

## **DR MARISA PATERSON MLA SPEECH**

### **Women in Climate and Health Networking breakfast 2022**

#### **Reducing consumption**

Good morning, and welcome everyone!

It's great to see so many people interested in climate, health and learning more about reducing consumption! I'm looking forward to hearing more on this topic from all our guest speakers this morning across a range of perspectives on how they're reducing food waste, residential carbon emissions and clothing.

For those who don't know me, I'm a Member for Murrumbidgee in the Legislative Assembly, representing the communities of Weston Creek, Molonglo Valley and Woden Valley, as well as Deakin, Yarralumla and a small portion of Kambah.

I'm Chair of the Assembly's Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity; on which Jo Clay – who's here this morning – also sits.

I love my role because it provides me the ability to listen to what's important to the community of Murrumbidgee and across the ACT, and to act on those issues.

## Reducing consumption

I think we're all becoming increasingly aware of the responsibilities we have to reduce our consumption and contribute to positive environmental and sustainability outcomes across all avenues and aspects of our lives.

For as long as I can remember, the mantra has been 'reduce, reuse, recycle'. Until recently, and despite it always being the last word of the mantra, I feel like the emphasis has very much been to 'recycle'; that this has been at the expense of really considering 'reduce' and 'reuse'; and that recycling is where the vast majority of efforts have been made – by individuals, government and businesses.

It's been great to see some really tangible outcomes in this space, and significantly increased efforts to recycle.

But that's not enough, and – as climate change continues to be very real – we need to start paying a lot more attention to reducing and reusing.

We - and I say 'we' very broadly and in its most general sense – have become a society of increased consumerism and, with it, increased waste. We can no longer afford to live this lifestyle to which we've become accustomed. And not financially, but environmentally we can't afford it.

## Slow

We need to adopt a mindset of 'slow' - in every possible meaning of the word. While the concept might be daunting for many people in our community as our lives seem to become more hectic, the benefits are immeasurable across every aspect of our lives.

Slow food, slow fashion, slow travel, slow and local community living. As a way of life, it has a lot of appeal for our mental and physical health. As an effort towards environmental responsibility, it's an absolute must.

There are supply, policy and demand levers within business, government and the community. Change and action need to come from each sphere, concurrently. They need to drive each other. We all have responsibility.

I look forward to the day when, as a matter of course, we all think and behave in ways that seek, fundamentally, to reduce and reuse.

I know I'm preaching to the converted. You're all here because you're interested in this space; you know what needs to be done; and you're already doing it.

It's important that we keep connecting; we keep inspiring each other; we keep pressure on government and businesses; we keep celebrating the positive steps forward; and that we inspire others to join us on this journey.

In closing, I'd like to extend my thanks to Sophie and her office for their generosity in co-hosting this morning's breakfast, and to Arnagretta, Chris, Melinda and Serina, as well as Selina Walker. I'd also like to thank Sunita and Sanjay for the great catering.

I hope you all enjoy this morning's event, and thanks again for attending.