

**1. My details**

[REDACTED]

I have a background in biomedical sciences and obtained my PhD in the field of radiobiology. I have lived/worked in different places in the world and currently live in Perth, where I volunteer in a community center & city farm.

**2. My motivation for making a submission**

We recently moved from Amsterdam and although I feel there is a strong community feel in Australia, it is devastating to notice how little is done by the govt. to tackle the climate change issues, the loss in biodiversity, & plastic pollution problem (among many other environmental issues). Although there is a lot of knowledge & expertise available (from experts/other places in the world).

I am struck by the short term vision of politicians and I miss political courage to finally put in place policies that put the environment and changing climate first.

**3. My opinion on the state of West Australian climate policy or environmental conservation in 2019.**

We recently moved to Perth, so I miss some in depth knowledge at this point. However I do notice the following:

- I see that cars are the king of the road and more roads are being built to accommodate cars. The city is made for cars and has so little green compared to e.g. a city as Amsterdam. Instead of discouraging car use, the city promotes car use by making parking free in the city (3h – weekend; in Amsterdam they discourage car use in the city by making parking very expensive and this works!).
- There is very little infrastructure for cyclists. Some cycling lanes just end with no foreseeable alternatives. There is little green next to the cycling lanes (cyclist just need to inhale all the toxic exhausts).
- Airconditioning is used inappropriately.
- Grass is kept immensely short for no obvious reason (and lots of time, water & effort is put in that) providing no benefit for insects or other fauna. Glyphosate (categorized as ‘probably carcinogenic’) is still allowed to be used in public and private spaces.
- Lots of single use plastics are being used (coffee cups/take away food – the irony is that some places can only do that since they do not have a license to do other way!). Although you see many waste bins, it is generally accepted that we need to REDUCE waste in the first place.
- In the city, there is a lot of concrete, little green, and if there is some green, it is still controlled with chemicals, or you hear the noise of the polluting transport in the background (e.g. How many roads are available for cars in Kings Park? How do you stimulate alternatives if you encourage car use in a park? (A park should be a place that is meant to be a silent green retreat in the hustle of the city?).

**• The most important things I would like to see included in WA’s 2020 climate policy are:**

In general:

- 1) Immediately reduce WA’s carbon pollution and achieve zero net emissions as soon as possible. Legislate to deliver science-based interim targets and an emissions reduction pathway in line with a fair and equitable contribution to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees.
- 2) Deliver a billion-dollar Clean State Jobs program to unlock thousands of new jobs in clean industries and support a just transition for affected workers and communities.

3) Completely repower WA with renewable energy, phase out climate damaging fossil fuels, and prevent any new or expanded coal, oil or gas developments in WA including LNG and fracking.

4) Hold WA's biggest polluters to account. Require companies to reduce emissions and offset their climate damage by investing a portion of profits in clean industries, carbon farming and renewable energy.

5) Permanently protect natural carbon stores in WA's forests and other ecosystems, and rapidly transition away from native forest logging and clearing.

6) Support climate adaptation programs and partnerships, including with Aboriginal people and communities, farmers, local governments, businesses and other sectors.

In addition, not only the big polluters should be held accountable, pollution in general should be discouraged and there should be a shift to non-polluting alternatives (see individual transport, waste, water-use, energy use, biodiversity management, etc.).

#### Comments (taken from my personal experience) on some of the topics issued in the paper:

##### Transforming energy generation

- LNG is a no go! We need to move away from fossil fuels, not encourage them!
- Not only should there be a transformation to clean energy sources, but also **reduce** where possible (see also 8. liveable towns and cities)!  
E.g.
  - Policies for (rental/furnished) homes: Buildings should be energy efficient; house owners should provide LED lighting; energy efficient household supplies)
  - Supermarkets should not have any open fridges.
  - Airconditioning:
    - Airconditioning public spaces (libraries, etc.) should only be used if really needed. If it is 25 degrees outside, simply open a door to ventilate instead and wear light clothing instead of putting aircon on 20/22 degrees. Note that airconditioning also assists with the creation of heat islands in the city.
    - If aircon is used: Close the doors. In the CBD you often see open doors with full on aircon - what a waste of energy!
    - If aircon is really indicated: it should not be put to 20/22. In some places you need to wear a sweater (or more). This is absurd, not needed, and even very uncomfortable.
- Cars should not be allowed to stand still next to the road with engines on (e.g. aircon) while fiddling with their mobile phones (alternative. Go outside, sit under a tree, etc.). Connect with your environment. Note that some EU countries it is not allowed by law to stand still with your engine on in these circumstances.

##### Future mobility

- Invest in more! & better! cycling lanes. Encourage people to cycle by making it the easiest and fastest way to move around in city/suburbs/towns. Invest in facilities and infrastructure. Create cycling lanes that are separated from cars & pedestrians. Plant/provide trees so cyclist are protected from sun & heat & noise. If building cycling lanes next to highways, ensure cyclist are protected from noise and pollution of cars (again trees!!!). Trees are natural air conditioners. Learn from cities such as Utrecht, Amsterdam, Copenhagen! You would be surprised what is possible to do with a bike. How cycling does not only reduce your carbon footprint, enhances your health, enhances connection between people & community, how much open space is provided back to the public.

- Stop giving way to cars everywhere. In Perth, almost all crossroads do not automatically become green for pedestrians/cyclists if you do not push the button?! This is absurd. If you just arrive, you have to wait twice as long as the cars that travel in the same direction (as they can go automatically - see the light is green for them). In Amsterdam & Utrecht, some crossroads have built in sensors that monitor movement and will influence the traffic lights (in the advantage of the cyclist – see non-polluter!).
- Use zebra crossings so pedestrians can move more freely (cars have to stop for a zebra crossing).
- Invest in more car free spaces and transform carparks into community/public spaces, city gardens.
- Let polluters pay. Subsidies people that use public transport/walk/cycle to work. Many countries have systems in place where you can either reclaim your bus rides/bicycle kms/even your bike. As a cyclist/pedestrian you do not distribute polluting fumes/exhaust: Then why is this group disadvantaged in the city/suburbs? In Perth you have to be cautious that cars do not come out the vast number of parking lots. It also seems normal that they stop in the middle of the footpath and do not go out of the way if they see a pedestrian. They expect you to wait until they cross?
- Make school zones car free, so people are encouraged to use alternatives to come to school. Make the school zone safer and more attractive to alternatives way of transport. In the Netherlands, almost all children come to school by bike (I.e. on the bike of the parents - cargo/normal bike or by themselves! In all weather conditions - when it rains, they just wear raincoats & pants). As you get more sun here, provide shade, plant trees!!  
(I was shocked to hear that at a kinder garden a tree has been cut down as it was not considered safe. Instead they 'planted' plastic grass (heat absorbers and full of chemicals) and shade cloths. The 'problem' could have been solved by protecting and supporting the tree.
- Invest in public transport to get to the city! (if people have no other option ensure you have some places outside the city wherefrom people can easily access the city by bike (bike sharing)/metro invest in means to easily move people.  
Invest in clean public transport and integrate all car-free modalities (e.g. provide enough space on train/metro/bus for bikes).
- Consult experts e.g.:

<http://www.cycling-embassy.dk/2016/03/15/city-of-bikes-copenhagen-the-philosophy-of-becoming-the-worlds-best-cycling-city/>

<https://yeswecandoalmostanythingbybike.wordpress.com/2017/06/03/why-is-copenhagen-the-walhalla-for-bikers/>

[https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20170602\\_02910411](https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20170602_02910411)

- Stop expanding the highway! More lanes, more traffic, more congested cities (this has been proven).

#### Liveable towns and cities.

- Create green urban spaces/invest in more city greening (small spaces with green, urban gardens/green roofs/green buildings. In Amsterdam residents are subsidized if they remove concrete/tiles and plant green in front of their door.
- See also examples 'future mobility'.
- Invest in local craftsmanship/local farming/local grocery stores (instead of all these big chains) to support the Australian business & entrepreneurs.

#### Waste reduction.

- Just ban single use plastics such as: single use cutlery, drinking/coffee cups, straws, lightweight fruit&veg plastic bags (a ban on single use plastics will come in place in Europe. In Kenia, all plastic bags are banned.)  
There are plenty of alternatives. If people can bring a bigger shopping bag, they can certainly carry some lightweighted reusable fruit&veg bags.

- Bars/cafes that only have a take away license should also be able to provide porcelain/glass/re-usable cutlery/crockery. It makes no sense that they can only provide their customers with single-use plastics/other single use items.

Water security.

- What really surprises me is that so many non-native grasses are being watered. So much water is going to waste for a patch of grass that has no function apart from being there. Plant native species and prohibit the use of these excessive amounts of water for patches of grass that have no function apart from being mown way too much (again - using polluting and noise making machinery). It does not stimulate biodiversity, it is not beneficial for insects (see it is mown way too short) and on top of that is it most likely being sprayed with a substance that is listed as 'probably carcinogenic' (mind blowing!) - who understands this logic? In addition, all this maintenance cost the public/private owner a lot of money that could be invested in alternatives that are better for our health, biodiversity, use of public space and community).

Protecting biodiversity.

- For cities/suburbs: Stop using glyphosate. Use & invest in (research in) alternatives. Plant natives. Let nature be nature again instead of wanting to have 'clean' pavements, monoculture grasses. Prohibit the use of plastic grass as an alternative.

#### **4. The opportunities good climate policy can bring to WA and good examples I know of include:**

With re to future mobility: e.g. installing cycle lanes only cost a fraction compared to car infrastructure; you give space back to the public; cycling promotes fitness and health; re-connects people with their environment.

More green in the cities can help prevent the creation of heat islands and makes the city more attractive, which can stimulate local businesses.

More efficient use of airconditioning also diminishes the heat-island effects and connects people more to the outdoors (in contrast with being isolated in your aircon room).

#### **5. My comments on the Issues paper include**

The issue paper misses any clear targets and is not ambitious enough. We need change (which implies political courage) & we need it now.

Look at other cities/places (such as Amsterdam, the Nordics, other Australian states) that are way more ambitious and have longer term concrete plans.

#### **6. Conclusion**

Listen to the scientists and experts instead of the lobby of the (polluting) industry. We only have 1 planet earth.