



The Greens (WA)  
**30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History Project**  
[1990-2020]

An interview with:

**Hon TIM CLIFFORD, MLC**



**1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 at his office in Midland**

The Greens (WA) acknowledge that First Nations peoples, as the original inhabitants of this country, have a special cultural and spiritual connection with the land and water. We believe that their rights and responsibilities as owners and custodians must be respected.

We hold that First Nations peoples have a right to self-determination and political representation, and must be partners in the development and implementation of public policies, programs and services that affect them.

This interview was recorded on Noongar land and the Greens (WA) acknowledge that these lands were stolen and sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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**NOTES TO READERS**

FULL CAPITALS in the text indicate a word or words emphasised by the interviewee.

Square brackets [ ] are used for insertions not in the original recording.

**INTERVIEW DISCLAIMER**

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## INTRODUCTION

Mr Tim Clifford was the Member of the Legislative Council for the East Metropolitan Region in the Western Australian Parliament at the time of his interview. Tim was not successful in being re-elected at the 2021 State election.

He was born in Perth in 1982 but his family moved to Albany shortly afterwards, where he grew up and completed his schooling.

Tim travelled after completing Year 12 and also trained with the Army Reserve. He then commenced in the construction industry, working throughout the State.

Tim joined the Greens (WA) in early 2011 while completing a degree in politics and journalism at Edith Cowan University. He was Convenor of the Perth Regional Group as well as Co-convenor of the Party's Election Campaign Committee.

Tim had stood for the Greens as a candidate at State and Federal elections three times before being elected to the Legislative Council in the 2017 State election.

In early 2020 Tim tabled the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Bill 2020* which called for net zero emissions in WA by 2040.

## TRANSCRIPT SUMMARY

Time	Topic	Page Number
0 mins	Start of Interview	5
5 mins	father working as FIFO	6
10 mins	Mum working in hospitality	8
15 mins	Considering post-school employment	9
20 mins	Travelling to Ireland	11
25 mins	Working as a labourer	12
30 mins	Working at Ravensthorpe	13
35 mins	Applying to attend ECU	14
40 mins	Welding plastic on Barrow Island	16
45 mins	Considering joining a political party	17
50 mins	Differences between the Greens and the ALP	18
55 mins	Early days as a member	19
1 hour	Changes to the Greens' advertising strategies	21
1 hour 5 mins	Standing for the Federal seat of Perth	23
1 hour 10 mins	Liaising with the Greens' Senators	24
1 hour 15 mins	Working on a committee	25
1 hour 20 mins	Learning the ropes in Parliament	26

1 hour 25 mins	Parliamentary staff	28
1 hour 30 mins	Achievements as a MP	29
1 hour 35 mins	Podcasting social activists	31
1 hour 40 mins	Conclusion of Interview	32

## TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:01] DW: My name's David Worth and I'm with Tim Clifford on Wednesday the 1<sup>st</sup> of July at Tim's office in [Unit 1, 36 The Crescent] Midland. Welcome Tim and thanks for giving up your time for this interview.

**CLIFFORD:** Thanks, David. I really appreciate the time to talk with you.

DW: OK, if we could start at the beginning, can you just tell me where and when you were born?

**CLIFFORD:** I was born in Perth in 1982. March 31<sup>st</sup> 1982. And yes, born in Perth. But I was raised in Albany for the better part of my younger time, my youth.

DW: Did your parents move down to Albany after your birth?

**CLIFFORD:** Yes, my my Dad immigrated from Ireland in the early 1970s and, his uncle lives in Queensland. So I think his uncle immigrated in the 1930s. And my Dad always had a fascination, I think, with Australia and wanting to work and see this country. So he originally immigrated out to, he arrived in Sydney, I guess, and then travelled north to Queensland. So actually, my family's still there. They still run the, it was a banana farm, I think, and they're still there in Tully in Queensland.

So Dad travelled up there. Some things didn't work out for him in Queensland. Then he travelled to Western Australia. And that's where he met my Mum obviously. He travelled to Western Australia because he wanted to work in the mining industry. And he was working in the North West. And I my parents were living in Pannawonica in the far North West at the time. And my, so my Mum came down to Perth when she had me, and then we went up to Pannawonica and I think I was there from about the age of one to four years old.

DW: Right.

**CLIFFORD:** And then we moved to Albany after that when I was close to four or five years old.

DW: It's a big change for your Dad - starts in Queensland, then North West of WA, then Albany, which is geographically, weather, that's all so different.

**CLIFFORD:** Yes, absolutely. And also for him to come from Ireland, he left home when he was 14 [years old], his older sister moved to England in the, probably would have been the late '50s, early '60s. And then he went to live with her to work in England because there was no work at all... it was very impoverished all the way up into probably, into the 1980s. And then things started to get better. But he took work there. He left school at 14. He only ever knew labouring at that time and he decided, you know, it's probably worth, it took him a long time to save up money to get out to Australia. But he took a boat out to Australia. Yes.

So if you met my Dad, he's a very reserved person. And he would, you wouldn't think he would be the sort of guy to step out of his comfort zone to do something like that, so he even surprised his own family, when I spoke to them in the early 2000s.

DW: And what's your Dad's name?

**CLIFFORD:** It's Denis Clifford with one 'n' in Denis.

DW: And, I'm just thinking, was he from the Republic or from the North?

**CLIFFORD:** From the Republic. He grew up in a small town called Coowoolbin, and it's in the ring of Kerry. Yes, from Kerry.

DW: And did you have any siblings?

**CLIFFORD:** Yes, I have three sisters. My oldest sister, Nicole, she's a half-sister, not my Dad's direct. And my two other sisters, one is older than me by three years. And I have a younger sister that's younger than me by three years.

DW: Right. And how did you find that? Living in this family in Albany? I imagine it was a bit smaller in the '70s.

**CLIFFORD:** Yes, or the '80s.

DW: I'm sorry, the '80s, in size and probably about that time as well the whaling had finished. It might have been in a bit of a downturn?

**CLIFFORD:** Yes, I think so. I think Albany itself, and knowing Albany right now, it's still a sort of retirement town. Not much work. And my Dad moved us from Pannawonica to Albany. I think my Mum wanted it more than anything because she grew up in, she grew up in Cranbrook in the South West, and she sort of knew the South West and a lot of her family come from around that area, Mt Barker, Cranbrook.

And so she wanted to get into the cooler weather, maybe. I don't know, I've never really gone into too much depth why she wanted to move. But then my parents split up in - it would have been probably 1987 or around that time. And my Dad started working away because at that time my Dad would ... he would work away for three months at a time and we wouldn't see him. Then we'd see him for two weeks and then he'd be away for three months, and two weeks, and so forth.

DW: And that's a bit of the experience that the FIFO people, families now face as well.

[00:05:00] **CLIFFORD:** Yes. The difference, I think the difference is, and even my Dad pointed to it, which I didn't think of before, is back then you used to work away to get ahead and provide as a way of really getting ahead. But these days, it's almost become the norm for a lot of families in WA, and I think that's added some mental health issues and all those kinds of things because people are just trying to service their mortgage while they're working away two to four weeks at a time, which I did [chuckles] myself, which we'll probably get to later.

Yeah, it was very tough for him. It wasn't easy. It was like, for a guy who left school at 14 and then to come out to Australia and all you know is THAT. Like it's very - you just can't jump in and become a lawyer or something like that. That wasn't his path. So that's ... Yes. He just had to do what he had to do, I guess to try to provide for the family.

DW: Does that mean you went to both primary and high school in Albany?

**CLIFFORD:** Yes. I went to St Joseph's College. Well, I went to preprimary, I think I went to, it might have been Spencer Park Preprimary School. And then I went to primary school in ... is it Kindie? No, preprimary. I went to St Joseph's, and then primary school, St Josephs, and then from years, at that time high school was years eight to ten or eight to twelve. But I went, I was at St Joseph's from years eight to ten and then years eleven and twelve at Albany Senior High School.

DW: Is that because St Josephs didn't offer the leaving and high school certificate that you left?

**CLIFFORD:** No, it was more like we didn't have much ...at that time, and people go, you went to a private school, you know, thinking at some glitzy big place. But they had this sort of deal going where I think the more kids you had, the less it costs all the kids. I think that might be the thing that happens. But my Dad would, I think the agreement as a part of the separation was my Dad would pay for the schooling and also pay child support. And Mum would obviously be at home looking after the kids. So I was there ...

And the choice, when I got to year ten, I was, at that time I wasn't going to do TEE [Tertiary Entrance Examination] and at that time you needed TEE to get into uni. And so I thought I'd go down where it's cheaper, take a bit of pressure off my parents. I wanted to do information technology, IT, at that time.

But, the truth of the matter was, I didn't know what I want to do. I, you know, I did some work experience with electricians. I did some work experience in a computer repair store like, yes, it was sort of a mish mash because my Mum never went to uni. My Dad never went to uni. So they all, so if I stayed in Albany labouring or working at Woolworths, that would be, you know, that's fine. I was never pushed in that [uni] direction.

And, you know, when my Dad left, like, my Mum made some pretty terrible decisions financially that left us in a, you know, that's why we ended up in State housing for probably half of the portion of the time when I was growing up or when I'm still living at home with my Mum, which made things very difficult. And Mum had a few relationship breakdowns which put a lot of pressure on us. So I, my whole mindset wasn't about going to uni. My mindset was just like, okay, how do I just manage?

DW: Given you were living in Albany, did the natural environment, do you think, have any impact on you, and where you are now as a Green?

**CLIFFORD:** I think so. Well, growing up and living in Albany and being able to appreciate the fact that I could, if things were bad at home, I could get on my bike and cycle down to the beach or I could go see and catch up with my friend down at the park or we'd go shoot baskets. I played a lot of basketball in high school. And yeah, I think it did, but subconsciously. I didn't think, I didn't come from a family that were a Greenie family. It wasn't a family that said we need to, like, preserve this and preserve that.

But I think just by seeing what was important to me. And the Greens as a political party, I never, thought of the idea of a green movement that was more of the people that lived in Denmark, in the town of Denmark, not so much the town of Albany, probably because of the size of it. But I appreciated the fact, I used to love going to Denmark, to Walpole and all those places. And in hindsight, I think it was very, it helped shape my way because, although there were a lot of social issues growing up. But I also think the fact that I didn't

really appreciate the natural environment until I sort of left home and I started thinking about where I came from.

DW: It sounds like you spent most of your family time at home just with your mother. Was there discussions about political issues with her and the environment and what was going on?

[00:09:56] **CLIFFORD:** No, my Mum worked in hospitality mainly. And she worked in a couple of bars and she even managed a sort of a bowling club at one stage. Which reminds me, I actually moved to, I moved to Katanning in year five. Sorry- for the year five schooling year I moved to Katanning. Sorry, I forgot about that. Because she met someone and they decided to take on the job, my Mum and her partner, decided to take on a job as the Katanning Bowling Club managers. So we moved to Katanning. And just like, you know, things that, unfortunately my Mum's relationship broke down and we had to leave Katanning. And we ended up back in Albany and I was back at Saint Joseph's, starting back at year six again. So that that was pretty informative because seeing that sort of relationship breakdown with my mother and I sort of... it probably helped me to become a bit more, even at that young age, a bit more independent.

And also the other thing that I was, I really thought about, I used to read a lot about history, even though I didn't do TEE. So I used to get lost in books about World War Two and how that shaped the world and all those kinds of things. And I started to get a bit more fascinated with post-World War Two reconstruction, and looking at the United States and social movements. So there were these seeds in my head about what significant characters played in history. And I used to, was sort of forced into, reading it. I enjoyed it. And I liked documentaries as well. There was something I used to watch a lot of SBS and I used to watch these amazing documentaries about different historical figures. And, you know, and I couldn't really put two and two together about politics.

And going back to what you asked about my parents being political, my Dad never really engaged in politics because of 'the Troubles' in Ireland<sup>1</sup>. And he thought politics was best kept at arm's length, understandably so, because when he left, it was pretty, things were really heating up. But my Mum, when she was working, she worked in the Albany Club. And the Albany Club was a sort of a small bar that was exclusively for the business owners and politicians and people with influence around town. And I used to go in there in the afternoons and I used to chat to some of these old timers, like some of the people who were World War Two POWs [prisoners of war], so I used to speak to them. I used to pick their brains to their annoyance, probably.

But also at that time, Kevin Prince was the local [Liberal] member for Albany and my Mum introduced me to him. I remember that. And as far as politics went, my Mum pretty much didn't really affiliate with anyone because I think it also came down to education. She just saw people with that sort of power as knowing best, you know, knowing better than other people because you don't have that. It just goes to the thing, what the Liberals are doing now with the arts schooling, with secondary education, not making it more or [making it] less accessible than normal. Like people, you can't really rationalize what the role of that person is and what the policies are, and all that when you come from a family which are only really worried about putting food on the table, paying rent.

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Troubles' refers to the 30-year conflict between nationalists (mainly self-identified as Irish or Roman Catholic) and unionists (mainly self-identified as British or Protestant) in Ireland and Northern Ireland. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Troubles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Troubles)



DW: We should get your mother's name.

**CLIFFORD:** Sorry, it's Linda Clifford. Or Linda Graham now. But it was Linda Clifford at the time.

DW: And given your interest in history, were there other members of your family, your sisters or people at school, you could discuss those issues with?

**CLIFFORD:** Not really. Actually, my best friend, Aaron is, I'm still best friends with him now. Like he's in, he's just moved to Denmark actually. But I went to primary school with him and we were in the same classes. And we, you know, we just sort of, even at a young age, we just sort of hit it off. And I think because we had a very similar sort of upbringing, we didn't come from money. And he came from a family where I think he had like eight brothers and sisters or something.

So I used to go over to his place, he used to come over to mine. And we used to talk a lot. And I would watch documentaries. And I used to go around to his place and go, 'You didn't happen to see the documentary on blah, blah de blah'. And then I just like brain dumped on him about, you know, significant things that might have happened in history. And he said, like he was also interested in different things. He actually did do the TEE. He wanted to go to uni. So at that time, he was a lot further down the path of actually understanding or rationalizing ideologies and all those kinds of things. And I wasn't, I just wasn't so interested in the cause and effect, you know? And so it's good. And we still talk about politics today. And, yeah, it's good to have a friend who can do that.

DW: Have you converted him over to the Greens? [chuckles]

[00:15:02] **CLIFFORD:** He was a member, actually I need a check. I think I checked, he's got a young family. So I think his activity is sort of, he was a paid member, but he's just sort of lapsed. I don't know, after this I'll actually I have to call him up about that.

DW: So, you finished Year 12 and you didn't then go onto uni, you went into employment?

**CLIFFORD:** Yes. So at the beginning of Year 12 I tried to ... I applied for the Army.

DW: Right.

**CLIFFORD:** Because my uncles on my Mum's side of the family, they were all in the defence force and you know, and negatively impacted by - one of my uncles who went to Vietnam, he was drafted. So we came from a sort of a family where people join the Navy, join the Army. And it was a way of job security and it helped to give you direction. And I thought that was it. And given some of the troubles that were going on at home, I saw it as a way out, of getting out of town. So I thought if I could just leave, it might help me with my path.

And so I applied for the Army. They knocked me back. I actually came up to Perth with Aaron. He said he'd come up and he was like my support person. And he... I went in there for the interview and it was just, I understand why now because of, just you're 17, you're a kid. I tried to join the infantry, actually, and I didn't, it just didn't happen. And so the recruiter said, 'Go back to Albany, finish Year 12 and then think about what you want to do. And if, you know, if it's there for you, you should reapply'. But he said you should look at joining the Army Reserve because it's a stepping stone. So I joined the Army Reserve.

So the year after Year 12, I went away and did all my basic training in infantry over East. And so I joined the Army Reserve, the 11<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> battalion in Albany.

DW: And how long were you in the Army Reserve?

**CLIFFORD:** I think for that first year after high school it was pretty full on, like with the training and everything. The first year or the year after that. So I was coming on to near 20 years old, but I was in for a couple of years. When I was in high school, if you're talking about work, I worked at Woolworths, that was a casual or part time job I had from year eight until twelve. When I left, when I was applying to get in the Army Reserve, I did a number of things. I worked in the video store in Albany, VideoEasy part time. I also worked in a place called Precision Hearing, which was, I took a traineeship making hearing aids. And then I went from that, they let me go saying that they didn't have any work. I think I was, you know, thinking back on it, I was exploited. I think traineeship, they didn't pay me much.

But then I took a job. Everyone in Albany ended up, like if you wanted to get ahead, you ended up working in an abattoir, which was horrific. And given my values and everything, I was just trying to take work because I just needed the money. And when you're 18 or 19, you're just like what I'm going to do with my life. So I left the abattoir when I started the Army Reserve side of things. So when I left the abattoir I was doing night shift. And that was actually very informative for me, looking globally, looking outside of Australia because I worked nightshift.

They pointed to me when we did our induction, they said, 'You're on nightshift', and a lot of the people on nightshift, there weren't many born in Australia, not Australians, there were a lot of people from different countries. And I was working on these sort of work stations. On the longest chain that I was working on right next to people that had fled conflicts, and this is before September 11<sup>2</sup>. And so I was talking to these people who were from Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, and some of them had law degrees and they were working in an abattoir.

And it was like, 'And so you've got a law degree and you're here with me working in this abattoir?' And so I'd learn about their family. And they said, 'Oh, yeah, we were pushed out. If I didn't leave I probably would have been killed'. So I started to empathize with other people. I started to think these people were just trying to do the best they can with what they've got and they've come a long way to Australia as a as a way of rebuilding their lives. And so it actually brought a lot of their stories home with me. And it also tied into, it helped to inform me.

Not long after, when I came back from my training with the Army Reserve, I was actually at training one night when September 11<sup>th</sup> happened. September 11 happened on the day that we were doing, were at the barracks in Albany watching this. And then the tide started to turn against those communities, 'What are these Muslim people doing here' and all that, and you could actually see it. I mean, the media and everything, and funny enough, I was chatting to a friend about it the other day in Albany. When September 11<sup>th</sup> happened they only put Fox News on in Albany 24/7. I don't know if you remember that, but I thought it was criminal that they would do that in hindsight. But at the time, you see these shocking images every minute of the day and, you know, it is sort of propaganda in a lot of ways.

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<sup>2</sup> The September 11 attacks, often referred to in the US as 9/11, were a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks by the Islamist terrorist group Al-Qaeda against the United States on the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September\\_11\\_attacks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11_attacks)

[00:20:43] But then obviously, I was doing all my training, I'd saved some money and I decided to travel to Ireland to see where my Dad grew up. That's a bit of a segue. But I saw all that happen. I got through it, ended up going to Ireland and I stayed in England for three months and then Ireland for another six or so months. And during that time, I'd sort of tried to learn a lot about my family. I stayed with my uncle and I wanted to learn what did my Dad do when he was growing up, and sort of get to know the extended family. Which was very good for me because I did, actually understood my father a lot better than before, sort of because my Dad didn't really talk much about what he did when he was growing up. It was hard to get information out of him.

DW: So you got this sort of sense of self, or where you'd come from?

**CLIFFORD:** Yes. Yes. It sort of went like this. Where do you think, this show that's on tape here, where do you think you go? Who did you think you are? And so I went back there. But when I came back to Australia not long after that, I had this plan worked out. I'm going to go full time in the Army. But one of my friends who was a close friend of mine in primary school going into high school, he went along, he travelled the same path I did. And he ended up going into the Army after being knocked back trying to get into the Navy because his father was a clearance diver and he wanted to do his ... So ended going into the Army and he actually committed suicide in the army.

And so that shook me a bit. Like it actually, you know, when you start to think about the reasons why that happened. And he was in the same training facility that I was, but I left before he got there. So he was in this facility. He was bullied. He had an injury which could have recovered. But all he wanted to do was to have a career in the Army and they just didn't treat him very well. And so when that happened, it was a big thing on ABC and a huge inquiry. His father really fought for his son and, you know, tried to make things right and got people... I think were sacked from the Army and it changed. It set a precedent in the way that the Defence Force treated people. And I think that was a really good thing.

But at that time when that happened, I decided that's not for me. I don't think I could have mentally gone full time into this place where I've just sort of directly spoken to his family, who was just devastated by the loss of their son.

DW: So, Tim, what age were you when you went to Ireland?

**CLIFFORD:** I was 20 years old, and I think I celebrated my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday there.

DW: And when you came back to Australia, that's when you had these thoughts about going into the Army, but your friend had committed suicide?

**CLIFFORD:** Yes. So I came back to Perth. I didn't go back to Albany. My Dad had a house in Perth. And so I came back to Perth and I'm staying at his place and decided not to go [into the Army]. But my priority then was just to get some work. And so I worked. I applied for jobs in a lot of places, and I went into a job seeker agency and I was in their applying everywhere. And I was doing the best I could to try and get meaningful work. But they just weren't ... it just wasn't happening.

And I decided to take work through a work agency then in construction because it just seemed to be the best way to go about it. So I registered with a company called WorkPac, and they deal with, like, you know, all different people that work, from machine operators

to labourers. And actually the first job I got through them, WorkPac sent me to the old CBH grain silo that's here in Midland, that they pulled down recently, oh, about five years ago. But one of my first main jobs in Perth was in Midland here, not far from the office which I find ...

DW: A full circle?

[00:24:58] **CLIFFORD:** Yes. So this circle, full circle. So I got the job through WorkPac and I worked for a company called Urtech. Urtech gave me a time job and I worked with them. This is around 2001, 2002. And I worked with them the majority of the 2000s. I worked initially in construction around Perth. I worked on different subdivisions where they'd get the plots ready for houses and putting in Telstra cables and putting in water and sewerage and all that. And to be honest, I hated the work. I really didn't like construction work, but I was doing it. And they ...

DW: ... pay you?

**CLIFFORD:** They pay me. And you know, at that time, you just try and do what you have to, because I think it's also that mentality that gets passed on. I'm sure my Dad wanted to do different things in his life, but you just do things because that's what ...

DW: Got to pay the bills.

**CLIFFORD:** You pay the bills and you've got like, and in the back of my mind, I was thinking maybe I should study because at the same time, my best mate, Aaron, he was going through uni at the time. And in myself I was thinking it just wasn't the right time for me then. And then I got to around 2006, after I had this girlfriend in the early 2000's, that relationship was really bad, didn't work out. And I ended up, I was playing music as well, I started playing bass, which was great, which was something different. I was never afraid to jump into something, you know? And so I started playing bass and I met a lot of really good friends in the local music scene. So that was a real focus of mine.

And by the time it got to 2006, I decided to work away. And a guy that I was playing in a band, we were just jamming, and I'm really good friends with him now as well. Our boss who I had in Perth working for Urtech, he called me up out of the blue. Because I took a break from Urtech in 2005 and I took a job working at Telstra in credit management for about eight months. Where I'd call people up and tell them that they they owed money and you're going to be disconnected, if they didn't pay their bills. A lot of people were yelling at me over the phone. But it was more of a break to get away because it was very hard work. Like when I was working for Urtech, I was working from, like, anywhere from 10 to 12 hours a day. And in the middle of the sun, you know, half an hour, one break all day. Also a terrible workplace agreement.

That's another lightbulb moment. [Liberal Prime Minister] Howard's workplace agreements, we were signed to them with this company. And it was such a terrible workplace agreement. We weren't getting proper sort of overtime. For example, I was on single time for 50 hours. I had to work 50 hours before I could get to overtime. If I was sick during the week it wouldn't count, [no overtime] on the weekends. It was really convoluted, but as a young person, you're like, I know this is bad, but this is all, this is my world, you know.

DW: And the power of the unions at that time was going down anyway.

**CLIFFORD:** And Urtech didn't like the unions. If they found out that you were with a union, they publicly wouldn't say it because it was illegal, but they would force you out. They would just find a job site so far away from your house and tell you to drive, you know, miles, every day until eventually you go 'I'll leave'.

DW: Can I also ask there, did you get any training? Because it doesn't sound like you had an apprenticeship or anything.

**CLIFFORD:** No, no. The job out of the CBH silo when I was working with WorkPac. They were plastic welding. And what they were doing is they were rolling out these massive sheets of PVC and were overlapping it and were welding it together. And then concertinering it into these big panels. The panels were being prefabricated and then sending... they were being sent down to Kwinana to the big Alcoa refinery in their caustic ponds. They were lining the caustic ponds with these panels. After I prefabbed them with a work crew there they sent us out to Alcoa to line those ponds to prevent the caustic from going into the water table, which has caused a lot of health issues out there for that community.

That's another lightbulb moment when you see the caustic ponds, it's quite confronting. Yes, so that job I picked up my skills in plastic welding. So I was welding PVC and HDPE [high-density polyethylene]. And those skills, although they're recognized in the United States and Europe as, I think an apprenticeship, you can do an apprenticeship in it. But in Australia they weren't. So it's just word of mouth, like you're recognized as a great welder, you can get work through that. So I did that for a majority of that time. So I'd jump between subdivision work and plastic welding.

And then when our boss Tony, I want to tell you, he was a really nice man. I had a really good friendship with him. He ended up working away, took a job in Ravensthorpe. And he called me up out of the blue saying, 'Would you like some work, it's really good money'. You should come down here. So I'd just gone through a breakup and I just thought I'm gonna go down to Ravensthorpe. And my mate Ash, he ended up coming down with me. So we were down there together doing the same thing. The tailings dam, lining it in HDPE plastic and doing like really sort of very detailed work with welding. It's very hard work, you would be out on this plastic in the middle of the heat, and you're welding it and rolling it out, very physical work, you're pulling these heavy panels into place. I don't advise anyone to do it because it really ruins you back.

DW: And you moved to Ravensthorpe. Fly in, fly out?

[00:30:58] **CLIFFORD:** I was doing drive in, drive out. I was doing four weeks on, one week off. And the money was good. But it's terrible, like being away for that time. You imagine coming home for a week and then having to go away for four weeks. It's horrible. Initially it wasn't too bad but it really started to get to me and then, we were there through the construction phase. I think [WA Liberal Premier] Barnett, actually, after Barnett won the election in 2007, I think, 2008? They came down, it would have been 2007, I can't remember, they opened the mine up ...

DW: It was 2008.

**CLIFFORD:** Yes, 2008 and then everything started to come apart in the world, like with the Global Financial Crisis and the nickel price plummeted. And it was terrible for me because I'd bought a property in Queensland and, it was more because everyone said you should

buy property. As a young person in this State, it was like, you can just get in a machine and drive and earn all this money and don't worry about the future. Just get into the property market, that's where everyone's making money and stuff. But I didn't do it to make money. I did it because I wanted to actually buy a place. And I don't know why I chose Queensland. I think because the place reminded me of, in a strange way, reminded me of Albany. It was a nice little remote community up near the Daintree rainforest. And it was somewhere I could see myself eventually going.

But when the GFC [Global Financial Crisis] hit [in 2007-09], I went into negative equity in the property. And also at that time they shut down the Ravenshorpe nickel project, and they sacked the 2,000 workers that were down there. I was there the day that they did it. They didn't do it in the right way. They lied to the community. And I know that because a friend of mine, his sister was the public, one of the public liaison officers with BHP. And she went out to the community saying, 'Don't worry, the mine's going to stay open'. She didn't know... she thought the same thing. And what they did the night before they shut it down, they faked a safety protocol two weeks before the shutdown to shut everything down, so it put everything into lockdown mode.

So we're doing all these safety rehearsals, routine and everything. And it was just allowing BHP time to formulate their announcement and shut the whole place down. And so they did that. So they flew security down the day before they shut it down. So just in case, they thought there might be a riot, people had moved across the country to go to that project. They'd bought property in Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe. And so they shut it down. And, you know, instantly overnight, people I knew had lost half of the value of their property, and so they were, like hundreds of thousands of dollars down the drain. And they didn't know what to do. And the mine's just like, BHP is just like 'too bad'.

And then I heard through the grapevine that the mine manager had already sold his property three months before. So everyone was angry. And I've never seen anger like that from people, like what are we gonna do? Tears, people yelling. So my boss, Tony, had driven to Esperance and he told me. I said, 'oh you'd better get back here because they've shut this place down', and then they wouldn't allow him back in so he could pack up his room. They were that ruthless.

And that was another lightbulb moment with me. And I said to myself, I can't stay in this industry. This industry is treating people so terribly. And I'm sure there are places that they did. But this boom and bust sort of thing. And I think in a lot of ways, as a sort of a younger person at that time coming through the State, I think we were lied to, duped in what's really important in your life. Is it going away for four weeks at a time, earning money to buy things at Harvey Norman? Or is it like, is it to actually enjoy time with friends and family and do something that really interests you?

[00:34:58] So, at that time, just before that shut down, I think it was just before that I applied to do my STAT [Special Tertiary Admissions Test] test to get into Edith Cowan University. And that was something I'd wanted to do because I was like, right, I'm going to do this finally. But what happened with, because I had that property in Queensland, instead of going to uni, in 2008, 2009, I was forced to work away for two years until I sold the property just to pay the bills. So I lost my job with Urtech, because of the shutdown they halved their workforce overnight. And I was jumping from contracted to contractor around the State to try and pay the mortgage.

DW: In plastic welding?

**CLIFFORD:** In plastic welding. I got a job in the Newmont gold mine just down the road. And I was there and they didn't have rostered weeks off. So I think I worked eight weeks straight.

DW: That's hard.

**CLIFFORD:** And they didn't treat us very well. They said if you don't want to work, then you don't have a job here and I needed to pay the mortgage. So I was doing that eight to ten weeks. I was away for that time. And then eventually I got, even though Urtech had, Tony was still working at that company. So he called me up and he said, we've got a job up in Port Hedland. You should come up to Port Hedland. I'm the boss, it's gonna be decent for the workers there. And I had good friends up there.

So I ended going up to Port Hedland after that. And funnily enough, I was staying in the old asylum, or was it the refugee facility, where they used to keep people in Port Hedland. And we were staying there in accommodation because all the accommodation was packed out in Port Hedland. And I started thinking about what about the people that lived here, another lightbulb moment. You would think about the refugees that would stay in this place, and post-September 11, treated very poorly by John Howard.

And I ended up going up there. I worked in Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, the Northern Territory. And one of the work crews I worked with was mainly Indigenous, mainly Aboriginal people. So I got talking to Bill Williams, who's a bit of a respected elder in a community up in Queensland. I used to work with him, he used to work for Tony, because him and Tony were friends. And we didn't really talk about [politics], because at that time I wasn't really thinking too much about First Nations rights, and all that. I was more talking, speaking to my friends, you know, who were like Bill.

I spoke to his wife when I met her. They would jump from different plastic welding companies, so I spoke to her when I was in the Newmont gold mine. And she was very cluey, she was a community worker. And she said to me, she said, 'you should read', I forgot the name of the author but the book was '*Why Weren't We Told*'<sup>3</sup>. I don't know whether you know the book. It's about the Stolen Generation. And I didn't get to read the book in full, but I got to read parts of it because at the time I was googling about it and reading stories. And I'm, this hasn't been, shockingly, it hasn't been that long. You know, my friends out on this work site, were treated in many ways in Australia as second class citizens. And that sort of really pissed me off.

DW: And what year was that you were up in Queensland?

**CLIFFORD:** Well, I was working in Queensland, I was only up there for a few months. And when I was jumping around at that time, it was around 2009.

DW: Yes, right.

**CLIFFORD:** And always with an eye to get back to Perth. And around that time, they said they needed some plastic welders out on Barrow Island, the Gorgon project. And I said, oh, you know, that wouldn't be too bad, actually, like I wouldn't mind going out and seeing the Island. And so they sent me out there. I eventually got out there and I was flying in and flying out from Karratha because they didn't have accommodation on there for work, which

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<sup>3</sup> By author Henry Reynolds. See <https://www.penguin.com.au/books/why-werent-we-told-9780140278422>

I thought was a bit of a novelty, getting on a plane to go to work. And I was flying in from Thevenard Island out there as well.

So I got to see this magnificent part of the country, like it's just beautiful. And what did get me, though, was the fact I started questioning why we were there on Barrow Island. I started thinking, why are we building this gas facility on this pristine A class nature reserve? It just didn't seem right to me. And I'd speak to some of the environmental people who worked on the island. And they were there were between a rock and a hard place, like they were being paid money, and, although they knew the overall impact of this project, they just thought [sotte voce] 'phew, oh my god, there's a lot of stuff that probably happens out there that doesn't get reported'.

And one day was flying into the island for my stint, we're doing 26 days on, nine days off. I could see them dredging out in the water, and there's turtles on this island. And you just, it's right in front of you, you know, like they're not. 'Who's policing this?'. And money talks. And then someone told me out on the Island, which I thought was very interesting, they said, 'oh, yeah, we're only doing this project because we were watching, we're reading *The West*'. *The West Australian* was the newspaper of the crew group. And I'd be reading it. And it would say, 'Budget blowout in Gorgon'. Gorgon went from being something like a \$40 billion project to like nearly \$80 [billion] at the time, it was blowing out.

I said, 'why do these people keep pushing on with this'? And then someone told me, 'Oh, because they want to prove that they can do it on an A Class nature reserve so they can go to Antarctica'. And I was like, this is wrong. So I was thinking a lot about that and thinking about... and I wanted to get home. I didn't want to keep working away.

[00:41:19] I had also a bit of a falling out with a couple of the bosses over workers' rights as well, because some of them on other jobs were forcing workers to stay away longer than what they should, not telling him that they were eligible for breaks. The company also wasn't letting us know about our entitlements. So we might go to a project and the company might be paying Urtech or whatever, for paying them the full amount. But they wouldn't tell us as the workers, so we'd find out.

I'd always make a point to go to the engineer of the contractor to tell me what our entitlements were, send them to me so I'd know. And then I go, 'Why wasn't this in our pay?' And a couple of times we'd have running battles with the company, like we'd strike with no union protection. So there were two things, it was this workers' rights thing going on, there was this big industry post-GFC thing going on, and me questioning what my role in the world was. And then I came to the conclusion that I would like to go to uni, and go to do a job that I thought could help people. And so that's when I came back from working away in 2010, or around that time.

DW: And you went to uni full-time?

**CLIFFORD:** Yes, it was, mainly, I did. I had a letter, actually. I was sent a letter from ECU just before I flew out to go to Barrow Island. And this is January of, I think it's 2010. Yes, January of 2010. And I was in the crib hut and I think there was a cyclone happening and I was reading the letter and the letter was about the STAT tests. So I was only eligible to defer for two years. And the letter basically said, if you don't take up your uni spot now, then you won't be able to do it. You have to go through the whole process again.



I was offered more work out at Barrow Island and I just said, 'No, stop this, I'm going home'. And so then I just packed my bags and came back to Perth. And when I did that, I enrolled into uni. And I was doing four units initially. I was doing a... my degree was a double degree at that time. It was politics and international relations and international business. So it was a double degree. And then after the first year, I changed that from the major double degree to just doing a single major, doing politics, international relations and journalism.

DW: And journalism?

**CLIFFORD:** And the reason I did journalism, I did a couple of units and I met Kayt Davies, she was a Greens member. She knows Alison [Xamon]. Kayt Davis was the head of journalism at ECU. And funny enough, I didn't talk about the Greens with her at all. I didn't know she was a member I think. And I mainly did journalism because I hadn't actually written much in a long time. I did journalism because it forced me to write and it forced me to read. And that helped me to get my grammar up. So it helped me on the other side of the degree to finish, to do my politics and international relations. And during that year, I think it was early 2011, that's when I joined the Greens. I think it was, I'll have to check with Rowena. It's around that time because I thought, I initially thought I might just volunteer with Amnesty International.

[00:45:06] I thought that might be a way to help people. I thought refugees' rights and dealing with different issues in that way might be the way to go. But then also knowing, I also sparked an interest [while] away [at work] in US politics, as a lot of people do, because it dictates a lot of what goes on here. And I started putting two and two together about Australian politics and going, okay, the Liberal Party is looking more like the Republicans of the US. And do I really want the US system here in Australia? And then I was like, these people have to be stopped.

And then I started thinking I might get involved in politics and I said, I'd only join a party, and mind you, the context of Australian politics at the time. A lot of the inside stuff that was going on in the Labor Party, there was like backstabbing, you know, and everything. And I thought to myself, I'm going to get involved in a party with policies that is driven by the membership and bases its approach in science, in actual... this is what's proven to work and this is the outcome if you apply it.

And and that's why I joined the Greens. It wasn't about getting into Parliament or anything like that. I thought being a part of a political movement, and I could see there were rallies around different issues. And so I ended up going to the Greens meetings, the first one in Bayswater. And I met Alison Xamon.

DW: So that would have been the Perth Regional Group?

**CLIFFORD:** Yes. Perth Regional Group meetings. And I was really nervous because a whole bunch of new people, well, a whole bunch of people I didn't know. And like a lot of new members, and the feedback I get from a lot of new members is I'm just so worried I don't know enough about the policies. And I was like that. I was reading the policies and having to remember all these things, but at the end of the day, it was about ...so I just sort of threw myself into it. So a lot of things happened in that ...

DW: Can I just clarify before you go on, when you came back off Gorgan, were you living with your Dad again or were you living independently?

**CLIFFORD:** Sorry. I moved into, at the time when I was working away, throughout the time in the 2000s, I ended up just moving to share housing. I was living with friends in different... one house in Vic Park, one in Como. In 2009, I moved in with friends in Mount Lawley. So I was still working away at the time. And then when I came back, I was still in that house.

But what I also did is I was applying for jobs in the public sector because Aaron, my best friend, was working in the public sector and said, 'you're mad if you don't try and apply for work because there's jobs going'. And I landed a job in the public sector in HR [human resources] in the Attorney General's office, so that ...

DW: While you were doing your university degree?

**CLIFFORD:** Yes, so I was balancing three or four units a semester and working full time. I ended up cutting it back to four days a week work. And I dropped a unit because it was hard to manage, but I was getting through my work, although I had a lot of late nights. And I was throwing myself into the Greens. I met Scott Ludlam just out, you know, I think at Reps [Representatives Council] or something.

Although what was really interesting is, I read a lot about campaigns, the US campaigns when I was away. And I read a book by a guy called Thurston Clarke. And it was on Robert Kennedy's last campaign<sup>4</sup>. And I'd read that Jo, I think Jo Vallentine, had met Robert Kennedy, I think at something like, you know, it's better to talk to Jo about it, but she went to the U.S. In the 60s, I think. And I think she might've met him on some sort of exchange thing. But I read that book and I read a lot about, you know, you see the US election, Barack Obama who was elected in 2008. Right. And I was fascinated with social movements and how you could get a whole bunch of people together and you go to talk to other people and you could just, it wasn't about winning, but it was about just putting the things that matter on the agenda.

DW: Can I also I just clarify, you could be on a roll, but, given your lightbulb moments during your working career as a young person, like at the abattoir with the migrants and so on, you didn't think about joining the Labor Party because it seems, especially about the work agreements, all that employment stuff may have pushed you in that direction?

[00:49:46] **CLIFFORD:** Yeah, well, I think it was... the Labor Party to me, and not even being a part of Greens, it was something that came up. It was all I could see, I was never engaged, I never really spoke to any Labor Party members. But I was very inspired by what [ALP Prime Minister] Gough Whitlam did. And I guess that's what politics should be about. Politics should be about the idealism of, you know, going after something, trying to correct something that doesn't exist to service the people. And his legacy has lasted so long, even though [his Government] was for such a short period of time, he managed to put something together that the Liberals couldn't, even when they really tried, pull it all apart. They did a good job in damaging it.

So even though it was construction and everything, I saw the Labor Party as being pretty much run by different powerful groups, factions and that. And I didn't really know too much about factions at all, but I just knew that it would be very difficult to do what's right for the community if massive factions like those powerful people ran your political party and if it

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<sup>4</sup> *The Last Campaign: Robert F. Kennedy and 82 Days That Inspired America*, published in 2013. See <https://thurstonclarke.com/the-last-campaign/>

just walked over your membership. So I know there are a lot of good people in the Labor Party trying to fight to change from within and everything. But in my mind, I had to do something that was... I always had this thing about like doing the right thing, the integrity side. To be a part of something that was as fair as possible to the members. And more transparent than anything else.

And when it came to a political party, I don't care if the Greens didn't hold government or anything. It was just about actually the Greens were a party that were there and taking massive... we've gotta to deal with climate change when it's not popular, necessarily popular. That's bravery in one sense. And I thought that's what I wanted to be a part of, to be able to take this bold vision and take it out to people. And that's why I joined the [Greens] Party over the Labor Party.

DW: You said also, around the same time you joined the Greens, you were fascinated with social movements. They brought issues onto the agenda. Did you actually join any groups like Amnesty or the forest-hugging people?

**CLIFFORD:** No, I read about the ... I've read about what Bob Brown did, you know, and saving the Franklin [River]<sup>5</sup> and all the work that he did in Tasmania. And I thought that was quite fascinating. Yes, so I never really joined [other groups], I think the most sort of activist thing that I did was more about when I was working away on those work sites with organizing workers with no union protection to strike against a company that, who I found out later on, donate to the Liberal Party. [chuckles] And make change on that level. And that was my sort of gauge in regards to doing that. But I don't think I had time, realistically, I didn't throw myself into that. I respected and I supported the forestry movement and things like that from a distance, but I never really engaged in it.

DW: After joining the Greens in 2011, you quickly got involved. I think you were the Perth Regional Group Co-convenor in 2013?

**CLIFFORD:** Yes.

DW: Jumped into things pretty quickly?

[00:53:16] **CLIFFORD:** Yes. And I think it was more about seeing the need for someone in there because it's like when you're at a Greens meeting and you've got your regular diehards that love the processes of the Party. And I was approached, I think, from one of the members saying, 'We need a new convenor, you know'. And I said, 'Well, I'll do it if there's a co-convenor'. And I don't think the Co-convenor actually manifested themselves. But I did that and I took part. I think when I first joined the Party, when I did things at that time, and I still do on another level, now. If I do something, I try and do it 100%.

And I thought, I want to learn more. I want to learn everything about the party. And so I sat in on Reps meetings and I wanted to learn about, the [State] elections which were coming up in 2013, in March 2013, and they needed candidates. And I didn't want to be a candidate necessarily. But Alison [Xamon] was there and she says, 'Well, we need people that aren't, we just need people who would like to, they could take their values and take it into an election'. And at that time, I was living in Mount Lawley, and I said, 'Well, I'd love

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<sup>5</sup> The Franklin Dam project was proposed for the Gordon River in Tasmania but was never constructed. The social movement in the early 1980s that eventually led to the project's cancellation became one of the most significant environmental campaigns in Australian history and many activists later joined the Greens. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin\\_Dam\\_controversy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin_Dam_controversy)

to, you know, I'll put up my hand for [the seat of] Mount Lawley'. And I was preselected for that, I was taking on two roles within the Party. As you said, I was the convenor. But in my mind, it wasn't so much about the elections. It was about trying to change what we were doing, like being more proactive in the community.

Like I noticed that a lot of people in the Party, I think the membership at that time was around 650 or something, today it's nearly 1,400. I saw it as being, we had a whole bunch of different activist groups outside of the Greens. But we were all about administration, which is fine, the Party needs to run. So we'd go to our Reps [Council], we'd talk about different things, the Regional Groups would talk about the different processes of the Party. But we weren't talking about how we're going to actively engage with the community about what the policies are.

So after the 2013 election, which was a terrible one for us, we lost two members, Giz [Watson] went in the South West and Cam [Poustie] ran for North Metro. And Alison didn't hold on, and she lost the seat [East Metro region]. And after that, I was like 'Oh', you know. And in hindsight, it was about the [Federal] Gillard-Green Alliance that really smashed us in WA. So I said we need to... I saw the Labor Party out there doorknocking and I saw them. I was doorknocking in 2012 and 2013, leading up to the election. But I thought we need to get out there and talk to people.

And then the 2013 Federal election came around and I ran for [the seat of] Stirling to support Scott [Ludlam] because we knew that was going to be a tough election. And at that time, Scott, in the lead up to that, before that speech that he gave and all the support that he got from that, we were facing a really tough election and then a ballot box went missing after the election. It looked like Scott was going to lose. But then they reran the Senate count. Scott made the speech. And then I think that gave us, it opened the door to the party going, 'Okay, if we don't get out there and talk to people, we're going to lose everyone'. And that means not just Scott's position. But the next State election, the next Federal.

There are so many different things going on at that time. But what we did is, I didn't take on, during the Senate by-election, I became the Co-convenor [of the Election Campaign Committee] with Trish Cowcher. I got a call and they said, 'Would you be interested in this?'] Because I wasn't interested, I didn't want to go on the Senate ticket. I was about ... we need to try and defend this Senate spot. So we're like, okay, what we're going to do is we're going to organize to try and get as many volunteers as possible and we're going to try and doorknock. And I remember, I think it might have been early 2014, because that Senate by-election was April 2014, we went out doorknocking for the first time, in a proper organized group with [then-leader of the Parliamentary caucus of the Australian Greens] Christine Milne in Vic Park. And we did that.

People today, like some new members, find it really fascinating or they can't believe that we weren't doing it [already] at the time. And it's not all about doorknocking, but at the very basis of it was just going out there and talking to the community. And even right now with Extinction Rebellion, the way that the party works with the Extinction Rebellion and works with, you know, not working with them in an alliance, but working to have a presence at rallies and working to be a part of holding events. And we're doing more fund, not fundraisers, but we're doing quiz nights, so we're making it a more of a social thing. And I think that attitude that I had to try and change it into that with other people came from when Scott went into a Reps council meeting, he probably doesn't remember, but it was at a Reps Council meeting in 2012.

I was sitting in the Reps Council meeting watching everyone debate everything. Scott says, he was there I think giving his Senate report, and he says 'There's an issue here'. And everyone said, 'What do you mean, there's an issue here?' He goes, and I think I was the youngest person in the room by like 20-something years or so. And he goes, 'We can't have just one young person in these spaces. We need more young people involved in this party because we are not going to be relevant. We need to make sure that this is accessible to everyone, events, not just ...'

So he made a point at that Reps. And I go, that's exactly what we need to be about, because in my mind, we can't go out there and prove, make sure we have people elected into Parliament and everything if we don't go out there and talk to people. And so since that time, I was like focused. I didn't know what to do necessarily, but I knew that when we got talking to people like Jess McColl, who was the Treasurer at the time.

DW: Can I just park that idea of doorknocking as really important, [the Greens] hadn't done it until about 2014. You found it very useful being face to face with people talking about policies, but you've attracted a whole bunch of young people since then with social media's is also really important.

**CLIFFORD:** Yes.

DW: So they go together, or there's a bit of a tension?

[00:59:44] **CLIFFORD:** No, no, together. It's completely together and we've also been part of a time where I think, it's where the Party's at. And if you look back in time, I sort of look back into, I think I've seen some of the fliers from, say, 2003, those previous elections. At that time, you had real clear avenues of where you put the party policies out. You go through *The West Australian* ads, you go through your local media. People were reading them at that time. But by the time 2008 came about and after, like social media, the rise of social media and the death of traditional media, we're going in, it was going in two different directions.

So we have to be more agile and more ahead of the curve in all those spaces. And I think there's no tension between the two. It's about working together with the two. So I see it, in my mind. I see it as a layered approach. If you take one of these seats and we go out there campaigning, I see it as a layered approach. Okay, we've got the doorknockers out there, right? So then what are we going to do? Are we going to put out some social media messaging the week before, and then we're going to go in and run a stall like in the park in that electorate, and then we're gonna go to the train station.

Every part of it has ... it's all the element of putting the Greens logo in front of people's faces and our policies. And so I think it all goes hand-in-hand. And when people ... what I find really interesting is people go 'Oh no we really need to prioritize spending thousands of dollars in newspapers. And then at the same time they're on their phone looking at their news on ABC on their phone. And you just go [chuckles]...

DW: Can you also talk to me a bit about being a candidate in a seat that you know you're not going to win, Stirling, Mount Lawley. How do you go and do the work if you know you're not going to win?

**CLIFFORD:** No, I never thought I would win, but I thought that we could put our policies on the agenda. But also, I heard when I first joined, there's a real stigma around the party, there's a real stigma about the Greens. People think of the Greens as being hippies or whatever. And of course, every party has an element of something. But for me, it's more about, okay, I'm going to go, I gonna go to an event and talk to people and go, 'I'm with the Greens Party' and sort of work to put us in those spaces.

So, like, it never got me down knowing that the odds were against us, because obviously when you go to polling day, you see the Labor and Liberal Party spent millions of dollars on Mount Lawley, which was a marginal seat, you just go, we went out there, we represented the Party, and we gave people an option. And I think that's what's really important.

DW: And how many hours a week, or how many hours a day, would you spend as a candidate for Mount Lawley?

**CLIFFORD:** What I did is I set up a whiteboard in the garage in this shared house that I was in and I was going ... we didn't have walk maps, or I wouldn't have, like what we have now with all these lists and lists. What I had is I went into Google maps and I was printing out the sections of the streets. And then I got what I need to do tomorrow is I'm going to try and fly on this section, this Google map, and then I'm going to doorknock this street here, you know, and it was really basic. I think I still might even have a box with all those pieces of paper in it.

Then what I'd do is I'd go out there and I'd use a highlighter colour for the streets I've been on. But now we use, we're organized and we organize clipboards and everything for people to use. But at that time, it was a bunch of loose bits of paper with me. And I'd drive out to like Dianella and I'd go out. And sometimes it was tough. Like you'd doorknock someone and they'd go, 'Get off my porch' or something.

DW: That was 2013, Mount Lawley, I think you're saying. Were you still studying? Or you'd finished your degree and you were working full time.

**CLIFFORD:** Still studying. Which was really cool. You know, being a part of that and doing a sort of political related units at uni, I think was really good. The other thing is, I know for me, when I see candidates in different parties and you see like, and some of the comments that come out from different, well, I heard from a Labor supporter saying, 'Oh, the problem with our party is that we've got people that go straight out of uni, they go straight into an MP's office, and then they go straight into Parliament. And they haven't really spoken to anyone'. Then there was a report that came out a couple of years ago talking about that same thing, I think about 60 or 70% of all the Labor Party is ex-staffers, or lawyers, or whatever.

And I think that's the real power of our Party, is that a lot of our candidates are real people, like I was an ex-construction worker. And I hear people saying, 'Well, I wish the Labor Party had more of those.' And running as candidates or having real people and I'd say that to people at uni, I'd go to the uni class and they'd go, 'Oh you're running in the election.' I'd say, 'Well, that's another stigma in the community that you need to be some sort of PhD candidate to be an elected member of Parliament.' I think you can be informed and you can take policies, like a lot of the work behind them, but you're fighting for an idea. And I think that's where we need to be. Yeah, I thought it was good. I found that really a good...

that was a really good situation for me to be in class, to talk to other students about running in politics because it gave people an in to it. And I thought that was really valuable.

DW: So then you're preselected for East Metro?

[01:05:31] **CLIFFORD:** Perth. Perth was 2016. I ran in the 2016 Federal [seat of] Perth.

DW: Was there a big field of people putting their hands up for [Perth] at that time?

**CLIFFORD:** No, I ran unopposed.

DW: Wow. Okay. And did you think you would win that one?

**CLIFFORD:** No, [laughs] no, no. What was really difficult ... I can say what was really tough was when I was working in the public sector at the time, there was a lot of murkiness around public sector workers and running in [elections]. And it really annoyed me because you'd have like ex-oil people running for the Liberal Party and stuff. And that's a real conflict of interest. And I was just a level two point something in the public sector. And all I wanted to do was run in the election, but they were telling me you'd best just resign. So it cost me a lot of, like my annual leave and money. So it was really difficult.

When I got through the Perth election, because I'd had to take two months off work, by the time they did the count, we'd built something really special, I think in that election because we built ... I've still got the photo of me and Jo Vallentine, and a couple other people in the park. We built that into like a hundred people over this massive campaign, it was just awesome. It was a lot of fun, you're friends for life. And that's it. The outcome is one thing, but also the journey. And I think the journey of a campaign brings people together. And I think that's also equally as important. And that's what happened in Perth.

So after the Perth election, I was spent. I was really tired and I was thinking about what I wanted to do. There was a freeze in the public sector and I was redeployed into the Magistrates Court from the Attorney-General's office. I said I wanted to work on ... I wanted to experience the court. I wanted to see how people are treated in our justice system. So I got to sit in the court. It was a very stressful job. But I got to see people walk through, like people, unpaid fines go to jail. It was really confronting. But I got to see that injustice as well.

But when the preselections were coming up for the 2017 [State] election, I had friends contact me to say, in the Party, saying, 'You should really look at doing it. [chuckles] You've just come off this really good campaign and we really want to support you to do it.' And I think that was why I was unopposed. And also, I spent the majority of my time in those elections in that Perth election and time living and going out, like we campaigned from Mount Lawley to Bassendean. We doorknocked the whole triangle. So I didn't see ... and people used to say East Metro is really tough to win. It is tough and it's a tough area for the Greens because it's very diverse.

But so is every other region and I think really with the shift of demographics in the community and everything, it's not the traditional ... this is safer than others. Like you look at South Metro, Fremantle is strong for us, but outside of Fremantle, we don't do very well whatever in Kwinana. So there's a lot of things like people saying, 'Why don't you run in these notionally safe seats' and you go, well, nothing's safe. We've lost, we didn't win North Metro. Preferences make a huge difference as well because of the group voting

ticket. I think we can win East Metro. And that's why, if we can do that and retain it, that was going to be ... that'll be a hell of a story because, it'll be a great thing for the party.

We're in Midland right now and we haven't had a Greens' office in Midland at all in the history of the Party. And I think that's significant because the feedback I get from the community out here is that it's so good to see the Greens out here, like the Greens had no one out in Midland. It's like, no, it's Labor territory. And so to break in in that way, in a community sense, I think was a real achievement for the party as well. So that's why I thought East Metro was my focus.

DW: You're saying it's [East Metro] a very diverse area. Armadale through to Mount Lawley, where Swan is quite rural, I'd imagine. Have you got different strategies for different bits of it in terms of your reelection next year?

[01:09:37] **CLIFFORD:** Yes, I think we've been putting that together now and how we talk to people. And, you know, what I think we do is we go into the election and we separate the two. We've got State and Federal [seats] and we go into it. But to the general community, people who don't engage in politics don't see the difference between the two. Some of them don't even know we have an Upper House or a Senate or vice versa, but they care about issues. What we've made a point of is ... we've made a point of I try to work with Senate offices as well.

And if there's an issue that's come up, like this COVID pandemic has shown up a lot of the cracks in the community. I try and take some of the issues that are coming out of [Greens (WA) Senator] Rachel's [Siewert] office about, say, JobKeeper and Newstart, which she's worked tirelessly for. And we've tried to put that out in front of the community as well. So we've got a lot of things going. But one of the proudest moments of ... so we've had that going in the background, like talking to people, so we might target social media, for example, target certain age demographics who are getting disproportionately impacted by COVID, women, young people, with some of the messaging and some of the things that Rachel's been campaigning on.

But the frustrating thing about COVID is the week before the COVID shutdown I read in the net zero emissions Bill in the Parliament. Climate change is a massive campaign for this office. And we spent probably 10 months putting this Bill together in the office and we managed to read it in. Then we were going to launch this big campaign off the back of that. And COVID happened, so now we're trying to put that back on the tracks and take that to the election.

DW: The other outstanding thing, I suppose, in terms of you and your career is, I think, Parliament for you, it was was the middle of the year, July or something when you first sat. You must be one of the youngest members?

**CLIFFORD:** Yes.

DW: They're full of old people up there [chuckles] ...

**CLIFFORD:** I went in in May. And I think our first sitting week was June 20. Yes, I was.

DW: ... how does that feel?



**CLIFFORD:** I felt like I was a fish out of water. I was really terrified. I was like, my God, I've got to try and get my head across this whole place because it's very difficult. So I tried to chat to people like Jo Vallentine and Giz [Watson] as much as I could because undoubtedly, they had a tougher time than I would ever have because of just the fact that it's a lot easier for a 30-odd year old white male to walk into Parliament in 2020, than it would have been for Jo Vallentine to walk into the Federal Senate in 1984.

So that's what I had in the back of my mind that helped me to keep my anxiety down a little bit. But it was a hell of a thing. It was like a real achievement. And I sometimes catch myself thinking about where I was in 2008. Ten years later, and my goal was never to go to Parliament and it was all about, always about the issues and trying to make sure that those things are on the agenda. But what did get me about the Parliament and the age difference between people is that there's not enough young people in Parliament. There's not enough single parents, there's not enough people from different walks of life. We really have a problem.

DW: First Nations [people]?

**CLIFFORD:** First Nations' people. We really have the problem with diversity in Parliament, and we need to try in this upcoming election ... we're going to try and encourage as many young people as possible to stand and to take part in the campaign, because I think politics should be accessible to everyone and there should be no barrier to people to get engaged with what they care about. So that's what I want to do in this election.

DW: And I suppose the other factor in terms of easing you into Parliament is at that election, there were more [Upper House] candidates elected. Robin [Chapple], Alison [Xamon] and Di [Evers] and yourself.

**CLIFFORD:** Yes. I remember the first day I think I was in Parliament sitting next to Alison and I didn't know, like even at that time, I didn't know where to walk, I didn't know where I was allowed to walk in the Parliament because you've got all these rules that you just, you know, get a small induction for. And so what Alison did is, because I sit next to Alison, she got the Orders of the Day, the agenda. And as the President would read them out, she would point to them on the bit of paper. So I go, OK, that's this. That's what this means.

I know this is coming up at this time, but then I would ask questions about what does Orders of the Day necessarily mean? What's nongovernment business? What can we do in these spaces? So there's a lot of working out. And I remember Giz, or a lot of the older Members and even some of the newer Members, they say it takes a term to know and understand the whole place. I guess it's nearly taken me that time. I still don't understand everything about it. But I know what to push, and I know who to ask.

DW: And committee work as well, which is always very important in terms of the Environment and Public Affairs Committee. So there would've been some issues there that you engage with.

[01:14:35] **CLIFFORD:** Yes, absolutely. Broadly... we take the petitions, and a lot of people don't know that if you take a petition to a Lower House member, they might read it in [to Hansard], then it disappears and it becomes more of a political issue within the seat more than anything. It might continue to be noted if it's like more of an election issue. But in the Upper House, the petitions get read in and then they go to my committee and then we get to assess them and we deal with a broad range of different issues.

It's been a lot of work, and hasn't been easy, but it's been very rewarding because it's forced me to really, in our committee, in every committee, I think on some level the politics is taken out of it because it's not like 'got you' moments like in the Senate estimates committees and all that. So we've worked together. You've got to work with people from different parties. I'm on a committee with two Labor members, one National, one Liberal member, and we all sometimes don't agree. But that was a real learning, that was a real challenge for me in the first year, trying to get my head around the committee process.

DW: You have four [Greens] Members in the Upper House. Did you negotiate portfolios and how the party would work in the Upper House?

**CLIFFORD:** Yes, at the beginning of the term, we all sat down. And I had an idea this is probably a really... this term has come with so many different twists and turns. When Scott [Ludlam] stood down, I'd spent quite a bit of time interning at Scott's office while I was at uni, which was so valuable ... to learn how those offices worked and everything. And what our plan was, Scott had similar portfolios on the Federal level to me. I wanted to align with, housing, planning, transport, all the things that he fought for, climate being one. I don't know whether he had the climate portfolio, but it all sort of wound its way back into us. We were going to line up and work together on different campaigns. And that's what we were going to do.

But then fast forward a year, less than a year, Scott had to stand down because of the dual citizenship. I was like, gee, we're going to have to try and reset our own path now. And it wasn't because we were delegating them to direct our office or anything, because that doesn't happen. It's more the fact that we were going to work together and we would have been able to magnify what we're doing. And I think that's what's been really important in this term, is that we've had a lot of the State [MP] offices work closely with Senate offices. And, I think the word amplify has been used a lot. We've used that to talk about similar things to different audiences and different constituents. But that was a real challenge too.

DW: I was interested in reading your first speech in 2017 where you talked about the things that were important to you in terms of climate and so on, but you also highlighted housing and the housing wait list, which once again is unusual, I suppose, for me, for a Greens member to be really worried about housing issues. Why is it important to you?

**CLIFFORD:** Because I think it goes back to when I talked about US politics influencing Australia, and neoliberalism really, because the same people who are putting through tax cuts for really wealthy multinationals and people and using this to pay for those cutting social housing and social services, are the same people that are perpetrating or driving the climate crisis. And I think that we can't, in some ways addressing both it will get us to a place where we can address both things. So I think there's been this convergence of issues and you can see it at the rallies ... climate justice is social justice. These things are being said, the same people are fighting the same battles.

And on one side of things, I've got me with my growing up in social housing hat on thinking back to my Mum could get into social housing a lot easier today, not by choice, like you're in the situation. And then I see people now out in the electorate that are on a social waiting list, like the lists are years long, six or seven years. I see the people responsible for it. And then, for example, more recently, when we're fighting the No Gas, the campaign, climate change is a real issue which fires everything. And it's always been an issue for the party.

When I see the Labor Party be so pro-gas to the point of just trying to fast track the Gorgon Browse project stripped back environmental protections with fracking and all those things, and then at the same time not put enough money into dealing with the social issues. And then we see the Labor Party doing that. And that's something I'd traditionally... you'd probably see in the Liberal Party. So I think really it's one and the same, campaigning against the same people. Yes, it's frustrating thinking about that stuff, because it's a real battle in ideologies and big business and corporations. Hijacking the economy and all the stuff you know about. It's difficult to reconcile when you actually see someone walk through the door of your office saying, 'I need help.'

DW: You threw yourself into the processes of Parliament quickly in terms of *Questions Without Notice*. Thirty in your first year, well, your first six months, I suppose. How do you find... like do you get support from your staff for all those processes?

[01:20:35] **CLIFFORD:** Well what we do is, I guess in the first year or two, it was very difficult to prioritize things in my mind. It was very hard. Like across the board, like really, really hectic because you're trying to, you have to try to stop yourself from going down rabbit holes because everything's important. And when I first got in I spoke to Scott and he said, 'Try and narrow things down, try, and if you can make an issue out of something like an issue that you fight for and you put your resources into that, when you speak on other things there's a bit more credibility with it.'

Instead of like saying, 'I'm running 10 campaigns', well realistically, you can't run 10 campaigns. We only have like three staff and the party's limited as well. So what we've done in the first year was a bit... if you see with the questions [to the State Government], we're trying to address the housing issue, we're trying to address some of the climate issues, we're trying to address local issues. We've really been really disciplined.

I'm using the climate example because it's the thing that we've been really working on. At the beginning of last year, going into last year ... okay, where this is the climate change campaign, our questions about what has the Government, just to get the Government, it's hard to get answers out of the Government, but just to get one answer out of the Government. For them to admit that gas is like 36 times worse, or just a straight cap on CO<sub>2</sub>. We can talk about that in our climate campaign, going out into the community.

We've been a lot more disciplined and I feel a lot more comfortable than what I did in the first two years because it was a bit... And when I speak to other members of parliament from other parties, I ask, 'Did you feel like this in your first term?' And they go, 'Yeah, absolutely.' But everyone's just too scared to admit it because they all want to project that everything's fine. But underneath, they're going, 'oh, my God.'

DW: Did you employ staff who had experience in the Parliament already or had worked for other MPs?

**CLIFFORD:** Not who had worked for other MPs. Initially, Emma in the office, she's the electorate officer. She worked for an NGO and now I've just gone completely blank. She worked for Pew<sup>6</sup>, I think. They were campaigning to create [Indigenous] Ranger Programs. But Emma also was involved with the Greens. But it wasn't about... she had a bit of a law background, she had a whole bunch of different things that really I thought would

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<sup>6</sup> Pew Charitable Trusts. See <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/projects/outback-to-oceans-australia/where-we-work/western-australia>

contribute to the office in regards to campaigning as well as fitting in. You need someone who understands how Parliament works and everything like that. She still works now with the office. She's here today and she's an amazing person.

DW: And the new [Greens] Convener.

[01:23:27] **CLIFFORD:** And new Convenor of the party. And that's really interesting because I never thought Emma would take on that sort of role. It's just the way that people evolve and emerge in the party. I think that's a testament to the party being a really open space for people to engage in. I think that's been really important. So it's really awesome to see her doing that.

I also had Alison Wright, she was the research officer, she came from housing. She never worked in an MP's office, but she understood the politics. She left last year. She took a job in community housing. That's a passion. And I think in hindsight, like we were going into the climate space. We are still friends. I think the real satisfying part of the way that the office is being run is that we're all still friends and we're all still... every office. Jo Vallentine even said she came to the office in the first month or two and Jo said, 'No matter how good you start, you're always going to run into some choppy waters, like whether it's staff or other parties or internal party stuff. There's always something that comes up and it's about how you manage it.'

And I think that really sums it up really well, because when staff are on good terms and when we go into... Conor today, he's the social media guy. He worked in Robin Chapple's office. So he already knew the party. But he also already knew the politics of Parliament and everything else. So we're sort of on the same page when we're talking about things around climate change and things. And we've also got Aletha in the office. She's the new... she took over from Alison. Aletha was a journalist. And so she's had to move into a space of being the research officer, which is really cool. So, we've got a really good team that aren't afraid to jump into things and they're not afraid to tell me that I'm wrong because we all sort of work together as a team. And I think that's the main thing.

Even when I worked away, we all worked together as a team. Even though I might have been the 2IC or the supervisor, I never put myself across as being I'm the tyrant boss, because I think that's the easiest way to get less out of people and break down relationships if you become the terrible boss. I'm always afraid of that. I probably should...

DW: Like to become the leader. You did mention the focus on climate and certainly in *Questions On Notice*, those *Questions Without Notice*, the last couple of years there has been a big focus on climate questions and [natural] gas and so on. And then, as you said, you introduced the Bill this year. For the first reading, the *Climate Change Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Bill 2020*<sup>7</sup>. How do you feel about that as a topic, given what's happening globally about the climate?

**CLIFFORD:** [sighs] I think I said when we first drafted the Bill and we went through the draft and it's ambitious, it's net zero [emissions] by 2040. It's got a renewable energy target. It's 50% by, I think 2030, and renewable energy target 100% by 2030, 50% by 2025. So it's got the two components, which I think applies to all our things, decarbonizing

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<sup>7</sup> See

<https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Parliament/Bills.nsf/BillProgressPopup?openForm&ParentUNID=2F8BE353FF3F1171482585300005CF9B>

the domestic economy, as well as taking into account export and emissions and everything because it is a global thing.

So my approach was we're going to put this, we're going to table the Bill. We're going to campaign on it. We're going to debate it this coming November [2020]. And we're going to really see where the parties sit on it, because we've put forward this Bill before the Labor Party. They've alluded to putting out their own climate policy before the [State] election. Now, there's a lot of disappointment with the Labor Party because they don't have a renewable energy target, they've got an aspirational zero emissions target which has been a point of contention between us and the Labor Party.

Our approach, it's like shifting a rock. Even though we're tabling it now and it might not look like they've adopted it now, in about 10 years time, elements of our Bill will be adopted. I know because that's the way that, you know, the world is moving in a different direction. And we've got the oil and gas industry and their political allies holding on for dear life. And we've introduced a Bill that is going to, in some way, influence future climate policy. And I'm really proud of that. And that's something that is actually in the back of my mind, even if the November vote happens and it gets voted down, it gives me more determination to keep pushing the elements of that Bill that are going to help protect the community.

DW: Well, I suppose the Greens do have that experience with the [ALP] Gillard Government where you had an Act that did reduce emissions in Australia<sup>8</sup>. So there is an experience of the Greens doing ...

**CLIFFORD:** Yes, well, and every time when you can see [ABC's] Four Corners not long ago and they're all going, and you see the Labor Party, every time you get off and we talk about climate in the Parliament, the Labor Party get up and, the CPRS [Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme]<sup>9</sup>. They go, 'Oh, you would have had this.' But they do it because they know that what we achieved in coalition federally [with the ALP] introduced long lasting ... the Liberals have kicked the hell out of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and they kicked the hell out of whatever elements of that structural reform was to have been.

But ultimately, at the end of the day, they still haven't killed it off completely and it's allowed for us, we've had the most dramatic... we reduced emissions. We've shown that it works, groundbreaking in the world. And that's something to be really proud of. Like the legacy of our party is taking this stuff to the table. And it's amazing.

DW: Talking about that, what do you think is the thing that you've achieved most as an MP over the last three years, that you are most proud of achieving?

[01:29:46] **CLIFFORD:** It's probably a couple things. I still want to do ... I still want to keep doing this, I love the fact that we're fighting for what we believe in. And I love the fact that I'm, as an MP, now going into an election. There's a lot of... there's a bit of anxiety about it because you just don't know [the result]. Sometimes you rely on preferences and so forth.

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<sup>8</sup> The *Clean Energy Act 2011* was a package of legislation that established an Australian emissions trading scheme to be preceded by a three-year period of fixed carbon pricing in Australia designed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions as part of efforts to combat global warming. The package was introduced by the Gillard Labor Government in February 2011 and was repealed by the Abbott Liberal Government on 17 July 2014. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clean\\_Energy\\_Act\\_2011](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clean_Energy_Act_2011)

<sup>9</sup> The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme was a cap-and-trade emissions trading scheme for greenhouse gases proposed by Kevin Rudd's ALP Government as part of its climate change policy. It was defeated in the Senate on 30 November 2009, with the Australian Greens voting against it. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon\\_Pollution\\_Reduction\\_Scheme](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon_Pollution_Reduction_Scheme)

And I don't know what the outcome in March [2021] is going to be, but we're going to run a hell of a hard campaign. And I think that's going to be a real big thing for us as a party.

I think this election is going to be really big thing. For us to retain East Metro for a second term is going to be a hell of an achievement. But the proudest thing, I think us putting together that net zero emissions Bill and tabling it legislatively as a path ... as a lawmaker. If you want to call that a lawmaker to put forward a Bill like that, that would fundamentally change and hold industry to account in a way that they couldn't get away with. I was really proud to put that Bill forward. I think in a lot of ways it's a Bill that a lot of Labor members would love to be passing themselves, but they can't because they're held by the oil industry, that won't let go.

DW: Can I ask on that Bill did you get outside assistance from the parliamentary drafters, or was it put together just by the Greens?

**CLIFFORD:** We went to a lot of stakeholders, but it was drafted by the Parliamentary [drafters] and outside. We had our targets and then we had an idea. We'd spoken to people like the Environmental Defenders Office. We'd spoken to CCWA [Conservation Council of WA], just as more of a consultation process. And also looked worldwide about what's required to address the crisis that's unfolding. When we go into this next Summer, we just... I was in America in January and I went and I spoke to the Sunrise Movement,<sup>10</sup> and I spoke to people in the Bernie Sanders campaign<sup>11</sup> and them talking about climate change, social justice issues all in the same conversation. And they're saying that we need to do more and we need to be, because like they were looking at the fires unfolding, happening in Australia. And that's real, that's climate change.

Some of them were almost going like we need to... we share a responsibility in that and that's us as a people. And Australia plays a major role in how these events unfold globally. So for us, and I'd say that to people, I say we're in a battle of our own, politically in Australia, to make sure that climate is addressed because it affects you in California and it affects friends in England. It affects everyone. So that was really eye-opening to see how much the natural disasters in Australia had affected people in the US, psychologically.

DW: Becoming an MP, I'm just wondering how your parents felt about that?

**CLIFFORD:** Oh, ... my Mum, like obviously proud, but she probably doesn't understand politics, she gets it now. I think initially she probably thought that's a career progression. I think that's how a lot of... that's what annoys me about some MPs. I think they see it as a career progression. I saw it as an avenue to try and change things... tell people. Mum was shocked. Yes, my parents were really shocked. My youngest sister was like, 'holy shit.' She's a single parent, she's got three kids. She's got a lot of worries in her own world. But when that happened, she was like, 'oh, that's pretty crazy.' And my other sisters were like, well, that's quite amazing.

So I didn't really get time, and I probably should to sort of reflect on... that sort of impact because you're thinking about your job, what you're doing with your job. But, for my family coming from... my cousin contacted me from the UK and he lives in... my Dad's sister lives in Coventry and they were just blown away, you know, because it's the same thing.

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<sup>10</sup> An American youth-led political movement founded in April 2017 that advocates political action on climate change. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunrise\\_Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunrise_Movement)

<sup>11</sup> Bernie Sanders was a candidate for the Democratic Party in the US for the 2016 and 2020 Presidential nominee. See <https://berniesanders.com/>

It's like a class thing, especially the UK, where MPs are of a different class than everyday people.

DW: With a very, very difficult job. I'm just wondering, personally, how you are dealing [with] the fate of the world? How do you manage your own sense of balance in all of that? Do you have hobbies? Do you have things outside the Greens that keep you happy, or you go for a walk?

**CLIFFORD:** Yes, I go for walks. I catch up with my friends, I just chat to my friends a lot. I listen to records. I sort of go retro with that. I like buying vinyl records. It's my escape in a lot of ways because I can listen to music. I like listening to bands. I like to know about how things were recorded. And I've got friends who still do in the music scene that I like to talk, pick their brain about what they do with that. So I like to use that as an escape because it's an interest. I still like to read when I get the opportunity... read history books and stories. I still read about World War Two and post-World War reconstruction.

DW: And you're doing your own research as well. Interviewing people.

[01:35:17] **CLIFFORD:** Yes. Oh, yes the podcasting, that's the other thing. I haven't really officially launched it yet but I had an idea before I got in I wanted to speak to people about what motivated them to get involved into what they care about. Like more about activists. Because for myself, I wouldn't have imagined myself in 2008 being an MP in 2017.

What made someone leap? I spoke to people on the front of picket lines going in front of rallies. I said, 'What did you do?' I spoke to one person who was a prison guard. And she had been... she jumped into Extinction Rebellion. She'd never been involved in politics before at all, or activism. She says, 'Climate change is something we need to deal with. And what's going on with our political leaders?' So there's a common story.

So I started to interview people. And the great thing about modern technology is that you can just get onto Skype films. Zoom in. You can Zoom people in from other parts of the world. I've spoken to people in America and I want to put those stories out online. I think it's a really good project. And I think if I can really get to the, if I can take, say, a single parent's story in America, or the UK, or fighting for single parent rights or something, and they get to tell their story and how they got engaged in their local community group. And if someone else hears that story they might go that might allow me to get involved in, you know, why aren't I getting involved in it?

I think it might be help with breaking down some of these barriers between issues and people. And I think sharing stories is a good part of that. So I like asking questions and having conversations with people. So I'm looking forward to putting that up.

DW: And some Green members, you'll be interviewing?

**CLIFFORD:** Yes, I spoke to Margo Beilby<sup>12</sup> and she was active in the Voluntary Assisted Dying legislation<sup>13</sup>. She'd been fighting for that for years. Since her husband passed away. And so I've chatted to her about it. I'd also like sit down, and not only for the podcast or whatever, but I'd like to record some stories, maybe even sit down with Jo Vallentine and talk to her about her idea of the modern world, for example, how that compares to when she was getting active in different spaces. I find that really, the perceptions of things, these

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<sup>12</sup> See <https://greens.org.au/magazine/20-questions-margo-beilby>

<sup>13</sup> See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia\\_in\\_Australia#Western\\_Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia_in_Australia#Western_Australia)

issues don't change in a lot of ways. The enemies are still the same politically. But putting things into context, I think helps. And I think those stories will help do that.

DW: Thanks Tim. We've covered a lot of ground in the interview. Is there anything we've left out that you'd like to add and make sure was included as part of this interview, that we've overlooked maybe?

**CLIFFORD:** I don't know. I think if we've got new Greens members. If this interview was played back to them, I'm sure if I'm still around in 20 or 30 years. If it was played back to me or if it was played back to Greens members in the future, I'd like to think that the party is as transparent, is as open to the general public, is as active in different spaces as it is now, even more so than now. And that's regardless of how many people we get into Parliament. It's more about a broader movement. But I'd hope that if you're listening to this now, I hope that the values of the party is still true and we fight to retain those values and keep ourselves grounded in the community and the people. That's I think is going to be really vital for us.

**DW:** Looking into the future, we've got four members in the Upper House, two Senators. Would that number be greater do you think, in 20 years time, or about the same?

[01:39:14] **CLIFFORD:** I'd like to think it would be bigger. I look at, say Victoria, for example, we started winning lower house seats. And if you see the Labor Party's climate policies, if you have a look at them now and their energy policies, they've adopted a RET, they've adopted a net zero emissions target. They've got real meaningful climate policies. And they're not there because they just came up with them one day. They're there because we were fighting for them.

The Greens, we started winning seats. We started like putting us, politically, I think we shifted a lot of the community and the Labor parties started adopting our policies. And that's a win for us more broadly. And I think that's, hopefully in the future in WA. I hope we have multiple Lower House members and we have our policies on the agenda. And I hope it drags the Labor Party away from where they're heading now, and that's towards the Liberal Party. A lot of people are in shock that that's sort of happening.

But, I hope having us in Parliament has also helped to defeat the big money that's driving the gas industry in WA, that would be a hell of a thing. And I hope that when I'm maybe 60 years old, in the future I hope we are celebrating the demise of the oil and gas industry and a transition into a cleaner future, the things we're fighting for now. I hope that's the reality that we have and we've averted a climate crisis. That's what I hope.

DW: I hope that as well. Thanks very much for your time this afternoon.

[01:40:49] **CLIFFORD:** No worries. Thanks David.

## **END OF TRANSCRIPT**

Link to Tim Clifford's WA Parliament Biography page-  
[https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Parliament/Memblast.nsf/WAllMembersFlat/Clifford,%20Timothy%20\(Tim\)%20James?opendocument](https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Parliament/Memblast.nsf/WAllMembersFlat/Clifford,%20Timothy%20(Tim)%20James?opendocument)