ecosystems and communities upon which we rely. Although I am somewhat relieved to see this urgent topic is finally gaining more prominence in public spaces, I have taken the time to write this personal submission as several concerns arose from reading the WA government's Issues Paper.

To begin with, I feel the Issues Paper paints a pretty picture of what the future of WA *could* look like, without truly committing to ambitious measures that are compatible with the current state of crisis we are in. If you are truly serious about your intentions to act in accordance with the Paris Agreement and thus limit warming to 1.5 C degrees globally, a legal framework needs to be in place as a matter of greatest priority. A climate policy founded on an 'aspirational' target is simply not sufficient, therefore I demand that Net Zero emissions by 2050 be legislated, including emissions reduction targets (we know it is crucial to support 50% reduction in emissions by 2030), carbon budgets and interim targets, sectoral targets, emissions reduction and adaptation strategies, and the formation of an independent body of advisors comprised of expert climate scientists. By comparison, I conclude that WA has the worst climate change measures among other jurisdictions. A lot can be learned from other jurisdictions where reduction targets have been adopted successfully, for example Victoria, ACT and South Australia (and Norway, New Zealand, Scotland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and France internationally).

I am aware that WA is the only state with *significant* pollution growth in Australia, with emissions increasing 23% just in the last 15 years. I also know that only 10 facilities are responsible for 50% of the states' total pollution, and that at full production WA's 5 LNG facilities emit 36% of the state's annual emissions (CCWA's Runaway Train Report 2019). Here I take the opportunity to stress that gas is a fossil fuel and its elevated methane levels negate any claimed advantage over coal. I reject the claim that "LNG can displace higher emissions fuels, reducing GHG from the export of fuels and minerals" (pg. 8) and refuse its said role in

decarbonizing the sector. It is imperative that WA's Climate Policy targets the state's biggest polluters. According to CCWA's Runaway Train Report, WA LNG emissions were also found to be undermining Australia's national efforts to tackle carbon pollution, effectively cancelling out the annual carbon savings obtained from Australia's 2.1 million solar rooftops 5 times! This, to me, serves as a great example to show that the focus of WA's Climate Policy should not be on individual action, but logistically at the state's biggest polluters by prioritising emissions reductions strategies.

In the face of such facts, it is disheartening that such industries are actually encouraged to increase their emissions through the ongoing subsidies which promote fossil fuel use, inadequate regulation of carbon pollution and no incentive to decarbonise. **The words in the Issues Paper are completely vain if this is to continue**, so I urge you to hold polluters accountable as a priority, with emissions to be offset here in WA. The development of a carbon offset market has the potential to create massive economic opportunities for investment and job creation throughout the state. Another study by CCWA shows that 4,000 jobs could be created by the offset market at the expense of 2% of LNG industry's profits. I find it very hard to comprehend why this is not in place if WA wished to lead the way in climate change mitigation. Another great opportunity for fostering thousands of jobs in clean industries is to create a billion-dollar Clean Jobs and Investment Program, which could easily be funded by diverting subsidies from fossil fuel companies and reviewing the unfair tax and royalties arrangements currently enjoyed by fossil fuel companies here in WA (take Norway's \$1 trillion wealth fund from oil and gas tax).

The study by Climate Analytics '*A 1.5C Carbon Budget for WA*' shows that GHG emissions should peak at 2020 and decline by 49% by 2030 if we are to transition to net zero by 2050. Therefore I strictly urge you to refuse any new fossil fuel proposals, such as the Burrup Hub expansion. This is completely incompatible with what you have set out to do through this initiative.

I note the Issues Paper also failed to pay due attention to the role of WA's carbon-dense native forests. Permanently protecting our native forests is the single most effective way of climate change mitigation, yet our policies in WA allow the logging of the world's most carbon-dense carbon sinks, with century-old trees being felled for woodchips. I demand greater protection of our native carbon sinks (change the definition of Old Growth!), initiatives for biodiverse carbon farming suitable to a warming WA, a scheme for payment for ecosystem services, and support for farmers interested in developing innovative methods of carbon sequestration (e.g. seaweed farming).

Lastly, I request for climate adaptation programs and partnerships which are inclusive of Aboriginal people and communities, farmers, local governments, businesses and other sectors.

Thank you for considering this submission,

Sara Cavalcanti Marques