



Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR MAIWAR**

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**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Climate**

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (2.38 pm): Last week the world's leading scientists again delivered news that should have sent shockwaves through communities across the globe, nationally and here in Queensland. Again, I am on my feet in this place to lament not only the shocking news but also the complete reprehensible silence of our political leaders.

Eight days ago a UN report laid bare the catastrophic, unprecedented human induced global extinction crisis unfolding before our eyes. It estimated that one million plant and animal species are at risk of being lost forever. It confirmed what scientists already knew: biodiversity and ecosystems globally are literally collapsing under the strain of the greed of those in charge and our apathy towards the climate crisis.

In less than a month, my partner and I will welcome a new baby into the world. In amongst the joy this tiny person is already bringing to our family, I despair at this kind of ominous news and the future we are bringing them into. This is not simply about the loss of some natural places or wildlife that I would like my kids and grandkids to be able to enjoy together. It is not even just about the loss of creatures or places in unprecedented numbers. Leading global experts are pointing to the rapid and accelerating deterioration of, in their words, the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide.

Climate experts have been screaming similar messages at us for decades now. They are saying that this could turn out really nasty. In fact, it has already begun. The traditional custodians of this ancient continent see it already. Our Pacific neighbours are sinking, ecosystems are collapsing and people are dying.

The economic system we have is quite literally destroying planetary life supports. This crisis should be everywhere—on the news, on the streets and most certainly in our parliament. What is the government's response? It is deafening silence, yet again.

The experts have called for transformative change—fundamental, system-wide reorganisation across technological, economic and social factors—but instead we see piecemeal, half-baked proposals that fail to properly acknowledge, let alone address, the gravity of the reality of the situation. Even worse, it is new coalmines, new fracking and new developments that will clear habitat and devastate what little refuge our wildlife has left. It is outrageous and devastating. Honestly, sometimes I wonder what is the point of us meeting in this place if we are not doing something about it.

I, like most people, cannot stand watching the major parties squabbling with each other, wasting so much time while our earth disintegrates, treating science as though it is a partisan issue—all the while failing to plan for the future, failing to do anything with vision. The big parties will not touch the greedy coal billionaires or stop those big corporations wrecking our common home because the big

parties do not rock the boat with their powerful friends. The sheer panic, anger and frustration can be overwhelming. I know that there are so many out there in this country and across the world who feel the same way. At this point, anyone could easily lose hope or just give up caring all together.

In less than a week Australia will go to the polls. This election really does matter, perhaps more than any other in this country's history. The young people striking from school are calling this election a referendum on their futures, and they are absolutely right. This weekend is a chance to communicate that rage and despair to our current federal government and politicians across the spectrum. It is the make-or-break point for the Adani coalmine and those that will follow in the Galilee Basin.

Here in Queensland, voters will choose between re-electing Larissa Waters to the Senate and handing a six-year term to a lazy, self-interested coal billionaire, a cowardly fascist or an unhinged conspiracy theorist climate denier. Here in Queensland we could elect up to three Greens MPs to the lower house to hold the balance of power and ensure that our planetary life support systems are the absolute priority for a new government, building a better and fairer society in the process.

This election could be the point we all look back on in a decade or two and think, 'That's when Australia turned the ship around. That's when we saw real leadership on climate.' In fact, it must be that point. We cannot wait any longer. In decades and centuries to come, when our kids and grandkids are dealing with the mess we have left them, they will simply not be interested in our excuses.