



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

An interview with:

**Mr PAUL LLEWELLYN**



**16<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at his home in Denmark (via Zoom)**

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.

© The Greens (WA) 2021

**INTERVIEWER**

Anne Yardley, Oral Historian, Greens (WA) History Project Working Group.

**TRANSCRIBER**

Giz Watson, Founding member and former Greens MLC, Greens (WA) History Project Working Group.

**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**

This is a near verbatim interview, meaning that the transcript follows natural speech patterns. Readers should be aware that how we speak may differ greatly from how we would write and that the evolution of everyday language and speech patterns also provides valuable insight into the culture and history of a place.

**INTERVIEWEE RIGHTS AND RESEARCHER ACCESS**

The Interviewee has granted The Greens (WA) non-exclusive copyright to use, record, copy, edit, exhibit, distribute and make accessible, this transcript, in whole or in part, in any form or media.

To publish, display or use any part of this interview for commercial purposes, please contact The Greens (WA) at [office@wa.greens.org.au](mailto:office@wa.greens.org.au).

## INTRODUCTION

Mr Paul Llewellyn was born in South Africa and moved to Perth during his high school years. He had run for State and Federal lower house seats 5 times before being elected to the Upper House of the WA Parliament for the South West region in 2005. His first election campaign was as a candidate for the seat of Melville for the WA Greens Party during the 1989 State election. Paul was a co-founder of the WA Greens Party, one of four organisations that merged to form the Greens (WA) in January 1990,

As a long-term resident in the South West, Paul has had an extensive interest in planning and environmental issues. He worked as a National Park planner and forest conservation consultant. He participated in the campaign to stop the construction of Alcoa's proposed aluminium refinery at Wagerup in 1979. He was a founding member of the WA Forest Alliance, and he also campaigned for large-scale renewable energy projects such as the Albany wind farm. Before entering the WA Parliament he was a director of the wind energy company Skyfarming Pty Ltd.

During his four years in Parliament, Paul introduced two Bills- the *Electricity Industry (Western Australian Renewable Energy Targets) Amendment Bill 2005* requiring companies selling electricity into the South West interconnected grid to acquire 20% of their electricity from renewable energy sources by 2020. Paul contends that his Bill used in WA and other states transformed the energy landscape of Australia. A gross feed-in tariff for renewable energy technologies was passed unanimously through WA's Upper House in 2009.

Paul second major Bill was the *Water Services Licensing (Water Conservation Target) Amendment Bill 2007* which required companies operating licences for water supply services to meet specified water conservation targets.

Paul was not re-elected at the 2008 election. He subsequently became a founding director of the green energy companies Mt Barker Power Company and Denmark Community Windfarm Limited. He also co-founded and project managed the construction of the Deco Housing Ecovillage in Denmark.

## TRANSCRIPT SUMMARY

Time	Topic	Page Number
0 mins	Start of Interview	5
5 mins	Growing up under apartheid in South Africa	6
10 mins	Family impact of apartheid	7
15 mins	Studying at Murdoch University	9
20 mins	Modern politics driven by urgency	11
25 mins	Need for transformative work	12
30 mins	Work before running as a Greens candidate	13
35 mins	Negotiations to form the Greens (WA)	15

40 mins	Results of the 1989 State election	16
45 mins	Future should be both sustainable and renewable	18
50 mins	First Greens (WA) Senate ticket	19
55 mins	Stood in all elections	21
60 mins	Greens respected for their forest campaigns	22
1 hour 5 mins	Personal Parliamentary framework	24
1 hour 10 mins	RET was most important personal achievement	25
1 hour 15 mins	Greens run a bit more by despair rather than empowerment	27
1 hour 20 mins	Need for personal development	28
1 hour 25 mins	Proposal to transform McMansions to apartments	29
1 hour 30 mins	Original Greens principles	31
1 hour 35 mins	Need to not have a deep suspicion of markets	32
1 hour 39 mins	Conclusion of Interview	33

## TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:01] AY: This is an interview with Paul Llewellyn, an environmental planner, management consultant and wind energy planner. Paul was the WA Greens MLC between 2005 and 2009 representing the South West [region]. Today is Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2020 and Paul is speaking to me from his home in Denmark [via Zoom]. And I'm Anne Yardley. Can we start right at the beginning Paul with where and when you were born?

**LLEWELLYN:** I was born in South Africa, in fact, born in Johannesburg [on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1957] but brought up in Durban, a coastal town in South Africa. In a place [suburb] called "Windsor Park", in fact, which says a lot of things, doesn't it?

AY: Who were your parents? What did they do?

**LLEWELLYN:** My sweetheart, my Mum! My Mum is Dulcie Elizabeth Hemmler Obery, nee Llewellyn. She is a woman of colour from South Africa<sup>1</sup>. Who quite accidentally found herself caught in the race wars of South Africa and apartheid in the early '50's, and she was a creative and inventive woman. She was very creative with her hands and she was a survivor. She found a way through that really torrid and racist environment and structural injustice with an amount of flair, resolve and stealth.

My father, Gerald Vincent Llewellyn, who was a child who developed infantile paralysis [polio] and was educated by nurses in I think what must have been an aged care home. But he was very well educated because he was read to as a child, and he could retell stories [he had heard in great detail]. And he was a bureaucrat. He worked in the public service, in the railways, and he became a very accomplished senior bureaucrat in South Africa.

But being of white origin, he and my mother were not allowed to get married in South Africa because of institutional racism and apartheid laws. And so though they were in love, they could not find a way to join themselves because my mother was colored, my father was white, it was illegal and they used every trick in the book to eventually become married. So the context for them was that they lived in a world of injustice. My father was aware being well educated, well read and an observant public servant. My mum was a survivor. She became an accountant or if you like, a bookkeeper for companies and she was self-educated.

---

<sup>1</sup> People of 'colour' in South Africa were a multiracial ethnic group native to Southern Africa who have ancestry from more than one of the various populations inhabiting the region, including Khoisan, Bantu, Whites, Austronesian, East Asian or South Asian. 'Coloured' was a legally defined racial classification during the apartheid era. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coloureds>

AY: What were the circumstances that brought you to Australia?

**LLEWELLYN:** Racism ... so this is just a quick vignette ... I was brought up as a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant in South Africa. I believed for my entire early life and teenage years that I was a [white], Anglo-Saxon, Protestant. [For our own protection], my parents made up great cover stories [to hide our true racial heritage]. And by the time I was about to come to Australia, when I was ready for going into the [South African] Army, because everybody had to, it was quite clear that my parents couldn't sustain the lie. And so we as a family emigrated to Australia in dribs and drabs under cover, and started a new life in the early '70s in Fremantle, effectively because I had an aunty [father's sister] living there.

And so I finished my last two years at John Curtin High School, in fact, with Dee Margetts [Greens (WA) Senator and MLC] who was at the same school, and so I've known her for a long time as well. Not very well, but ...

AY: The environment that you grew up in your family, was politics talked about, were environmental issues talked about? Was this something that you grew up with?

[00:04:56] **LLEWELLYN:** I think politics couldn't be talked about. It was South Africa, it was a police state. It was scary. It was better to keep us [children] all rather ignorant. The environment was in many ways a luxury item. You know, if you if you're oppressed and you're afraid of your basic fundamental human rights, then environment is a luxury item in that case, and that's what the African National Congress movement said.

I was barely aware of apartheid. I didn't have another language. I came to Australia and I remember someone saying to me, 'Why don't you give black people the vote in South Africa?' You know what my answer was? 'Well, they don't know how to vote', and that's how ignorant I was about politics and that's how complete the indoctrination and the discourse was around racism. And my father, whom I think I said, gave us a really strong sense [of self and] that there was nothing wrong with us, because in the schoolyard and at the schools, there was this undercurrent of racism, I went to were all-white schools.

Windsor Park Primary [School] was like a nice West Perth-type suburb [school] in Durban. I was an abject failure at school and I suspect that it was partly due to racism. I was put in the back of the class [because I was a colored child]. I shouldn't have been there. When I look at the pictures of myself in that class, I was an unhappy boy right at the back of the class.

AY: So in those early years, what were the major influences on you growing up, do you believe, that maybe shaped the person that you are now?

**LLEWELLYN:** Well, funnily enough, my parents took refuge in the Methodist Church, because that was the one safe place they could go to [in South Africa]. Of course, as you know, the church environment provided a strong moral and religious foundation to their lives, actually gave one some foundation in ethical thinking. And so that was an influence in my life. I wasn't, in a sense, religious. I just was in the stream of religiosity, and that was a big influence.

I saw outside of the window in my house in Durban ... people on the street, attacked by police and shot and murdered in front of our eyes.

My parents tried to keep us from looking out the windows at this stuff, but we saw what was happening, but it had no kind of clear context. But there was a real stream of injustice in there. I was sitting on a bus with my Father once and the conductor came back and said, 'Excuse me, you need to go either get off this bus or sit at the back of the bus'. It was after a holiday, I think we'd gone to the seaside and I was darker than normal!

My father would take us to see symphony orchestras. He educated us.

AY: Was your Mother accompanying you to these things? You're presumably much darker skinned Mother. What was it like when you were out with her?

[00:09:06] **LLEWELLYN:** All undercover.<sup>2</sup> Look here's a quick story: my Mother had twin brothers, Paul, whom I was named after and John, well George actually, and Paul was classified white and George was classified coloured [under the apartheid system]. I had no sense in South Africa that I had any family. We were in isolation. It was a story that was told. Anyway, these two brothers are identical twins, they died at the same time and eventually had to reconcile at the end of their lives, and Paul, who is white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant and extremely wealthy [businessman], while George lived in Cape Town in the slums as a concrete slum worker. They had agreed to never to see each other.

When George died, Paul was compelled to go to his twin brother's funeral. None [of Georges children] knew that their Dad had a twin brother, excepting some of the adults, none of the children. Paul walked into the funeral and people [were shocked and] were fainting in the aisles thinking that their Dad had just come back to life - and this was [the effect of apartheid]! This is an astonishing, astonishing story of racism that actually was in the background of my life, only told to me and corroborated years later.

When I was 18 years-old, a good friend of mine said to me, 'Paul, your Mum asked me to tell you something', this was in Fremantle, 'You know how you've always thought you

---

<sup>2</sup> Paul added to the transcript, "Living in South Africa was terrifying for my mother. Racism ripped peoples lives apart."

were white? Well, you're not. You're actually coloured [and your mum was too ashamed to tell you]'. I went home and looked in the mirror and for the first time my life [experience] made sense. And I was 18 years old. And I think that injustice and that sensibility must have had a deep effect on me, but I feel intact now.

AY: Do you think it may have informed your social activism, your activist kind of sensibilities?

**LLEWELLYN:** I rejected Christianity as soon as I possibly could, I rejected all structured religion as soon as I possibly could. My activism was really sparked through, I think, my tertiary education at Murdoch University. At that time in the '70s, [ALP Prime Minister] Gough Whitlam had unleashed a massive transformation in tertiary education, which was free to all. I was probably selected because of the migrant disadvantage or something<sup>3</sup>.

But that [Murdoch] gave me free thinking. And I think that education was responsible for my radicalism. My sense of justice [fused] with a very strong ethical foundation in my family about what was [morally] correct, not religiously correct, because they weren't religious in that sense, they were in the church because that provided a refuge for them. It was the place where we they could be together in South Africa without [fear and] questions being asked.

And when they [Mum and Dad] came to Australia, they could hold hands and walk down the street [for the first time without fear]. My father went from being the head of a whole government department in South Africa to working on the docks in North Fremantle, moving steel in the cold winter. He had never done anything like this with his hands before. But [in Australia] he could walk down the street with his wife and they could go dancing and it was a great liberation for both of them. I saw their liberation, and that spoke to me that freedom and liberation must be an important thing.

They had managed to conceal their marriage, an inconvenient marriage, and they had gone to such lengths to conceal it so that we could actually not 'out' ourselves because I think I would have if I had known. I think that the foundation of my radicalism, was a good education, an open education and a clear moral foundation.

AY: And that radicalism took the form, I'm thinking here of the environment. Now, where did that interest come from? Why did you choose to go to Murdoch in 1977 and study biology? What was behind that?

[00:14:16] **LLEWELLYN:** For me, it was simply that I had excelled in biology through the school system and I fell into it. I was observant. I was really interested in nature. I

---

<sup>3</sup> Paul added, 'I certainly did not expect to get into university.'

spent my time, tunnelling in the undergrowth, when I was a kid, because that was an escape. But it wasn't enculturated. In other words, I know some small children that are very cultured and educated, young children that are educated and they're observant and they understand the science. I was just curious and interested.

[Murdoch University encouraged interdisciplinary study.] In addition to biology I did courses as much as I could, in other schools. I did social inquiry, philosophy, comparative religion. I did whatever it took to expand my world view. But I love bioscience because it made sense to me.

Another really transformative thing happened to me when I was just arrived in Australia. A fabulous man [and family friend], Peter [Chandler, also a Greens (WA) member], used to take me bushwalking. I think it was his way of taking me under his wing, he wasn't that much older than me. We'd go bushwalking with the Western Walking Club in the forests outside of Perth.

That [bushwalking] gave me relief and it gave me some insight and a love for the forest<sup>4</sup>. I remember on one occasion we walked straight out of the forest into a massive destructive dam site. And sometimes we walked into bauxite mining pits in the early '70s and I went 'this is astonishing', [the destructiveness] hit me in the guts, that this could happen, that you could walk through this nature and appreciate it and then see this astonishing destruction. And [the effect was lasting] it was more subliminal than it was explicit, I just had this gut reaction to that.

Once I was finished at Murdoch, I rode my bicycle on an amazing adventure cycling from Perth to Darwin in 1978 with a Danish friend. We landed in Kakadu at the time when they were doing the investigations for the Ranger [uranium] mine, and I found [there] people who are [experienced environmental] activists and I felt a natural affinity with them. I landed in groups of people [activists] who were doing protests. East Timor, the bombing of East Timor [and visiting American nuclear warships]. It seemed natural to me, that this was unjust [and that these were issues that needed to be addressed].

And so coming back south [to Perth] I landed in the forest movement because that's what I knew. Someone asked me to come [to a meeting], it was as simple as that. But the thing that actually transformed and radicalized me, was at that very moment we also found nonviolent direct-action, nonviolence as a framework, as an intellectual framework for social change<sup>5</sup>. We essentially 'painted by numbers' to work out how to organise a nonviolent direct-action [campaign]. We stood on the shoulders of the people

---

<sup>4</sup> Paul added, 'I also learned to orienteer and to read the land.'

<sup>5</sup> Paul added, 'We found the 'Monster Manual' *Strategy for a Living Revolution* written by Quakers in the USA.' See *Resource Manual for a Living Revolution* <https://www.connexions.org/CxLibrary/CX3557.htm>

in the civil rights movement, Gandhi in South Africa, what was happening there. What we knew at that time about what nonviolent intervention was, and we basically pioneered how to do it [nonviolent direct-action] for Australia and Western Australia.

AY: Who's the 'we'?

**LLEWELLYN:** Well, it was a small group of [very young] people. The 'we' were other social activists [mostly involved in the Campaign to Save Native Forests, and the anti-nuclear movement]. There was one young man, I think, Ray Polglase, who was at Murdoch University and came from a sort of a socialist/Labor background and I think he was the one that actually brought, or encouraged us to get a woman [Laurie Cane] from America, to come over [to Perth] and train us in nonviolent direct-action. That was a seminal moment<sup>6</sup>.

And I might tell you, I was on a boat going up the Franklin [River in Tasmania in 1982] and I was standing next to this chap right in the bow at the front of the boat, as you do, and he was talking to me and I asked, 'What brought you here?' And he said, 'Well, I saw this film called the *Wagerup Weekend*<sup>7</sup>, about the Wagerup Occupation weekend' [in 1979]<sup>8</sup>. And I said, 'I was there'. And he said, 'Yeah, well that [film] is what inspired us to do the Franklin campaign'. ... because we made a film about it. That was Bob Brown [former Senator and parliamentary leader of the Australian Greens]. I only found out later that it was Bob Brown that I was talking to and I thought, yeah, great. The circle is complete.

A lot of the people that were in the Wagerup Occupation were there training the other people at the Franklin. I think that the work that we did in these early days in nonviolence training really provided a whole framework for social change. It was a method of meeting procedure, group process [and facilitation]. It was a philosophy of non-harm and non-retaliation, and it was about growth and development. Personal growth and development. That foundation informed my activism, and I'm still a co-counsellor today. I just finished a men's group and I still always use those first principles of nonviolent direct-action and group process.

---

<sup>6</sup> Paul added, 'Nonviolent direction-action training and the organising of the occupation of ALCOA's bauxite refinery at Wagerup was a transformative experience for all of the people involved. Many, like Giz Watson (Greens (WA) MLC), Bill Hare from Climate Analytics and I went on to be lifelong activists.

<sup>7</sup> A 1981 documentary film, see <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1778376/>

<sup>8</sup> On 3 February 1979, 16 members of the Campaign to Save Native Forests (CSNF) climbed into the site of Alcoa's proposed aluminium refinery at Wagerup. This was the first occupation of a site in Australia utilising the tactics of nonviolent civil disobedience. Prior to the occupation, a rally of about 300 supporters was addressed by Alan Tingay, CSNF President, John Dawkins, ALP MHR for Fremantle, and Jack Evans, State President of the Australian Democrats. See <https://www.foresthistory.org.au/Proceedings2004/125.pdf>

AY: Now, have you not made the comment that you think the Greens have moved away from that a little bit?

[00:20:20] **LLEWELLYN:** I think that the Greens ... I have a view about politics that we are driven by urgency, that the sky is falling in, and that there are genuinely vast problems and we become very attached to dealing with those problems<sup>9</sup>. We haven't moved away from nonviolence as a first principle, what we've moved away from is the tools and machinery for implementing and developing organizations and people who participate. We need to make an effort ... an intellectual investigation into what does nonviolence mean, what does good group process mean? How do we facilitate and develop the level of skills among all of us so that we can operate effectively? We tend to get hijacked by the urgencies and by the issues, [and fall into reaction rather than pro-action].

And we're saying the process is so important, the process that we use to actually arrive at our decisions, the meeting procedures and the process, they're not just casual, they are extremely well proven, very effective methodologies. I think ... we're not doing the intellectual investigation into the nature of social change, and we're not bringing that into the very fibre of our lives and organisations to actually make the changes. I think that because many of us think, well, we can't be bothered with all that [time consuming training], we've got to get on with the revolution. I say, 'No, we actually need to have the tools and self-reflection to be able to do that well'. So I feel like in some ways I failed the movement by not insisting [on organizational training and development]. I have also felt hijacked by urgency and then compromised those first principles [of building skills and community through] ongoing training.

In my small Parliamentary team, we did a lot of development of the group. We formed a team, we did self-reflection, we empowered ourselves and skilled ourselves to work as a collective and that was why I think we were really successful<sup>10</sup>. Often a lot of that training and development and process just gets put aside for the greater good of the cause. And I think it's wrong. You cannot be insightful [and effective] activists, [particularly for the long-term], if we don't develop enough tools and skills.

AY: But is it genuinely difficult to devote the time to this sort of thing that you're talking about?

**LLEWELLYN:** Well, it's a bit like brushing your teeth. You know, it is easy to spend time brushing your teeth. I think you should and you know, what would your mum say if

---

<sup>9</sup> Paul added, 'The urgency for action can take us away from investing time in good processes and training.'

<sup>10</sup> Paul added, 'For example, in getting the *Electricity Industry (Western Australian Renewable Energy Targets) Amendment Bill 2005* passed in the Legislative Council.'

you said, 'Well, I can't brush my teeth, I've got all these other important things to do.' No, no, no- we need to brush our teeth. We need to get good technique. We need to hone their skills. And, then of course should we eat properly? Yes, of course we should eat properly. We can't, we can't not do that. And then should we not cook? Well, yes, of course we should cook and eat well. It's like, don't compromise these things because we'll hollow out our lives in the name of promoting one cause or another.

AY: Expediency perhaps?

[00:24:41] **LLEWELLYN:** Yes it is an expediency. I remember a saying [from the 1970s], 'If you've got a clean house, you're neglecting the revolution'. I remember that one. No, if you've got a clean house, an orderly house, it's a good thing. So I don't know. For me, I would like to see a revival and re-evaluation of [nonviolence training] methodologies and so on. Of course, it's not absolutely necessary, but It would be [for the movement].

And I was doing all sort of personal growth things before going into Parliament. In my view politicians look so immature and damaged because the people who are in politics, who put themselves in that role, have not done sufficient personal work. And [politics in Australia] looks like a bunch of adults working out childhood issues in public. It does not look good. And, I mean, I don't know if this is arrogant, but to be in the public sphere, I felt compelled to actually clean up some of my shit.

[At one point in my life] I had a choice about two big projects. One was to actually do some transformative work in the Greens by reintroducing transformative thinking [growth and change]. The second was build a wind farm in Denmark. Both were hard projects. [I was Co-convenor of the Party], but I chose the easy project, I built the wind farm [in Denmark (WA), and it took over 10 years to realise]. I have some regrets about that, but you know, there are other good people [in the Party] who can do this stuff too.

AY: Let's go back to the early, early Greens because you were a co-founder really and it's a muddled beginning for people who don't know a great deal about it. So how did it evolve from the WA Green Party to Greens (WA)? Who were those early people?

**LLEWELLYN:** OK, so it's interesting because, just to put this in context. I had finished my work with the Australian Heritage Commission [on the Old Growth Forest Survey for Western Australia]. I was looking for other projects to do and I had gone back into a kind of life of real activism because there was a lot of work to do. There was mining in National Parks. The Labor Party were trying to [allow mineral sand exploration] in the D'Entrecasteaux National Park, and I'd been their planner for the D'Entrecasteaux National Park. I said it doesn't matter which government we seem to have here, whether we're negotiating with a Liberal Environment Minister or Resources Minister or a Labor

Resources Minister, we have exactly the same issues [and arguments], we have to out them<sup>11</sup>.

And we ran quite a number of different projects, one of which was Project Sand Castle, which was a nonviolent direct action in the D'Entrecasteaux. It was fantastic grassroots campaign and that's how I ended up running against the Minister for Environment, Barry Hodge. By that time there was a quite a large activist culture in Western Australia, people were doing all sorts of different things<sup>12</sup>. I think people like Laurie Capill, who was the first convener of the WA Greens Party, and Nadine Lapthorne, who lives down the road here in Denmark, was an activist in her own right but she is very low key, met [and discussed the formation of a green party in WA].

The other people who were in the room - this pirate sailor - Paul Lewis who was a little bit of a rebel, but he worked at the mathematics of how ... and he said, 'Look, we should register a political party called the Greens and we should run [in the forthcoming 1989 State election] in every seat in State Parliament, in other words, we should actually give every Western Australian the opportunity to vote Green one'. That was the only objective.

And it's possible that we could win a seat in one of the Upper House [seats] because there had [been recent changes] to become closer to 'one vote, one value' - in other words there is multimember electorates and we could say, 'Oh well, we only have to get 8% or 12% of the vote or 16%', whatever the number was, it was actually 16%, 'and we could jag this'. So we were well aware of the statistics and we were an educated mob!

AY: This is the Upper House you're talking about here?

[00:29:23] **LLEWELLYN:** This is in the Upper House<sup>13</sup>. I ran in the Lower House because I was a credible candidate. I had come out of the public service. I was something of a cleanskin, even though I was bad! You know, I had been a long term activist and I understood how government worked because I had worked in it. And I was determined to depose our Minister for Environment [Barry Hodge, and I lived in his electorate of Melville]. But otherwise, we ran Upper House candidates throughout Western Australia in that 1989 election.

---

<sup>11</sup> Paul added, 'And we needed to be in office in the Parliament!'

<sup>12</sup> Paul added, 'Including peace and disarmament, environmental, social justice campaigns. We had just seen the emergence of The German Green party and Petra Kelly came to Australia at the invitation of Jo Vallentine.'

<sup>13</sup> Paul added, 'The winnable seats were in the Upper House but our electoral strategy was to run in every Lower House seat we could to support the Upper House campaign. The Greens (WA) uses the same strategy to this day. We also wanted to run a few high profile candidates.'

As I said, the [WA Green Party] meetings were full of energy. Laurie found me and Pam and Groundswell - that's my partner Pam [Rumble] who was in Groundswell- and we were a collective of people providing nonviolence training for all sorts of activists and groups from animal liberation to anti-racist campaigners, to anything you liked, and we were training them in nonviolence training, primarily direct-action but what that meant was meeting procedure, group facilitation, organizational development, vision to project and then all of the nuances of direct-action campaigns.

So. Just imagine that in the late '70s, the late '80's, we've got this culture and it's ripe, it's ripe for change. There was the Swan Brewery site, with people wanting to develop on a sacred site<sup>14</sup> - well we trained people there and Laurie found me and a few of us from Groundswell, including Cheryl Lange, who wrote a history of the Greens [(WA)], and co-opted us into this or encouraged us into the [WA] Greens Party. And it seemed to me that it was such a clear moment that we effectively dissolved Groundswell into the WA Greens to say, 'Look, this has to be the methodology we use and we basically ... Pam and I and Cheryl Lange facilitated the Greens' meetings and because we were accomplished organizers and facilitators we had it rocking! We were empowering people. We were experienced at organizing and we had the place on fire and it was ready for that.

AY: There were different groups within that, though. So can you just talk me through it, wasn't it? Not everyone was 'green' oriented as such, which is what you've just said. So why logically was it the Greens?

**LLEWELLYN:** From our point of view [we were clear that a State-based Green Party was needed]. I was only vaguely aware of the Alternative Coalition and what Christabel Chamarette was doing, but I did know what Louise Duxbury and Chrissy Sharp [Greens (WA) MLC for the South West region 2001-05] were doing in the South West [Green Development campaign] because Louise and Chrissy are both close friends of mine. In fact, Louise lives just down the road and Chrissy is a longstanding friend, and I knew what they were up to.

So, the reason why it became the Greens was because we understood the political significance of the name the Greens, the brand. We know today, if I travel the world, I can say, 'Who are you? What are you doing?' 'I'm a Green!' Anywhere in the world, anywhere on the planet. It's brand recognition. You know, you can say Coca-Cola and there'd be brand recognition. I would say the Greens, or Ecology Party, people go, 'Yeah, I know who you are'. So there is international brand recognition.

---

<sup>14</sup> In 1989 Noongar activists set up a protest camp at Gooninup, the site of the derelict Old Swan Brewery on Perth's foreshore. This marked the beginning of a four-year long struggle to secure recognition of an Aboriginal sacred site. See <https://commonslibrary.org/the-battle-for-aboriginal-heritage-on-perths-foreshore-30-years-on/>

Well, we understood from the very beginning that the German Greens and our activism had created brand recognition and that it was important for us to capture that brand by registering the name. That was what caused the angst [when it came to merging the political groups in WA], because by an accident of history or just because of our insight, we owned the name 'the Greens'. The WA Green Party and no one else could use it. So there was Christabel Charmarette, there was a Rainbow Alliance group. There were a lot of groups around the place who were attempting to have some sort of intervention in that [1989] State election. But we had the brand, we had the name and it worked.

It worked because we said this is not just someone running in the [Upper House] South West Region on the Green Development [platform], which is what Louise did. And I know that Chrissy Sharp helped underwrite that platform. It wasn't just the Alternative Coalition running on a kind of broad platform they were running [in the South Metropolitan Region]. No, we're going to give every single citizen in Western Australia the opportunity to vote Greens one. It's simple. And I went on to be the Co-convenor of the Greens [(WA) and the South West Greens] for many, many years. And I insisted on, personally insisted, that we must keep the message simple, simply 'vote Green one'. You can add anything you like to it, but the brand recognition is what we're building and I think we were successful in that.

And that's why it became so ... not tortured ... it was so divisive in some ways that we own the name and other people wanted to use it, but we wanted it to be transmitted in a fairly clear way. We didn't want it to be diluted into Green Alliances or the Rainbow Alliance or the Green Left Alliance or the Black and Green Alliance, because the brand was powerful and I think it's politically astute.

AY: How difficult was it to bring these disparate groups together then under that umbrella of the Greens? Because you've got some people, deeply committed people, to their own causes, and you're trying to bring them together.

[00:35:46] **LLEWELLYN:** We just happened to be the one that owned the name. Other groups were more interested in bringing everything together. And when I say 'we', I think I ended up being an honest broker [representing the WA Greens Party in the negotiations]. I was a radical greenie, but, you know, I wasn't completely rabid in my negotiating. We had the tools of [nonviolence and] negotiation. I mean, I've written papers on principled negotiation, that was my profession. It was about negotiating. And we negotiated and trained hundreds of people in nonviolent direct-action, [principled negotiation] and organizational development.

So it was right that, in some ways, [my partner] Pam and I ended up in a role which was to help the negotiation process and to bring people together and to really overcome the despair that people were feeling, the disempowerment that people were feeling around,

well, you [WA Green Party] have the name and we want to use it and you're controlling it. The truth is that ... I think Christabel said it beautifully ... 'You have to give up something to get something'.

They had to give up the Alternative Coalition, they had to give up the Rainbow Alliances, they had to give up the Vallentine Peace Group, they had to give up certain things [they'd worked for] in order to get something. And that was was the name 'The Greens'. And it just became difficult and we had to negotiate that, through all sorts of disparaging accusations. The [WA] Greens Party ran a small deficit in that [1989] campaign because we weren't counting the money. We were running this kind of exciting, creative campaign and we ran over-budget, like spending a bit of money on a banner painting. And it became like, 'Oh, you've brought a debt into the movement'.

Well no, we actually brought a massive asset into the movement, and then argy bargy. But I don't want to focus on that because, actually, I think that everybody knew that the time was right for the emergence of 'The Greens' or 'The Green Party'. Doesn't matter what you want to call it. It was so clear back in the early '90s, late '80s, that time had come. And whether they liked it or not, they had to negotiate with a bunch of reprobates like, you know, Laurie and Paul and Nadine.

Not this Paul, the other Paul [Lewis], the one that caused all the trouble ... the pirate ... [chuckles] pirate Paul! I mean, I'll say it, he was a bit of a drunken larrikin but he was smart and I think people didn't give him the credit for kind of coming up with the idea that that's what we should do [to register the Green Party and run in every seat]. And then he just disappeared. Just disappeared. He wasn't involved - as soon as all the negotiations and the difficult stuff started, he went back on his boat and probably went to Africa. For all I know he was a pirate who was probably running drugs or something. I don't know what he was doing, [laughs] but he came to Australia, was educated here, I think he was a PhD in mathematics. He understood how the election was going to happen. You know, that's how it worked, it was mathematically possible for us to win. Let's go for it.

AY: So what was the result of that 1989 election?

**LLEWELLYN:** I can't remember what the numbers were, I think<sup>15</sup>...

AY: In terms of expectations. Were you pleased with the outcome?

[00:39:31] **LLEWELLYN:** Well, probably, yes, we were all quite pleased. Some of us came perilously close. I think Louise [Duxbury] came reasonably close to getting in.

---

<sup>15</sup> The WA Green Party obtained 0.5% of the total vote in the Lower House and 5.2% in the Upper House. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1989\\_Western\\_Australian\\_state\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1989_Western_Australian_state_election)

Christabel ran a reasonably close election [in the Upper House South Metropolitan region], but the preferences and the names weren't ... personally I don't think we were ready for it [laughs] but we could have jugged it. I ran against the Minister for Environment very hard and he lost his seat on Greens' preferences. And it split because I ran on an open ticket and we understood the maths. We understood we're going to say to people, 'You vote Green first and then you can vote for whoever you like, after that'. Our preferences went 60% to Labor, 40% to the Liberals. And that was a pattern that was consistent for many, many years. I don't know if it's still consistent, but it was pretty consistent.

What that said to us, statistically, is that if people are just one-step away from being a green and because we understood that people weren't voting Green because they thought we had no chance of winning, but we were so close to it, if we could have convinced people that, yeah, your vote is powerful, and your vote counts twice. That's been one of the most difficult messages to communicate, because it's in the interests of all of the major old parties to muddle the view. It's a bit like the tobacco industry saying there's a shadow of doubt if you do it [smoke]. So we haven't cracked that one, we actually haven't cracked the one that says, 'Oh, I can't vote Green because you're not going to get in', and quite frankly, yeah, don't know ... it's tricky.

AY: Is there a message that would work, that would make that work, for the voting public, do you believe, a way of convincing people that it's not a wasted vote, which is what you often hear?

**LLEWELLYN:** It's not in the electoral system because we change the electoral system regularly and confuse the matters. We changed local government arrangements twice from one vote-one value, back to first past the post. So various governments that end up in power keep it. And no one's really that interested. OK, I don't think that people are that interested in [electoral systems]. I think what needs to happen is the narrative of the Greens. We have created a new narrative which is basically that 'the future is green'. We've only vaguely articulated that. I mean, in my life, I'm putting my hand on my heart here now, my life. It's been about saying, 'What does that green future look like?'

In my maiden speech, which I spoke from the future, and said, I'm not talking to this Parliament I'm talking to the Parliament from 50 years time and I want to tell you how we arrived at this future, the green future and it was a series of steps. So that's how I've run my life. This is the same thing about being caught up in the urgency. Here we are caught up in the urgency of issues, is it Black Lives Matter, is it nuclear energy or is it biodiversity collapse? All these things are profound, [but while we're] caught up in the urgency, we are not creating a powerful narrative of a sustainable future.

To be honest, I think that narrative is just so embryonic, it's so there, we're so close to it. And now the Internet is kind of this echo chambers of divisiveness- it has made it harder, not easier for us to communicate. And so we need powerful models. I've devoted my life to actually saying, 'Try this, try community energy'. Well, of course, I've been highly successful at bringing renewable energy on. I'm going no, no, no renewable energy. It can also collapse the global ecosystems. It is actually not a panacea. It is actually only a tool.

If abused, renewable technologies will also destroy ecosystems because ecosystems don't recognize the difference between a solar-powered bulldozer and a diesel one. They don't see that and the other thing is that when we liberate all this [cheap renewable] energy we turbocharge the economy to produce more materials like this computer and this lamp here, and this chair there [all of which require the earth's resources] and ecosystems don't recognize the difference about what's charging it.

So when the Club of Rome did their future cast<sup>16</sup>, it was the high-energy pathway leading to the collapse of global ecosystems, and we [the Greens] thought, oh, that means fossil fuels or that means nuclear. Actually, it means any high-energy pathway, including renewables. And so I'm of the view that the narrative that we have to put forward is that we can have a good life, that we can have a high-quality human existence with radical simplicity, and end with a lighter footprint and that it is good for us.

However, my life is so complicated, my power system that is running this life here is blackbox technology that if it broke I wouldn't know how to fix it and we've become separated from technology that is giving us the life and connection. So it is a double-edged sword, the future is a double-edged sword. I want it to be sustainable. I want it to be renewable. But I want people to know that it's not just clean energy that's going to just save the world - it's not.

AY: How difficult a message is that to get across?

[00:46:22] **LLEWELLYN:** Well, listen, there's a new narrative the future is green and that it means that we all take quality over quantity and that we can all have good lives, everybody can have a good life and that on this planet the wealth needs to be shared. It's clear now in this COVID climate that the Government's run out of fingers plugging the holes, we need a guaranteed minimum income, a [universal] basic income for every citizen, and that needs to be almost a global platform that will become irrelevant through artificial intelligence. We need a new thinking around that.

---

<sup>16</sup> *The Limits to Growth* is a 1972 report on the impact of exponential economic and population growth on the Earth's finite supply of resources. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Limits\\_to\\_Growth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Limits_to_Growth)

India understands it, that's a high-tech nation, China understands it, that's a high-tech nation, South Korea- they are all high-tech nations. We're the ones that are backwards, we're just driving bulldozers. I think that we need a creative narrative that says 'it's possible that we can repair the planet'. That the planet is deeply in need of repair and that we can actually repair the planet and that, in fact, the way we do that is by unleashing human potential, by actually not making people have to work for labour, solely the labour force into a market ,but actually sustained - give people resources to sustain their lives so that they can do the stuff that really counts in the world. A guaranteed minimum income, for example, would be fabulous.

AY: That's probably some way off? So in the meantime, can we go back to ...

**LLEWELLYN:** What? We're actually so close to that. That is the only, in my view, the only rational response to this COVID economic collapse. My background is in economics and environmental science. The only rational response is to actually unleash the wealth of the Commonwealth of Australia, the commonwealth of all nations, and share it equally and give everyone access to sustenance so that they can continue the important work of restoring - keeping their families, feeding their families, keeping their homes, well, and restoring the ecosystems around them that sustain their life. I can't see another pathway. I cannot see another pathway out of here. And it's possible and we're so close to it, but we keep missing it.

AY: Let's go back to those early days of the Greens. You've got through the 1989 election, where were you going next? What was the plan for the next election? Because you did also stand for the Senate. You ran for the Senate, I think, and processes took you through to deciding to be a candidate for the South West [region]? You'd moved to the South West?

[00:49:36] **LLEWELLYN:** It was something that happened before this, actually, I'll tell you what it was. Jo Vallentine was first on the [1990 Greens (WA) Senate] ticket and she had intended to stand down [to make way for a new Greens representative]. I was [originally] second on the ticket, from the WA Greens Party. So when Jo Vallentine stood down, it wasn't going to be Christabel Charmarette it was going to be me [to replace her], as a matter of fact, and in order to bring the group together, I said, 'OK, we'll dissolve that arrangement and and we will re-run the preselection process' and Christabel was now in there [as second]<sup>17</sup>.

---

<sup>17</sup> Paul added, 'This was in mid-1989 during the amalgamation negotiations between the various green groups but at the end of 1989 it really required that we dissolve that arrangement and that we use a proper preselection process for the new Party. Christabel won that preselection ballot and went on to do a great job in the Senate.'

And I think that [being in the Senate] would have messed up my life! You know, I was a bit young [laughs] and I'm not sure I was 100% ready, and Christabel was a very good representative. But that is an interesting trade-off that happened. And it's probably lost in history. It was Jo Vallentine then Llewellyn from the Greens Party, because that was the way that we were going to bring this thing together. And then it was so divisive and so problematic. I said, 'OK, I'll step back'. Now I'm not being magnanimous about it, I mean, that's what actually happened. And we said, 'OK, we'll have somebody else' and I was really pleased to see Christabel go there. She was ready. She was older. And she had a strong desire to do that.

And I had a young family and we were on our way South. [Pam and] I built a house in Palmyra, the back of our house, I still own it. My wife's on the way up there now. And that was for me and our family to sustain my activism because I was dealt out of an income as a high-level public servant, or in any kind of public servant, because I had upset them by doing the old-growth forest survey for Western Australia. And so I was on my way to the South West because I always worked in the South West forests. I'd done my Masters degree in natural resource management in restoration of water catchments [damaged by over-clearing and salinity] and agroforestry.

AY: And salinity with ...

**LLEWELLYN:** The restoration of catchments through broad-scale, regional scale, restoration through agroforestry because I really thought that if we could resolve the production of forest materials [on already cleared farm lands], then we could take the next steps in native forest [protection] issues. So we needed timber and we needed to restore [damaged] landscapes, and that's why I believe that we can do it. It's not that we don't know how to do it. And I was on my way South to set up a new agritopian life in Denmark, to continue the work of setting up the Greens in the South West region and to continue the work in native forest conservation because it was undone work, and to support those campaigns.

And I ended up surfing, re-finding surfing, which was what really kept me here, though I probably wouldn't have stayed if it hadn't been ... like had found my surfboard again. [laughs] But we were very clearly on our way down to invent sustainability. We've lived and experimented for 20-odd years in this agritopian sort of mudbrick, solar-powered home and work place. And it became like a lightning rod. People were interested in how we had done this, built a six or seven star mud brick house running on solar power. I can show you something, things that we made out of renewable energy and people would say, 'No, you can't do this with renewable energy'. Sure you can. We demonstrated it and there were TV shows and people would come by the busload to our house to look at this model of sustainability.

Now I said, 'Do not do this'. This was a great experiment, but it's not the right way - do something else, build eco-villages right in town, reduce your footprint, get out of the car. So we had a narrative and we were trying to set up the Greens regionally and it was a joyful time, the South West Greens hummed for years, and like I said in my little narrative, in some ways we represented the heart of the the Green movement. We were activists, we were on the ground, we were doing it and we continued the training, we continued the nonviolent direct-action and the training. Our organization actually had some real heart and we didn't get distracted by every second issue that came along, even though we were aware of those. We're all educated.

AY: But at some point, you did decide to stand again for election ...

[00:55:08] **LLEWELLYN:** In every election. I stood in every election because I was supporting whoever was running [in the Senate or State Upper House]. Even my partner Pam ran in the Upper House- oh no she ran in support of other candidates, we were an activist family. My son wanted to run at one stage, I said, 'No don't do that!' But in actual fact, he should have, he would have been astonishing.

AY: Well tell me the processes that did actually see you elected in 2005. How did that come about? After unsuccessful attempts?

**LLEWELLYN:** Many, many, and mainly running in Lower House seats where there was no hope of winning, but definitely supporting Christine Sharp, who in my view was an astonishingly good politician and parliamentarian, not just a politician. She was an excellent parliamentarian. To my mind, it was just get behind Chrissy because she was ready for it. She wanted to do it. She had the knowledge. She had a broad perspective, a regional perspective. I said, 'I will build, I will work in the background'. I was the Co-convenor of the South West Greens and Co-convenor of the State Greens [1998-2000] as well at the same time. It was clear that I had a role to play and that there might be some point in which I would run for the Greens, and Chrissy and I talked about that and we talked about that [about succession and transition] openly in our Greens meetings that, when Chrissy's finished, I would have a crack at that.

It was an open process. Other people ran for preselection, it was an open process. But I had a very substantial regional profile because I was an activist at every level, whether it was railways in Albany to Perth and gas pipelines or bauxite mining or ... I was a regional planner, I understood the bio-region and the economics of the region and understood business. So I think I was, in my view, very well placed to be a regional-scale Greens representative. And Chrissy and I discussed it a lot and we knew that there would be this transition, and like I said, I'm really proud of that transition, we actually managed it beautifully, and we actually ... it was transparent and open and it was a good thing to do.

It's very hard being a regional member of Parliament. It's Hell in fact! And Chrissy being located in Balingup - that was hard for her, she couldn't fly in, fly out. So, I had built a profile on large-scale renewable energy, supported the Albany wind farm, had the Denmark wind farm running, not actually built, but as a major issue, running campaigns here and there and supporting people, supporting Chrissy's campaigns, supporting Federal campaigns and understanding our region economics. Knew the foundational economics of the region really well.

We had been very successful in the forest movement between 1996 to 2004, even though we hadn't really nailed all forest conservation. That was a completion of a lot of work. I'd done the old-growth forest survey, I'd worked for years and years and years to get these major National Parks declared [such as the Walpole Wilderness area]. I'd written the plans for National Parks, so I understood that part of the ecosystem management, I was passionate about ecosystems - I was ready to go!

AY: What were the issues in the electorate that got you there, do you believe?

[00:59:16] **LLEWELLYN:** I think we had been successful in the forest campaign and so the Greens were very well respected. At about that point we'd known about climate change since the early '70s, and we knew it was on the agenda [and starting to get traction]. Back in 1992, I remember big global conferences on climate change and going to them and actually facilitating some of those in Perth, and so energy needed more attention and climate change needed attention, water issues needed attention.

My whole thesis was on water catchment restoration and all that sort of stuff. So I took those issues into the election. But I think we got elected on brand. No one elected Paul Llewellyn. I mean, it was nice having me there, but they voted Green. It was good having me there because I was the lucky next person. And we landed there with just two of us [Giz Watson] in Parliament, having come from the balance of power with five people, and it was a very, very difficult environment to run into. We were with the Labor Party, the Carpenter Government.

I think Labor are conservative, I believe that Labor and Liberal are the flipside of exactly the same coin. On one side, Liberal heads - control of capital. On the other side, tails [the Labor Party] - with large organized union entities. What do they both want? They both want industrial development that provides revenue and capital for the Liberals, and provides for a large-scale, highly organized labour force for the Labor Party. Same agenda. And I think we have to challenge that, that there has to be another way of doing this, and that's the Greens. Adam Bandt [Australian Greens Parliamentary Leader] spoke beautifully this morning, I heard him on the radio [Radio National], I listen a lot.

AY: So what was happening during that period in Parliament? What were you able to achieve, are there particular moments that you're very proud of?

**LLEWELLYN:** Well, first of all, I had to stop being a director of Sky Farming, the wind energy company. And I had to unwind my relationship with Denmark Community Wind farm because it was a substantial local commercial entity. And so I am unwound myself from there. I was absolutely clear that I would go to Parliament on the agenda of renewable energy technologies. So climate, energy, water, that was that was what I wanted to go into Parliament on. I got everything. I got half the portfolios - it was impossible. Agriculture, everything.

Bear in mind that if you're a Greens Member in the State Parliament of Western Australia, and there's barely any national [representatives]. [The public] don't make the distinction between you being a national or a state member. You're just Greens. So everything came our way. But I was determined to promote renewable energy technologies and a clean energy pathway. I'd worked out from my own experiments at home that I could run my house and a small workshop and everything [on solar and hydro], and it was highly effective technology. We developed the Albany wind farm - with Synergy- but I helped with the kind of the politics of that. And here we were trying to develop [a model for] community-scale renewable technologies that would clean up the entire grid, the South Coast grid.

That was our objective and we knew how to do it. We had all the technology, we had the contracts. Our [primary] barriers were Western Power, Synergy, all State energy entities that were just going block, block, block, block. I had to go there and kick ass basically<sup>18</sup>. We created the Renewable Energy Target legislation<sup>19</sup>, which simply said, 'If you want to sell electricity into the West Australian [energy] market, you have to procure 20% from renewable energy sources by 2020 or you lose your license [to operate]'. It was a one or two-page piece of legislation.

And I went to Germany. I met with the people that wrote the renewable energy laws for Germany. He [Volker Oschmann] is now one of my best friends. He just came to visit me and he's now leads the renewable energy transformation for the German Government and he wrote their [feed-in tariff] law. I met the Greens over there and it occurred to me after the Global Greens Conference that I went to in the '90s- they [the German Greens] are three steps ahead of us. They are beyond ideology. They are into programs, not just policies. So I was very clear in my term of Parliament that I did not want more policies. I wanted programs and [legislative] initiatives.

---

<sup>18</sup> Paul added, 'That at that time regulatory change was absolutely necessary to overcome the barriers to clean energy in WA.'

<sup>19</sup> See

<https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/bills.nsf/BillProgressPopup?openForm&ParentUNID=C43DC799F4C58ED9482570CA000FC452>

[01:04:51] And I tried to create this framework where we had vision, policy programs, legislative enablers. And I am still running the policy for the Greens saying we need enablers. The enabling legislation is, in this instance, West Australian Renewable Energy Target 20% by 2020. Every single State member of Parliament in the Greens [around Australia] should put up the same framework and then have uniform State-based legislation where there was a vacuum in [renewable energy law in] the Federal Government.

And that was an initiative that I learned from the German Greens. They had harmonisation across the EU - they'd bring it in here, they'd bring it in there and then harmonize legislation. I was a legislator. I had enough corporate knowledge, business knowledge and economics and planning to know that we needed enabling legislation and I was determined to get it. Our [Parliamentary staff] team, as I said, we devoted 25% of our time to life-giving positive initiatives, not responding and reacting to the climate crisis, the water crisis and everything else, but in fact putting forward life-giving initiatives. The Liberal Party brought our case!

We sold the business case for renewable energy technologies to the Liberal Party and they passed our legislation in the [Upper House of] State Parliament, and as I said, it was Christine Milne who said this is the first piece of legislation in Australian Greens history that has passed the House of Parliament. I didn't know that. I thought, that's great, but I was on a mission and getting that legislation passed within about two years of being in Parliament<sup>20</sup>.

It [the WARET campaign] was momentous, we had big rallies at the front of Parliament calling for renewable energy technologies and even the Parliamentary staff said, 'Hey, this looks like the big movements from a decade ago in the forest movement'. We had this sort of stuff happening and we were doing it for renewable technologies and putting forward [initiatives] that and making it unstoppable, because I knew that if we got 5% renewable in the system - [it would be] economically unstoppable.

I told my dear friend Scott Ludlam [Greens (WA) Senator], who was there, he was doing a great job. Stop worrying about nuclear power, Scott, don't worry about it anymore. Renewable technologies are going to just knock its socks off. We almost have to be careful about how effective this is going to be. But, yes, nuclear bombs are bad. Nuclear energy and uranium is really bad. Don't worry about it so much because it's history. I imagined that this was a big snowball at the top of the hill, we put it [renewable energy]

---

<sup>20</sup> Paul added, 'Of course the Labor Party blocked the WARET 20/20 Bill in the Lower House, but only year or so later Labor passed very similar Renewable Energy Target legislation through the Federal Parliament. I remain convinced that were it not for our 20% by 2020 push for renewable energy, little or no action would have followed.'

in at 5%, goes down the hill, gathers weight. It's an unstoppable initiative. And it was simple. It was a simple legislative initiative.

I say to my Parliamentary colleagues from the Greens now, 'You are elected to be in government, we should behave like we are in government'. We should have legislative programs, and I had quite a number [in the pipeline]. I had water Bills. I had a hot water service Bill. I was working on the McMansion Bill, which was a planning Bill to convert all BigMac mansions with seven bedrooms and three bathrooms into [two or three] apartments and increase urban density, and liberate a huge value in the real estate market. And that Bill should see the light of day, but it won't<sup>21</sup>.

But I want to say, Diane [Evers, Greens (WA) MLC for the South West] said to me the other day, she said, 'Paul, I just got an amendment that you proposed to the procurement legislation to State Government, and that was to make every single car that the government buys an energy efficient car'. She said, I found it in the legislation and we just got it through. 12 or 15 years later, yes!

AY: Let's look at some of the policies you did do, because you were on quite a few committees while you were in Parliament, and as you hinted at as a Green, you have to be across everything. You have to get involved in everything because there's so few of you. So what did you do, do you believe that had the most impact? What did you achieve?

[01:09:46] **LLEWELLYN:** I think that the [WA] renewable energy target (WARET) was by far the most important thing that we achieved. You know, if you go into a shop today and you ask for a pack of smokes at the front and they have to go into a locked cabinet, the person serving you has to go into the locked cabinet. Well, we [the Greens (WA)] put that in. We lock them up behind the counter. Those are small things. But they were important. They changed space, smoking space, but on a big level, it was the fact that the [ALP Rudd] Federal Government eventually put forward a renewable energy target, 20% by 2020 RET<sup>22</sup> and that was I'm absolutely sure that was our initiative. They just appropriated it and put it in Federally.

The other thing that happened in Western Australia was that [Liberal MLC] Peter Collier became Minister for Energy [in 2008]. He [had previously] sat there listening to my speeches and he introduced a feed-in tariff for Western Australia. That is where you pay everyone money to put solar panels on the roof [to feed electricity back into the grid]. That has been one of the most successful initiatives. He rang me and said, 'Paul, I

---

<sup>21</sup> Paul added, 'I would love to see that legislative initiative developed and promoted by future Greens Members of Parliament.'

<sup>22</sup> See <http://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/RET/About-the-Renewable-Energy-Target/History-of-the-scheme>

really appreciate you doing this. You've done the work'. And he only did it because the Greens were in there. We were hammering away at it. It actually worked. They set it up badly, but it was still, in my view, everyone that says [to me], 'Oh, I got a rebate', I say, 'I did that!' [laughs] That was our initiative. We put it on [the table] and we drove it through. So if you see thousands of solar panels on roofs in Perth, that was our initiative. We did that. And so I'm proud of that!

AY: Are there things that you wish you'd been able to get through in that term but weren't able to achieve?

**LLEWELLYN:** I had a water conservation target Bill which was very similar<sup>23</sup>. It said simply, if you have a license for producing water (this is the Water Corporation), then you have to reach efficiency standards. I'd like to have got that through, but I ran out of time. [ALP Premier] Alan Carpenter called the election a year and a half early [*sic* six months early]. I spent the last year and a half working on the back foot because I had already been voted out, we lost by a few hundred votes, it was a real pain, I didn't realize how close we were. I think it was like two or 300 votes and I should have challenged it, but I didn't<sup>24</sup>. I was quite shocked.

And in any case philosophically, my work was not finished and so I was quite devastated, not that I didn't get back in, but that we'd somehow lost the South West seat on my watch. You know we had some of the forest [conservation] groups running against us because they didn't like what Chrissy Sharp said about logging and they actually ran against us and it's like, guys, we wrote the book on forest conservation. This is where our heart and spirit is. We were elected to represent the trees, the birds and the streams of the South West. We've done such an amazing job. Could you please get behind us?

But they wanted us to use our balance of power to block supply and they didn't realize that we didn't have balance of power unless the Liberal Party voted with us, there was no balance of power. We had to use influence and stealth to get things through. I think we used in the case WARET, the renewable energy target Bill, it was stealth. It was pure stealth. We had such a hard time convincing people that it was such a good business case.

---

<sup>23</sup> *Water Services Licensing (Water Conservation Target) Amendment Bill 2007*. See <https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/bills.nsf/BillProgressPopup?openForm&ParentUNID=76D1CFAF6A90CB0DC82573A9001596AB>

<sup>24</sup> The Greens (WA) received more votes and a swing of 1% higher compared to the result in the 2005 election. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Results\\_of\\_the\\_2008\\_Western\\_Australian\\_state\\_election\\_\(Legislative\\_Council\)#South\\_West](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Results_of_the_2008_Western_Australian_state_election_(Legislative_Council)#South_West)

You know - the Business Council - prove to me that it's wrong [that renewable energy does not make economic sense]! And I change the burden of proof, I also declared that I was a climate sceptic on Tuesdays and Wednesdays but for the rest of the week, I was fully convinced by the science. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, I want to debate the economics of climate change. That apparently is still quoted in Parliament, the Honorable Llewellyn, the climate skeptic on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and all the rest of the time he believes in climate change. [laughs]

I had a great time and our [staff] team, every one of them who worked with me, excepting for Adele Carles [Greens (WA) MLA for Fremantle 2009-10], who happen to work for me as well, they said that it was a transformative moment in their life and it wasn't me, it was our team, you know, it was transforming people's lives. And that was nonviolence [engagement]. That was our process that was walking our talk, doing politics not just differently, but really profoundly, authentically and not compromising first principles of - these meetings needed to be well structured, respectful, inclusive, and we used all the tools available to make it happen. So that's how I [also try to] run my life.

AY: Is that how the Greens run nowadays?

[01:15:27] **LLEWELLYN:** I think the Greens are run a bit more out of despair than empowerment. I think that's a great pity. And it's understandable and I think also that we involved ourselves in some party politics, which I don't think is necessary for us to do, in fact it's deleterious to our methods and to our effectiveness. It's damaging to our effectiveness. It's not that we are not nice people, we actually have a real deep moral commitment to the world but we all fall into this narrative about politics of urgency.

And you know, I don't want to be critical because I heard Adam Bandt [Parliamentary Leader of the Australian Greens and Federal MHR for the seat of Melbourne] and I thought he spoke beautifully today and very authoritatively on a whole range of things. And I said I hadn't heard his voice quite like that. And that's a great voice. We've heard Green politicians who's voice, in my view, sound not, and I'm not using that sexist sort of shrill thing, because that was the level that Christine Milne ... Christine, was one of our most astonishingly good politicians. She put forward initiatives and programs. She put forward the Green New Deal stuff, and she understood politics and she understood programs. She was a good politician.

But I do hear some of our Parliamentarians talking in despair. You know, [changes tone] 'This shouldn't happen' or 'that shouldn't happen'. Well, it does happen. And what are you going to do about it? What what are we putting on the table?

AY: And the greatest challenges for the Party at the moment, as a Party and as a movement? Where do you see the greatest challenges?

**LLEWELLYN:** I think the greatest challenge is for us to disentangle ourselves from the urgent issues and be more self-reflective. Be more prepared to improve ourselves internally, personally and internally. I honestly do think that ... we don't ask our elected representatives, 'Have you done enough personal work to make sure that you don't spill this despair onto the public and to our colleagues?' Because I found when I came into the Parliament, and into some of our Parliamentary offices, an incredible dysfunction, that's what I found. And I thought, I can't believe this.

And there were breakdowns and the MPs hadn't resolved it. And I think, 'Ok, oh why is that happening?' And it's because, apart from the issues he hadn't dealt with the personal, he hadn't dealt with what it means to actually be self-reflective, representative of not just your party, but community and so on, so I think there is actual - I hate to say this - personal growth and development that needs to happen, that will underpin organization growth and development.

I know Chrissy [Sharp] did a lot of work before she went into Parliament, did a lot of personal work, and I thought that was really good and I followed in those steps. I didn't know that she had done it until much later. I'm not saying I'm perfect - I'm so flawed Anne - you've got to know this, so it's very hard to make a judgment, but it's a perspective that says, 'Are we a mature organization. Have we developed intellectually, spiritually and personally enough to actually lead this country with clarity?' You know, because I believe that's what we're supposed to be doing.

[01:20:13] I never said I was going in to Parliament, to be in opposition, to be Green. We're going to have to set up government. That was my agenda. And when I gave my last speech in Parliament, the President I remember him saying, 'Paul, we were scared of you because you were a legislator! We thought something transformative had happened within the Greens, and he said, we were all very worried that the style of intervention', because I saw Parliament as a tool for political and social intervention, that was the tool - as a method of social change, parliamentary intervention was a method of social change. That's why we set up the Greens Party.

We said: protesting, organizing, doing this, doing that, parliamentary intervention is a method of social change, and that intervention needs to be Parliamentary and it needs to be legislated and we fail to see that. I still see many Members of Parliament thinking that they are there to promote issues. And they are in some ways, but they're actually there to guide the legislative context for change. And I've always encouraged them, write private members Bills, do that we need for the Greens to go further forward, we need not just policies, visions, policies, programs, initiatives. We need the programs and initiatives, and that's absent.

That has actually happened, in my view, the programs and initiatives, the things that says this is what I'm going to put in place to drive a change, and those initiatives need to be small initiatives that make big changes, the WARET 2020 [Bill], or the renewable energies Bill, was like two pages. But its implication was enormous. I think that we transformed the energy landscape of Australia. That's a big claim. It's a hell of a big claim, but it was because of its simplicity.

AY: Not all issues will neatly fit themselves into the simple that has big ramifications, big, wide reach ...

**LLEWELLYN:** I had more! We don't have to have 20 of them, for example housing, we're in a housing crisis. I used to say to Members of Parliament, let's say, how many of you live in a big house like say, let's say five bedrooms and two or three bathrooms. So you don't have to put up your hand, just wiggle your toes, you know who you are and of course most of them are wiggling their toes madly. And how many of those are stranded assets? How many of those houses are just big houses with no clear purpose.

Now there's more beds in Australia than they are homeless people. There's more bedrooms in Australia. There's more homes than there are homeless and the McMansion Bill was to say we will give every single person who lives, who is living in a huge white elephant, the opportunity to internally subdivide your house into apartments, into three apartments, to make small houses, and you will be able to turn your \$750,000 stranded asset into \$1.5 million asset because you will be able to sell three titles.

Now, as an economist that transforms the entire urban landscape and the first place you do it is along railway transit lines to increase the density along those lines so that you can have more public transport. And you transform the housing stock into a house like this one, [9] - 10 star [energy efficient]. Transform the housing stock, you only get this initiative if as you make these apartments, you improve its star rating from 5 to 7 or 8. Transformative, you are creating housing, you're creating employment, you're creating wealth.

And tell me that you can't solve a lot of big problems of insecurity in our society, inequitable in our society, without something like that. And it's simple. It's a simple piece of legislation that would say under the planning laws you can do this, boom, boom.

AY: It would be contested. It's not a simple argument to get across to people.

[01:25:19] **LLEWELLYN:** No because you see it actually has a very, very, very deep financial driver. In other words, if you've got the stranded asset that's in in Kingsley, five bedrooms and its value has now gone down to \$400,000 instead of \$800,000, but stranded nonetheless, you're getting old and you can't bloody look after it, it's too big and you're rattling around and you can through a facilitative agency that lends money to

the process, which is what has to happen, and through a government planning initiative - because I'm a planner, like a statutory legal planner - that it would create wealth.

I mean, good middle class people all over Australia are going to say, 'This is great thing. I can create three houses out of one and I could make it affordable buying'. It's not self-interest. It's actually an appropriate driver I think. Renewable energy has been fantastic for anybody selling turbines and making energy. It's like a great business. I own [a small part of] one. It's like - intercept some air [wind], turns air into electrons and we sell electrons and everyone loves it. This is like [owning] a Boeing 747, it's a business.

The Greens are not business-minded. I'm wealthy. I don't know how I got wealthy - a high net-wealth individual. I don't know because I've never worked a proper day job. I don't know how the hell that happened then, but what I'm committed to is economic justice and new pathways.

AY: What would it take for the Greens to win a Lower House seat here?

**LLEWELLYN:** Imagination. Straight out imagination and fun. These things are going to be fun and they have to be based on an imagined future. It can't be based on like, 'Oh, the sky is falling in' - everyone knows the sky is falling in! An imagined future that says, imagine living in this amazing place. Imagine being able to live in beautiful homes that are energy efficient and comfortable or whatever it is, an imagined future that people can say, I subscribe to that.

You know, we are, as a movement not an activist movement of the Greens, we are obsessed with problems and in some ways not solutions. And we don't see pathways. And the pathway is what do we imagine this could look like, so, imagination and what would we need to do that today to take one step towards that? The way I built this ecovillage, if I could take you on a walk around it- I used to get up and say, 'What am I going to do today?' And sometimes it was just like sweep the workshop. You know, what's the next step that I have to take? I've got to phone somebody.

So we [the Greens] don't see steps in the pathway, we only have anxieties and fears about how bad things are. And we don't actually apply our mind and we're not prepared to give up anything, we've got these Holy Grails, these things like 'Economics is bad'. No economics is good, 'markets are bad'. No markets are really effective.

AY: Let's look at the the Greens core values. Will you rank those in terms of your own concerns - which are more important to you?

**LLEWELLYN:** When we inherited those from the German Greens, I know the meeting that those principles came from.

AY: Oh, tell me about that meeting.

[01:29:41] **LLEWELLYN:** It was within the [German] Greens. They were trying to bring all these disparate groups together and they were having on hell of a big fight, just like we were having in Western Australia. And you had the fundamentalist greenies and then you had the activist greenies and then you have the economic socialists, and you had [peaceniks]. And this guy, one of the elders, got up and said, 'Grassroots democracy, peace and nonviolence, social equity, environment' and named them and he said, 'This is the platform' - yeah boom! And they actually accepted that and they became the principles.

I use that axiomatically, I use that whenever I had an issue. You know we didn't have all the answers, but I had to have a clear framework to hang onto and I could use that as a test. So we're in a perilous situation ecologically. We really are. And then we're in a perilous situation with regard to human poverty and economic disparity. You know, that is perilous. And we know that when people start spending more than 40% on food, of their total income on food, that societies break down, and we're close to that in many, many places. We know that.

And then there's rents, 'rent distress'. The knock on my back door, there was a young family who have a disabled child who are living in our place, which is kind of a bit of a middle-class 'paradise' and they're in serious financial distress. And I just got a knock on [the door] from our [eco-village] accountant saying, 'We need to talk about how we can support that'.

So the meeting in Germany where they brought all that [four pillars] up, and then we just imbibed that. At the beginning of the Greens ... the original [WA] Green Party constitution, there were some unifying principles that Laurie Capill wrote, and I thought they stayed in our [Greens (WA)] Constitution for years. I saw that - you know, interrelatedness, all these high ideals and things, and I thought they were excellent and they seemed to have disappeared from our Constitution, and I think that's a pity. It's a pity that we actually just lost them and became streamlined.

They were in addition to the four pillars, they were saying these are the principles that guide us ... and I looked for them because the other day when you rang up and I said, 'Oh Laurie' ... I rang up Laurie, he lives in Capel, and I said to him, 'No Laurie I'm sure that those principles are still in the Constitution', I looked, and no they are not, they're gone. So I went, oh, that's a great pity. I don't know what they were, they were just statements of principle, the interconnectedness of all life, you know. They were ecological, economic and social principles that we could hang our hats on. They had a little bit more definition than the four pillars.

But the Greens can lean on those four pillars<sup>25</sup>. But as long as we don't use imagination, in my view, to kind of totally visualize the future that we want, in other words, we are able to dream. That we're able to plan and [implement], and then celebrate those achievements through a process, through a deliberative process. We will stay in reaction mode.

I mean, Adam Bandt just popped up on my computer sending another message and no matter how eloquent and amazing some of our representatives are, we've got some work to do and I don't know how to do that, Anne. I'm doing it through my life. I'm modelling [how I understand sustainability]. The Denmark wind farm has had about five PhDs written on it, [with questions like,]. 'How do you do renewable energy, community based high-tech energy - from electrical engineering through to social organization and business theory? How do you do that?' And I say, 'That's good, go and study that. That's good'.

And this housing development [DecoHousing Denmark eco-village<sup>26</sup>] that we sit in - to start again from the beginning - it is an inspiration and there is a constant stream of people saying, 'How did you do this? Why are you doing this? What does it look like?' And bringing the heart back into this community. And it's bloody hard. It's really, really hard [but needs to be done].

AY: Just to finish up there then when ...

[01:34:46] **LLEWELLYN:** That's economics. That's the living, breathing, green economy, social enterprise, single purpose only it's not for profit, but for social good. And that's how we develop these things. And if the Greens don't give up the attachment to their deep suspicion about economics, their deep suspicion about markets, then they're never going to be able to move on because that's going to stop them. And I mean Robin Chapple [Greens (WA) MLC for the Mining and Pastoral region] said, 'Oh, Paul, you're very entrepreneurial'<sup>27</sup>.

And I said to him, [unclear], 'Yes, I am entrepreneurial because we have to unleash creative enterprise and entrepreneurial, and it's got to be ethical, and what's wrong with that?' It was actually like an insult, 'you're too entrepreneurial', what do you mean I'm too entrepreneurial? But like I said Anne, I have relatively high net worth, I don't know

---

<sup>25</sup> Ecological sustainability, grassroots participatory democracy, social justice and peace and non-violence. See <https://greens.org.au/about/four-pillars>

<sup>26</sup> See <https://decohousingdenmark.wixsite.com/home>

<sup>27</sup> Paul added, 'As if this approach were an impediment to being politically effective.'

how it happened and I think it was because I was entrepreneurial. [laughs] I was like a creative business person that never wanted to go and make money!

AY: You've done it by mistake?

**LLEWELLYN:** I've done it by mistake!

AY: Just to finish up, Paul. Where would you like to see the Greens going? How should they ... the Greens evolve now?

**LLEWELLYN:** I think I'd like to see them ... at a parliamentary level, I'd like to see them put 30% of their focus on statutory initiatives, drivers, just 30% of their focus should be on just that. Like, what do we need to put in place to drive the change? And in order to understand that, you need to have about a third of your time into saying, 'What does the future really look like? What does this actually look like?' Then, what do we need to put in place to give rise to that future? And another third of their time, responding to all the shit that's happening in the world because, hey, we've got to do that, it's respectful [and necessary] to do that too.

But we're not leading. We're not actually leading. We're actually responding to urgencies and stuff like that. We are not saying, with confidence, not an arrogant confidence, but with a internally secure adult voice, 'I'm going to have a punt at it, I'm going to have a punt and sell this dream'. And I'm fairly sure about it, but I'm not arrogantly sure about it, but I'm sure that it's better than what we've got now and we'll sell that because it's a good life.

I live in this beautiful studio, I'm in my pad up here in my attic. It's a beautiful studio and it's a good life. I have an astonishingly good life. And we've got to give access to lots of people.

AY: That's probably a lovely place to finish, unless you were about to add something else?

**LLEWELLYN:** We're too worried about global collapse to see the path, that's my view.

AY: It's been fabulous talking to you today. We could go on forever, really, couldn't we? We can always come back if there's something that you'd really like to add. But for now ...

[01:39:02] **LLEWELLYN:** Yeah, let's do that. I am so sorry for being so garrulous. It's not often that I get the opportunity these days to just download some of this stuff.

**END OF TRANSCRIPT**

Link to Paul Llewellyn's WA Parliament Biography page-

<https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/memblast.nsf/AllDocs/1893EECF77F4274248257006001E3DC6?opendocument>