

Thursday 21 June 2018

The Speaker, **Ms Hickey**, took the Chair at 10 a.m. and read Prayers.

QUESTIONS

National Firearms Agreement - Proposed Changes by Tasmanian Government

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.02 a.m.]

Just one day before Tasmanians went to the election on 3 March you assured them that on advice of your former police minister, Mr Hidding, your plan to water down firearms laws did not breach the National Firearms Agreement. Now, Right to Information documents have revealed that your own internal advice from police says that it is in fact unclear if your plans breach the agreement and also identifies a number of other risks.

Why are you so very dishonest? Why did you assure Tasmanians just a day before the election in March that your plan did not breach the National Firearms Agreement when there is advice that was not the case?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, this is an important area of public policy and one that is sensitive and of great interest to Tasmanians. It will now be the subject of a parliamentary inquiry which will enable the community and this parliament to better understand the status of our firearms laws, whether they met contemporary standards and whether changes to our gun laws can be made in a way that does not breach the National Firearms Agreement. It is our firm commitment we will introduce no laws that would do such a thing. I have made that point clear on a number of occasions.

By the very nature of the Leader of the Opposition's question she identifies the fact that there is some uncertainty. The document to which she refers says it is unclear whether our proposal - which is very similar to what the Labor Party was also proposing - to enable farmers and recreational shooters to have contemporary laws allowing them to safely use their firearms in a way that endangers no-one but is more practical. Our firearms laws have been changed in the past, as recently as last year when we strengthened our firearms laws. For those who say that our laws should always have remained the same since 1996 they have been changed, I believe, on 14 occasions. Every other jurisdiction has a change that is similar or the same as those that were proposed in our policy that we released during the election campaign.

I received advice as to whether or not it contravenes the NFA. If there is uncertainty that can be tested in the parliamentary inquiry. If there is any suggestion that what we propose to do by way of policy or legislation does contravene the NFA then we will not do it.

National Firearms Agreement - Proposed Changes by Tasmanian Government

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.04 a.m.]

You said your plan to water down Tasmania's firearms laws was based on advice you had received from your then police minister, Mr Hidding. Either Mr Hidding provided you with

dishonest advice, or you were aware of the internal police advice that your changes did breach the NFA and you were blatantly dishonest with Tasmanians about an extremely sensitive issue on the eve of state election.

Given the public interest in this matter, will you today table the advice you received from former police minister, Rene Hidding?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question and note the change between the first question and the second one. In the first she says that the documents to which she refers says, 'It is unclear whether or not our proposals would breach the NFA'. In the second question she says that it does. This shows the shifty nature of the Leader of the Opposition, where she will try to change the story to suit her own political needs and do so dishonestly.

We will introduce no laws to this place that contravene the NFA. The advice I received was that our proposals did not. I wonder what advice the Leader of the Opposition -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Standing order 45, relevance. The question to the Premier was whether he could table the advice he received from the former police minister. I ask you to draw his attention to the question.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you. As you would be aware, the frustration of my job is standing order 45 does not allow me to direct the Premier to answer the question directly but I hope he will answer to your satisfaction.

Mr HODGMAN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. Rather than engage in political play time, which is all we get from the Opposition, I am making it very clear that we will do nothing that compromises the NFA. We will bring no legislation before this place that will do that. The parliamentary inquiry, which we are prepared to participate in and to support, will allow all matters to be tested.

Tasmanians can be assured that under a Liberal government, which set up these firearms laws and has strengthened them in recent time, we will do nothing at all to weaken them. We will ensure that any improvements that can be made, and they go to the use of firearms by our farmers, and recreational shooters, will enable them to use their firearms more safely, in no way endangering Tasmanians. They are very similar to the improvements the Leader of the Opposition was prepared to entertain and shows again the gross hypocrisy. You table the advice you received about having exactly the same policy.

National Firearms Agreement - Proposed Changes by Tasmanian Government

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.07 a.m.]

The Greens revealed your secret plans to water down our firearms laws on the eve of the 3 March election that were cooked up to woo the gun lobby vote. You tried to dampen the public outrage by assuring voters your former police minister had advised you your policy would not breach the National Firearms Agreement. This RTI shows the advice from Tasmania Police was prepared in March. Given your Government was in caretaker mode for the first three days of March, is it not the case that you did not seek advice from Tasmania Police before the election? Now that

you know the truth, that your gun policies contravene the National Firearms Agreement and would make Tasmanians less safe, will you now do the right thing and officially drop them?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I again officially declare that we will do nothing to compromise the NFA. We will do nothing to weaken Tasmania's gun laws. The last thing we did with our gun laws strengthened them and there were no complaints from members opposite then.

There are a couple of bizarre assertions made during that question. First, that it was the Greens who revealed our policy. In fact, it was released 21 or 23 days before the election day. It was not done by the Greens.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The Premier has made a misleading statement. That policy was not released before the election, other than by the Greens when we were given advanced warning of it.

Mr FERGUSON - Point of order, Madam Speaker. This mischievous point is not a point of order. The member is attempting to debate the question and she is interfering with the ability of the Premier to answer the question that has just been asked by her own colleague.

Madam SPEAKER - My ruling is that it is not a point of order.

Mr HODGMAN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pointing to the fact that our policy was released some weeks before the date to which the Greens member referred.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - We have got off to a very bad start this morning.

Ms O'Byrne - Yes, Madam Speaker, he really has got off to a bad start.

Mr HODGMAN - Madam Speaker, you have just made a ruling and within a second the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is again intervening.

The second bizarre thing that the member did was suggest that we would breach caretaker conventions. We will do no such thing. We will stand by our policies. We are prepared for this one, and any uncertainty about it, to be tested during the parliamentary inquiry. We will not breach the NFA. We set up that agreement. We strengthened it. We will do what we can to support those who lawfully use firearms to operate under contemporary laws. This has happened here on 14 occasions since the legislation was passed in 1996, legislation to make sure they are able to use their firearms safely, not endanger any other person. It will not be done in a way that compromises the NFA.

National Firearms Agreement - Proposed Changes by Tasmanian Government

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.11 a.m.]

Prior to the election you assured Tasmanians that the advice given to you by the former police minister, Mr Hidding, was that your policy on firearms laws did not breach the National Firearms Agreement. If you were telling the truth about that, will you table that advice today?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I will repeat my answer. I received that advice. It is advice that we are prepared to have tested by the parliamentary inquiry, which will allow everyone to have their say and determine what improvements and changes can be made to our firearms laws. This has happened in the past. It will confirm my Government's commitment to do nothing to weaken the laws that this party set up and improved in recent times.

Visitor Economy

Mr SHELTON question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.12 a.m.]

Can you provide the House with an update on the strength of Tasmania's thriving visitor economy and the backing that the Hodgman majority Liberal Government is providing this sector?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his interest in Tasmania's growing visitor economy. Our excellent hospitality, tourism and events sector continues to be a powerhouse of Tasmania's strong economic performance. It is a sector that my Government has supported from day one. That continues in this year's Budget. As the TICT said in response to this year's Budget -

The investments and the initiatives contained within it are unprecedented and historic.

By working closely with the tourism industry, its representatives, our excellent operators, our regional tourism operators and local government we are seeing strong and sustainable growth in our tourism sector. Our vision is to have our visitors stay here longer, see more of our regions, and spend more while they are here. The latest Tasmanian Visitor Survey, released yesterday, shows that visitor expenditure has increased by 7 per cent to \$2.37 billion in the past year. That money has been spent in our businesses and communities purchasing Tasmanian products and services and supporting jobs across the state.

The TVS shows that 1.28 million people visited Tasmania in the year to March 2018, which represents a 2 per cent annual growth. These visitors stay for 10.83 million nights. The number of people travelling to our state to attend conferences and business events jumped by 17 per cent.

There has been growth across our regions, but there is more to do. That is why I have charged the Visitor Economy Advisory Committee to develop a new yield and dispersal action plan, which will chart a course for growth and to ensure that the benefits of our tourism boom are being experienced across our state.

The Budget contains \$129 million more to support tourism, hospitality and events. We are working with our regional tourism organisations and investing in our regions to provide new experiences and better infrastructure to encourage more people to explore the outer regions of our state. We are investing \$1.4 million to replicate the success of the Great Eastern Drive, with three new drive journeys in the north, the south and the north-west.

We have \$4 million to establish a new event attraction fund to target and secure events. This will bring more people to our state and drive them into our regions, ensuring the greatest return on investment.

An extra \$12 million will be spent on targeted marketing initiatives that highlight Tasmania's unique experiences. There is \$51.73 million to upgrade roads and tourism destinations to make it safer and easier for people to get around. Our hospitality industry is the front of house for our visitor economy and there is \$2.8 million to allow 2000 more businesses to take part in the Great Customer Experience Program. We will crack down on coward punch attacks. We are providing an additional \$6.8 million to grow our hospitality industry more broadly.

The tourism industry has described our Budget as unprecedented and historic. What would they say about the alternatives? If you want proof that the Greens do not support tourism, have a look at their alternative budget. It is more like a war on tourism. They want to padlock our tourism ventures, disallow others to access our wilderness areas, slash tourism marketing and reverse the growth in our thriving visitor economy that would threaten jobs. They want to cut out all the major events that bring people to our state and into our regions and they want to deter international visitors.

Tasmania has had the highest rate of growth in international tourists of any state but the Greens want to put up a wall and stop those international visitors from coming here.

Ms O'Connor - How?

Mr HODGMAN - You want to do that by putting a 10 per cent tax on international visitors. You use tax to stop people from doing something. In your case it is to stop international visitors from coming here and supporting our businesses. That is the Greens. What about Labor?

The Leader of the Opposition ditched the health portfolio during the election campaign, despite saying it is the most important thing for Tasmanians, because she did not think it would be appropriate for the Premier to be the minister for health. An article about the Leader of the Opposition's speech on election night described it as nasty and delusional. If you want evidence of delusion, it is that you are not the Premier. The second point I will make is that if you want to stand up for the tourism industry: this is the interesting thing; the Leader has ditched health but has taken on the important portfolio of tourism.

For an understanding of where Labor stands on tourism, look at their budget reply. It rated one mention - they want to establish an advisory council to tell them what to do. We already have that. There is the Premier's Visitor Economy Advisory Council. There is the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania, which, if you were not bagging its CEO, you would be able to access whenever you want. There is no shortage of great advice and support for me as minister from a tourism industry that has never been better engaged, never been better supported by government. This Budget shows it.

It is unprecedented to see such a pathetic commitment to our tourism industry from its new shadow minister.

Mandatory Reporting of Offences of Child Sexual Abuse

Ms O'CONNOR question to the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, Ms ARCHER

[10.19 am]

The Catholic Church in Tasmania has vowed to defy law reform that would remove the protections on the confessional and ensure priests mandatorily report instances of child sexual abuse. The church leadership sent the strongest possible message to priests not to comply with the law when it is enacted. I note section 298 of the Criminal Code makes it an offence to incite a

person to commit a crime. Given what the royal commission heard about the church's role in enabling and covering up the abuse of children, on behalf of survivors and all Tasmania's children and young people, will you condemn this statement by church leadership? What will you do to ensure the Catholic Church in Tasmania is not above the law and no longer able to cover up child sexual abuse as it has with such devastating, lifelong consequences for those abused by its clergy in the past?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question on this important issue. In responding to the recommendations of the royal commission, of which I tabled the initial response yesterday, the focus of this Government is on delivering what is in the best interests of Tasmania's children. This includes our acceptance in principle of reforms relating to mandatory reporting laws to include those in the religious ministry as mandatory reporters alongside other mandatory reporters that currently exist, as well as lifting the veil on the confessional for the purposes of such reporting.

I accept that this is a significant step and one that is difficult for the Catholic Church. The Government is already engaging with the leadership of the Catholic Church on this and I will continue to do so. However, I do not intend to have a running commentary of my engagement with the church. I will say that we will continue to consult with all stakeholders on the issues that impact them.

The findings of the royal commission revealed the way in which institutions across the spectrum have failed our children in the past. This Government is committed to doing all we can to prevent it from happening again. I agree this may be a contentious issue in some quarters. Some may find it difficult, but we must learn from our past and put the safety of children above all else.

It is expected that all members of the community will comply with the laws of the state in which they live. That is how our society functions. Although I understand the importance of canon law to the Catholic Church, the Government believes that these changes are important and we will pursue them. As I have previously indicated our preference is for national consistency in this regard so we need to actively engage on this point with other jurisdictions, my state and territory counterparts and federally as well, but this is an area of state law.

We will implement these changes. Obviously the form that it takes needs to be considered. There is a lot more work to do. Yesterday we tabled an initial response to the 409 recommendations, which were very lengthy. I trust that the royal commission in its findings considered an enormous amount of evidence to presented to it to get to the point it did and we take those findings very seriously. Given their significance, I have no doubt the royal commission gave careful consideration to the recommendations it made. I reiterate that we have accepted those in principle and will do the work that is necessary to ensure these laws come to fruition.

Community Safety - Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Legislation

Mr BROOKS question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr FERGUSON

[10.23 a.m.]

Can the minister please update the House on the work of the majority Hodgman Liberal Government in helping Tasmania Police keep Tasmanians safe and tackling the scourge of ice in our community?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, the member for Braddon Mr Brooks, for his question. This Hodgman Liberal Government is committed to ensuring that we are the safest state in the country. We want to ensure that all of our Tasmanian communities are safe places to live, work and raise a family. We are appalled at the damage that has been done by the scourge of ice and organised crime in Tasmania and we have a plan to deal with it. We believe Tasmanians have the right to enjoy our state free from acts and threats of violence, intimidation and public disorder.

Today we are delivering our commitment to introduce new laws to ban the wearing of colours and insignia by outlaw motorcycle gangs in our first 100 days of government. I will be tabling this bill after question time. Outlaw motorcycle gangs are well organised. Police advise that they are well resourced and increasingly sophisticated in how they structure and execute their criminal activities. They are resilient and opportunistic and are involved in a wide range of serious crime, including drug trafficking, money laundering, extortion, firearms and drugs offences, high-level violence and collecting debts using intimidation.

Nationally, addiction to crystalline methamphetamine, or ice, has fuelled the spread of bikie gangs and international crime syndicates. Ice is linked to family violence, increases in crime, and places an immense amount of pressure on all our emergency service providers. Unfortunately Tasmania has not escaped the shocking damage the scourge of ice has on individuals, families and our communities. Our tough-on-crime approach here will help cut and disrupt supply and make Tasmania a safe place, which of course is our key objective.

Police intelligence indicates that outlaw motorcycle gangs are major participants in the importation and trafficking of ice in our state, and since 2000 senior gang members in Tasmania have been responsible for, and charged with, some of the most significant methamphetamine importations in the state's history.

The Police Offences Amendment (Prohibited Insignia) Bill 2018 I will be tabling today will prohibit the display of insignia that promotes criminal associations and causes fear in the community. Outlaw motorcycle gangs use the wearing of colours to recruit and also intimidate members of the public. The wearing of colours and insignia is also used to threaten people and deter them from reporting crime or even giving evidence. There have been many arrests, convictions and individuals sent to jail. Police intelligence highlights a continuing and disturbing pattern of well-organised crime which unfortunately places our communities, families and children at unacceptable risk. Until we legislate to stop this, Tasmania is a soft target for criminals, especially given that other states have already implemented this legislation but we have not.

Social riding clubs can be reassured - and this is an important point - that as law-abiding bikers they will not be affected by this bill. Our message to Tasmanians is that if you are a member of one of Tasmania's many law-abiding motorcycle clubs, the colours prohibition laws will simply not apply to you at all. This bill targets only outlaw motorcycle gangs. I reassert the fact that social riding clubs and law-abiding motorcycle groups make up the vast majority of riders and they will also benefit from a safer Tasmania.

A detailed period of public consultation on these changes has already occurred to identify and address any deficiencies we have and weigh up the importance of public safety against individual freedoms, which is important.

This Government is committed and will continue to work on modernising Tasmania's consorting offences, which are out of date, in line with similar provisions in other jurisdictions to support contemporary preventative policing practices that will allow our authorities to act an early stage to prevent or reduce serious crime. This effort is strongly recommended by Tasmania Police and the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission as necessary steps for us to deal with the scourge of ice, organised crime and horrific violence, and it is anticipated that this matter will be brought to Parliament before the end of 2018.

Madam Speaker, the Government has a duty to ensure that community safety is paramount and to provide our trusted Tasmania Police with adequate tools to deal with organised crime. This bill is the first step in achieving this. We have successfully restored police numbers by 113 and committed to recruit at least another 125 over this term of government. This bill, together with our investment in a first-class next-generation police force, will position our state to fight the illegal drug trade.

National Firearms Agreement - Proposed Changes by Tasmanian Government

Ms WHITE question to MEMBER for LYONS, Mr HIDDING referred to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.29 a.m.]

Did you advised the Premier that changes to Tasmania's firearms laws did not breach the National Firearms Agreement and what did you base that advice on?

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Questions to private members are out of order.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Standing order 43 clearly says that questions to ministers or other members are allowed during questions seeking information and that questions can go to members that may concern public matters connected with the House.

Madam SPEAKER - With the indulgence of the House, I have received advice that previous rulings have been in relation to bills and motions. I heard the Premier offer to answer that question, if he is happy to accept that?

Mr HODGMAN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am more than happy to take the question.

Mr Ferguson - You are out of order and there is a generous offer in front of you.

Ms White - Do not reflect on the Chair.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, a couple of disturbing demonstrations of petulance by the Leader of the Opposition there and Opposition members in calling into question the advice of the Clerk and a ruling of the Speaker to a matter of process which goes to a sense of maturity that should exist in this place, and that is to abide by the rules. I am more than happy to answer the question again and say that when -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. The parliamentary behaviour is unbecoming and I am requesting all sides of the House to please look after themselves and look out for the rules.

Mr HODGMAN - I am more than prepared to have the policy that we took to the election tested in a parliamentary inquiry to allow members of our community to have their say and for any question, as the Leader of the Opposition has suggested there might be, with respect to the national firearms agreement, be tested through that process.

I want to make a couple of points about the Opposition because it seems to be something they are now avoiding. Perhaps the media is not fully aware of it but it goes to the hypocrisy of Labor. I know it may be the case that like many of the policies they took to the election they no longer want to talk about their firearms policy. We are not sure what they stand for. You would not know if you read the Leader of the Opposition's speech what they stand for. I can tell you what they stood for on 27 February 2018, only a few days before the election, when the Leader of the Opposition wrote to firearms owners organisations and clubs. I will not have time to read through it all but I want to select something.

Members interjecting.

Mr HODGMAN - I want to refer to some bits. I know they do not want me to which is why they are now screaming on cue. I want everyone to hear it.

Labor recognises the legitimate use of firearms for competitive shooting, hunting and as an important tool -

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. This is a very important issue. I ask the Premier to table the document from which he is quoting.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. I understand the game that is played here but the more points of order we get today the fewer opportunities for questions we will get.

Mr HODGMAN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is important that the public, the media, those with an interest in this issue, understand exactly what the Labor Party said about firearms policy just a few days before election day.

Labor recognises the legitimate use of firearms for competitive shooting, hunting as well as an important tool of trade for farmers and other professional groups including the collection of antique and other firearms.

Labor ... strongly supports the NFA

as do we. We set it up. We, the Liberal Party, set the National Firearms Agreement up. It goes on to outline a whole range of things that Labor will do:

- consult with firearm organisations and clubs to establish an agreed, formal expert based structure that is able to provide timely advice to Government on firearm policy and issues.

That sounds very familiar.

Acknowledge the submission by farmer groups, particularly the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, (TFGA) regarding regulatory issues encountered by farmers and others which frustrate and impede legitimate day to day use of firearms. Following the election of a Labor government immediate action will be taken to consult with the TFGA and others to address the legitimate concerns that have been highlighted.

They will move to introduce the use of infringement notices. I know you do not want to listen to it. They will move to introduce the use of infringement notices in lieu of a summons for very minor breaches of firearms storage regulations.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The Premier seems to know more about Labor's policy than his own. Table your advice so that we can all know what you are talking about.

Madam SPEAKER - Ruled out of order.

Mr HODGMAN - I will conclude. I know a lot about this firearms policy because it is very similar to what we were suggesting should occur.

Labor will address and resolve the interstate transfer restrictions on reloaded ammunition.

Is that a weakening you are proposing? 'It is presently greatly reducing attendances at shooting events and they will support the use of firearms on registered ranges and will, where appropriate, assist clubs and organisations to develop secure, safe and appropriate facilities.'

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. It goes to my earlier point of order that you ruled was not a point of order. The Standing Orders in the Tasmanian Parliament are silent on requests to table documents from which the member is reading. In circumstances where our Standing Orders are silent, we refer to the practice in the House of Representatives which can request that a member table the document from which he is quoting. I ask you to seek some advice as to whether the member will table this. This is a serious issue and we are very open and honest about what we did.

Mr FERGUSON - Point of order, Madam Speaker. This is very imprudent behaviour from the Opposition. The Premier is offering to answer a question that was disorderly and out of order. The member is expressing how uncomfortable she is that the Premier is answering, using her Leader's own words. I hope the Premier can be allowed to continue.

Madam SPEAKER - With due respect, Premier, I need a ruling from the Clerk that may overrule this. The ruling is that whilst you have requested the Premier to table the document, if the Premier does not want to table the document, there is nothing to compel him to do so.

At this opportunity I am going to stand up and say the decibel reading in this room can be heard in Launceston. It is really inappropriate. If this behaviour continues this morning I will be suspending the House and robbing everyone of time for more questions. Please calm down and let us get on with the business of the House.

Mr HODGMAN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will conclude by saying I have no intention of tabling the Labor Party policy on firearms. If they want to do that, that is a matter for them.

Rhetorically, I ask the Leader of the Opposition, if she would like to do as she demands and table the advice she received in relation to all these proposals and whether they breach the National Firearms Agreement?

Ms White - You referenced 'police advice'. What police advice did you reference? What are you hiding behind?

Mr HODGMAN - No. One standard for them, one for the rest of us. We will stand by our policy commitments, unlike the weak Leader of the Opposition who has shown this week, that she stands for nothing. We will do nothing to weaken our firearms laws either.

Renewable Energy Generation System

Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER FOR ENERGY, Mr BARNETT

[10.37 a.m.]

Can the minister update the House on the plans to increase the capacity of Tasmania's renewable energy generation system and recent developments in energy pricing?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question. The Hodgman Liberal Government is committed to delivering secure and affordable energy for Tasmanians as part of our Tasmania First energy policy. In a few short months, since our policy was emphatically supported at the recent state election, the Tasmanian people have seen a number of positive developments to deliver lower prices and a secure and reliable supply of energy to Tasmanian families and Tasmanian businesses.

These include the successful conclusion of the gas arbitration between Tasmanian Gas Pipeline and Hydro Tasmania, delivering security for Tasmanian customers, the \$10 million budget initiative to extend the energy price rebate for eligible commercial and industrial customers and the capping of regulated energy prices to CPI.

I expect an announcement from the regulator on electricity prices shortly. It will give certainty and confidence to mums and dads and Tasmanian businesses, large and small. Tasmanians will be able to contrast this to the chaotic and inflationary arrangements under Labor where, over seven years, there was a 65 per cent increase in power prices.

In 2013, the Labor-Greens government linked Tasmanian power prices to Victorian power prices under the volatile National Electricity Market. The wholesale prices in the National Electricity Market have increased alarmingly since then. Had we not intervened last year and again this year, the volatility in those prices would have flowed through to impact adversely and detrimentally on Tasmanian households and businesses.

Tasmanians are paying less now than when we first came to government in 2014. The Government has committed to de-linking from the National Electricity Market pricing mechanism

so that Tasmanians pay Tasmanian prices on Tasmanian energy, not Victorian prices on Tasmanian energy. Under this policy you will see savings of 7 per cent to 10 per cent in due course.

The best years are ahead of us in the wave of new renewable hydro and wind generation that is on its way. Tasmania is the renewable energy powerhouse. Over the last few weeks the Premier and I were with Josh Frydenberg at Lake Cethana, and our federal and state colleagues are working shoulder to shoulder looking at potential pumped hydro sites to deliver a \$5 billion investment over a 10-year to 15-year period, creating 3000 jobs and doubling the hydro output in terms of our capacity in Tasmania.

Proceeding with further interconnection to the mainland will unlock a range of renewable energy developments across the state. Now is the time to drive that change. Today I joined the CEO of Hydro Tasmania for another major announcement. Together with the federal government, Arena and the state Government through Hydro, we are committing \$5 million for a feasibility study to look at the design over the next 18 months and the results are very encouraging. It could deliver \$500 million worth of investment in the redeveloped Tarraleah power station. This is a power station built in 1930, one of the oldest of the 30 power stations across Tasmania, and it will double the capacity from 104 megawatts to 220 megawatts and create hundreds of jobs in engineering and construction, particularly in the central highlands, the Derwent Valley and southern Tasmania. It is very encouraging and we are focusing on the prospects for good results. This is all consistent with our Tasmania First energy policy to deliver the lowest power prices in Australia and fully renewable self-sufficiency by 2022.

In conclusion, I note that the January 2018 report from the Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator confirmed that Tasmania has already the second-lowest annual electricity prices for residential customers and the lowest for business, but we want to do more and deliver more for Tasmanians. By investing in projects such as Tarraleah we can achieve our ambitious targets and cement our status as the renewable energy powerhouse of the nation.

National Firearms Agreement - Proposed Changes by Tasmanian Government

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.43 a.m.]

Right to information documents have revealed advice from the Police department in relation to your policy on Tasmania's firearms laws. The RTI applications requesting the advice you received from Mr Hidding prior to the election have been denied. Does that advice even exist?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, yes, we took advice and made decisions about our policies that we took to the election. My question to the Leader of the Opposition is whether they still stand by the policy they took to the election and released just a few days before election day, unlike us, which was some weeks?

We stand by our decision to allow this matter to be tested by the parliamentary inquiry, and rightly so. They should also have a look at what Labor was proposing to do. My categorical commitment to the Tasmanian people is that we are the party that set up the National Firearms

Agreement and we believe in it. The laws that support lawful gun users have been strengthened in Tasmania, including under this Government, and we will do nothing to weaken these laws.

I ask the hypocritical Leader of the Opposition and her colleagues if they still stand by this policy, much of which was very similar to ours, and will they release the advice they received with respect to it?

Budget 2018-19 - Emergency Accommodation Funding

Ms WHITE question to TREASURER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.44 a.m.]

This week in the federal parliament your colleague, the Prime Minister, was insulting in his assessment of ordinary Australian workers when he said, 'The 60-year-old aged care worker in Burnie is entitled to aspire to get a better job'. In a Liberal Party meeting after the Tasmanian election when concerns were raised about the growing number of homeless people seeking refuge at the Hobart Showground, a Cabinet minister said, 'You're in the Liberal Party, not the Labor Party'. Last Thursday, budget day, you were asked how you thought homeless Tasmanians would react to the lack of any new initiatives for homelessness and housing affordability and you said, 'That is a matter for them, isn't it?'.

Does this callous remark towards the housing crisis sum up your heartless attitude toward the homeless, and is it the reason there was no new money in this Budget to support emergency accommodation?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. I will have to check what was reported because I do not remember receiving that question regarding the homeless. I was asked a question about stakeholders and some of the comments that have been made. I will need to check that because you might have once again misled the parliament which, to be frank, is what we have come to expect from that side of the House.

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. It is a serious allegation to say that the Leader of the Opposition misled. When the Treasurer is found to be wrong in his assessment now, will he come back to the House and tell us what he said on the ABC?

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. I ask the Treasurer to resume.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, I will check very carefully what was reported and look at what was said. I would not trust anything said by those on that side of the House.

Regarding affordable housing, we have doubled the investment into Affordable Housing Strategy 2 from 1 July. There is \$25 million additional funding on 1 July and \$100 million additional over four years out of a \$125 million investment over five years. It is the single largest investment ever into affordable housing in this state. On 1 July, \$45 million will be available and I think there is an additional almost \$10 million, so it is around \$55 million going forward this year on affordable housing.

Our Budget provides the opportunity for everybody to step up and benefit from what is a strong, growing economy that is attracting investment and creating jobs at a rate that those on that side of the House could only dream of. Who can forget that under the Labor Party with the Greens in the last term 10 000 jobs were lost. Tasmanians were leaving the state in droves and there was a recession occurring in Tasmania. That is what occurred under the Labor-Greens government.

The Budget that we have delivered provides and underpins more than 9000 new jobs being created across the four years, on top of the 13 400 jobs this Government has delivered since it took office only four years ago. Furthermore, on top of the record spend we have made into Housing, we have made a record spend into roads and bridges, Health and Education.

On that side of the House it is never good enough. I have said on many occasions in this place that whingeing is not a policy and complaining is not a platform. They are making an art form out of it. The fact is that they had a chance on Tuesday to explain to Tasmanians what they stand for, to look at our Budget and explain what was wrong with it and, importantly, make changes to it to outline what they would do. What did they do? They squibbed it. They stand for nothing. The Leader of the Opposition's speech was the worst, the most pathetic, the most insipid that I have heard in my time in this place. What she did was-

Ms White - You can personally insult me if you like. It goes to your character.

Mr GUTWEIN - Everyone in this place provides a critique. I get it every day. If the Leader of the Opposition cannot stand the heat, she should get out of the kitchen.

Mr Bacon - Oh is that right, tough guy? You have picked a few fights. How did you go with the MAIB?

Mr GUTWEIN - How did you go yesterday? You snuck in here last night under darkness to say you had something wrong: to explain that you had misled the House.

Mr Bacon - One word.

Mr GUTWEIN - We are still waiting for you to provide your second apology, because you misled twice.

Mr Bacon - So what is 2.25 minus two?

Mr GUTWEIN - If I were you I would get a calculator, because you are not good with numbers.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - When will the shadow treasurer provide to the House an explanation for the other misleading statement he made about public sector wages over the last four years? A 2 per cent wages policy while the CPI averages 1.6 per cent to 1.7 per cent: doing better over the last four years in keeping pace with inflation, in fact in front of inflation. The shadow treasurer needs to sneak into this place tonight under darkness and correct the record like he did last night.

Safe Access Zones - Termination Services

Ms O'BYRNE question to ATTORNEY-GENERAL, Ms ARCHER

[10.52 a.m.]

Australia's Solicitor-General and the Attorneys-General from four states - Labor states Western Australia and Queensland, and Liberal states New South Wales and South Australia - have formally intervened in a High Court case launched by an anti-abortion protestor appealing against a conviction for breaching Victoria's safe access zones. Their case is being assisted by the Australian Christian Lobby. Considering that Tasmania led the way with safe access zones, why have you not prepared a submission? Is it a fact that Tasmania has not joined this action because your Cabinet is dominated by the conservative right who do not believe women should be protected from protestors while accessing termination services?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. This is a political question. I have no personal knowledge of that case. I can get information on it, but I am not going to participate in a grubby little political issue that you want to make out of a serious issue of an ongoing case about which I know nothing. It is before the High Court so it would be inappropriate for me to comment at this stage.

Budget 2018-19 - Sport and Recreation

Mr BROOKS question to MINISTER for SPORT and RECREATION, Mrs PETRUSMA

[10.54 a.m.]

Can the minister please outline how the majority Hodgman Liberal Government investment in sport and recreation in the 2018-19 Budget has been received? Are you aware of any alternatives?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Braddon for his question and his passion for sport and recreation. I congratulate the Treasurer on the Budget, which delivers on our commitments on time and in full. It has been well received not only in sport and recreation, but right across the board.

The Government's goal is for Tasmania to have the healthiest population in Australia and reduce our rates of obesity to below the national average by 2025. We support the development of high quality and well planned sport and recreation facilities, programs and initiatives, which encourage and assist Tasmanians to achieve these goals by being physically active.

Funding grassroots sporting organisations is critical to ensuring that all Tasmanians have an equal opportunity in their local community to participate in sport and recreation activities. Sport plays an important role in improving physical and mental health and building community connections and social skills. Some of the sport and recreation initiatives in this year's Budget include -

- (1) Levelling the playing field. Our investment of \$10 million over the next two years for new and improved, female-friendly facilities and amenities is

the largest investment per capita in girls' and women's facilities by any state or territory government in Australia.

Cricket Tasmania and AFL Tasmania have both warmly welcomed it.

- (2) Ticket to play. This is our \$3 million investment to subsidise sport to 30 000 disadvantaged children across the state. Sporting clubs have welcomed this. As Football Federation Tasmania's Bob Gordon, said, 'The initiative was a great way to improve the opportunities for young people to get into sport'.

Bob Gregory, from Hockey Tasmania, said, 'Without doubt, this will enable the number of kids playing sport to grow, which is good for kids'. Netball Tasmania CEO, Aaron Pidgeon, said, 'The funding would help children begin what would hopefully be a long involvement in sport'.

There is also \$10 million for a new indoor sports facility in the Glenorchy municipality, capable of hosting a multitude of sports including basketball, netball, gymnastics and more. There is also \$2 million towards the proposed redevelopment of the northern tennis centre.

Members interjecting

Madam SPEAKER - Mr Bacon, I have to warn you, and Mr Barnett, that I will run the Chamber as I see fit, thank you.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Thank you, Madam Speaker.

There is \$1.8 million for Surf Life Saving Tasmania to keep people active and safe on our magnificent coastlines and beaches. There is \$3 million for a new hydrotherapy pool at the Doone Kennedy Aquatic Centre to treat and assist rehabilitation. There is \$300 000 for redevelopment of the traditional home of football, North Hobart Oval. There is \$240 000 in extra funding to Cricket Tasmania to help support their women's high performance program. It is an investment the CEO of Cricket Tasmania, Nick Cummins, says, 'recognises the importance that women's cricket plays in our community'. Erin Fazackerley, Tasmanian Tiger and Hobart Hurricanes all-rounder, said -

The Government's investment in the female program shows great confidence and trust in the players and is a strong commitment to the growth of cricket as a sport for all.

We are investing this money because this Government understands how important these investments are to their local community. Dorset Mayor Councillor Greg Howard, in last Saturday's *Examiner*, said in regard to our investment of \$3 million into Scottsdale sports facilities, that -

Investment in regional community projects was a major win in this year's state Budget. While it may only be a small piece of a multi-billion dollar budget it was very important to the community.

The member asked me if there were any alternatives. When it comes to the Opposition the answer is no.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mrs PETRUSMA - While the Leader of the Opposition may have outsourced the job of Opposition to at least a dozen committees - I am coming to you, Mr O'Byrne.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. If we stop all the nonsense we will get another question in.

Mrs PETRUSMA - While the Leader of the Opposition may have outsourced the job of Opposition to at least a dozen committees, sport and recreation is one portfolio that has missed out. It is not even worthy of a committee. Based on her budget reply speech it is a portfolio that Ms White does not even think is worthy of her or Labor's time or energy.

Madam SPEAKER - Minister, I respectfully ask you wind up.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Sport and Recreation was not mentioned in the Leader of the Opposition's speech, nor was it mentioned in the shadow minister for sport and recreation's speech either. This shows that the Labor Party has no policy, no interest, no initiatives and nothing to do with Sport and Recreation. At least the Greens had an alternative policy, which was to stop AFL and the V8s, to be killjoys and stop having fun.

Catholic Care - Funding

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for HUMAN SERVICES, Mr JAENSCH

[11.01 a.m.]

That was a disgraceful waste of taxpayers' money - six-and-a-half minutes on a Dorothy Dixier.

Among the single biggest beneficiaries of public funding in your portfolio is Catholic Care which, according to its most recent annual report, received more than \$7 million in government funding last year. If the Catholic Church leadership in Tasmania continues to tell its priests they will be above the law do you agree the Government, that is your department, must review the allocation of public funds to its service delivery arm?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Greens for her question, but I do not know what she is doing, though. The Leader of the Greens has added the Catholic Church generally and globally to her list of things that she hates -

Ms O'Connor - I beg your pardon? I was baptised Catholic. Do not impugn me.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. We have about 30 seconds left.

Mr JAENSCH - including China, V8 super cars - which by the way run on ethanol these days - including anything containing metal and then trying to draw the link to any form of contractual arrangement that this Government has -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I take personal offence to the minister's statement that I hate the Catholic Church. That is untrue. It was a legitimate question about public funds being given to an organisation whose leadership is prepared to defy the law.

Madam SPEAKER - Mr Jaensch, I ask you to apologise for saying the member hates the Catholic Church.

Mr JAENSCH - Ms O'Connor may not hate the Catholic Church but she hates all the other things I listed, including China, V8 super cars, anything containing metal, people who eat meat, white men -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The minister needs to control himself.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I am going to control everyone. The time for questions has expired.

TABLED PAPERS

Public Works Committee - Reports

Mr Brooks tabled the following reports of the Standing Committee on Public Works:

Report on Hobart Airport Roundabout; and

Report on Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct and Visitor Centre

Reports received.

POLICE OFFENCES AMENDMENT (PROHIBITED INSIGNIA) BILL 2018 (No. 21)

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Ferguson** and read the first time.

SITTING DATES

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business - Motion) (by leave) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House at its rising today adjourn until Tuesday 3 July next at 10.00 a.m.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Leave to Suspend Standing Orders to Move Motion Forthwith

[11.07 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon - Motion) - Madam Speaker, I seek leave to move -

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended so as to move a motion calling on the Premier to table all the advice he has received about the Liberals' firearms policy and the National Firearms Agreement.

This an urgent matter. The Premier today in question time said in his own words, 'This is an important area of public policy and that is why this matter needs to be cleaned up with haste.' We are urging the Premier to release all advice he received before the election saying that their policy does not breach the National Firearms Agreement.

We have a letter released by Mr Hidding that was hidden from public view until two days before the election when it was outed. There was no consultation with the public apart from the firearms users. What it says is a prima facie case that it breaches the National Firearms Agreement, so we need to have the advice to see why they are saying it does not.

We have some major issues. This policy document talks about the extension of firearm licences for up to 10 years. When we look back at the National Firearms Agreement, point 34(d) says very specifically that a licence must -

Mr BROOKS - Point of order, Madam Speaker, going to relevance. The member should be arguing why he is seeking leave, not the merits of the case or his arguments for the motion. I ask he be brought to the subject of why he needs it urgently.

Dr BROAD - Madam Speaker, I am arguing it is urgent because there is a prima facie case that their policy breaches the National Firearms Agreement. This is important public policy, as was admitted by the Premier in question time. There is a deliberate breach here.

Mr Shelton - You should be arguing why it is urgent and why you need to do it today.

Dr BROAD - Because there a breach of the National Firearms Agreement. Point 34(d) says, 'A licence must be issued for a period of no more than five years.' That is a direct contravention to the policy. Ten years is what the Liberals are saying, so it is a direct breach of the National Firearms Agreement. Even more concerning is that the letter talks about a creation of a new category E to encompass prohibited firearms. That is nothing more than back-door approach to allow greater access to weapons like semi-automatic firearms and pump-action shotguns, et cetera.

This issue has been dragging on. Tasmanians need confidence that the Premier makes decisions based on sound advice. That is why this is urgent. The Premier was relying on advice from his then police minister and he should release it. He should table it and clear this up once and for all, and that is why this motion is urgent.

The Premier in question time today was saying that the public should have their say. They did not get a chance to have their say on this before the release of the report. The Premier has spent question time talking about our policy. Our policy does not talk about an extension of licences to 10 years, a deliberate breach of the National Firearms Agreement. Our policy does not talk about creating a new category of firearms, which is an extreme breach of the National Firearms Agreement. Even more concerning, the Premier today has spoken about how the National Firearms Agreement is the guiding principle and it was set up by the Liberal Party. We have the Liberal policy. It does not mention the National Firearms Agreement once. Not once. Their whole policy document, the whole three to four pages of it, does not mention the National Firearms policy once.

Our policy says:

Labor strongly supports the National Firearms Agreement established following the tragic shooting event at Port Arthur.

Mr BROOKS - Point of order, Madam Speaker. On relevance. This is about seeking leave to move a motion. It is not about debating the motion. Dr Broad should know by now what the rules of the House mean. I ask him to be drawn back to him seeking leave, which is what this debate is about.

Madam SPEAKER - Could you get back to the question of leave?

Dr BROAD - This is an urgent matter because it goes to the integrity of the Premier and the integrity of the advice that the Premier has seen. How can the Tasmanian public have confidence that the Premier is making these very important public policy decisions based on good advice? We have a policy that does not reference the National Firearms Agreement once. Not only does it breach the National Firearms Agreement it does not even reference the National Firearms Agreement. Yet in question time today we had the Premier talking about the importance of the National Firearms Agreement when the Liberal's policy does not even reference it. That is an absolute outrage. This needs to be cleared up.

What is the advice? Table the advice. That is what this motion would do if we get permission to proceed: to table that advice and clear up this issue once and for all, because the public does have to have confidence. This is a very difficult issue for people. The National Firearms Agreement was put in place after the tragic events of Port Arthur. That is why we say in our policy that we strongly support the National Firearms Agreement and recognise that it was established following the event of Port Arthur. With that background we need to understand why the Premier has put in place a policy that is a direct breach. There is a prima facie case where a licence must not be issued for a period of five years and yet their policy is to do exactly that - to breach that by extending it to 10 years. That is why we are seeking leave. This is an important policy position.

You can rabbit on about what you think our policy is. Our policy does not breach the National Firearms Agreement; yours does. Where is the advice that says that it does not? This is what you are relying on. This is the straw man argument, that the then minister produced advice.

Mr Hidding - Who suckered you into doing this?

Dr BROAD - Table that advice. What about your letter? Are you ashamed that you did not reference the National Firearms Agreement once? Here is your document and you did not reference the National Firearms Agreement once. The pre-eminent guiding principles for firearms control in Australia is the National Firearms Agreement and your firearms policy does not reference it once. How can you do that? That is why this is urgent. We need your advice that has led to this cover up. This cover up must be unpicked. Table the advice. This is why this is urgent. All you are constantly doing is covering up, not releasing your advice.

We need to have confidence that the Premier is acting in good faith and not simply taking the word of the minister. This will finally clear this up. Does the advice exist? Was there written advice from the Police minister? Was it just a phone call saying, 'Yes, I think it is okay'? We need to know. This is important public policy. We have an upper House inquiry, which is the back door to try to cover up some of these issues and you know it.

You have recognised that you did not give the public a chance to comment on the firearms policy. This has set back sensible firearms changes. The sneaky manner in which this was produced

has created a situation where there is no public appetite for any changes, even sensible changes like the ones that were recognised in our policy. Simple things like changing in-use provisions that do not breach the National Firearms Agreement, whereas things like extending licences and creating a back door for people's access to semiautomatic machine guns does.

Time expired.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Could I have your indulgence please. I have been given advice to read:

On Wednesday, 13 June last, the House resolved, amongst other things, 'That Government business take precedence from such time as the Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2018 and the Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2018 are introduced, until the House has dealt with all business associated with the budget.

The resolution commits the House to a course of action and does not provide a mechanism for the House to deviate from that course, such as by the inclusion of the words, unless the House otherwise orders', which is a procedural device to cater for a change of mind or circumstance.

The Honourable Member for Braddon has moved for leave to move a motion without notice for the purpose of moving the suspension of Standing Orders to enable debate on a substantive motion.

Were these two procedural motions to be successful to enable the substantive motion to be moved, this would clearly contravene the Order of the House as business associated with the budget has not concluded.

The precise circumstances of today's proceedings were the subject of a ruling by Speaker Madill on the 21 August 1997 and by Speaker Archer on 4 June 2015 - in each case, the Speaker ruled that such motions were not acceptable.

Accordingly, unless the resolution of the House which has ordered the precedence of Government Business as rescinded, I am unable to accept the Honourable Member's motion for leave.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Is there any other formal business?

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Can we get from the Government an indication that if we did move a motion that amended the orders of the House at the moment to allow such a serious suspension to be considered, would they be amenable? Would they be amenable to facilitating this extremely significant concern raised by the member for Braddon, Dr Broad? If that is the only barrier, then surely we should be able to seek from the Leader of Government Business an indication as to whether he would be amenable to allow us to have this conversation?

Mr FERGUSON - On indulgence, Madam Speaker. I have been invited to listen to what the member opposite has just said on indulgence. I will keep this very brief. Members opposite have completely failed to upend the business of the day in this attempt to move a motion which is out of

order. Every member of this House supported a motion that gave special times allocated for the Budget to be the only priority for the week and government business to ensure that we could allow every member to have their say on the Budget. I recommend that members understand the standing orders, and recognise that the House has resolved in a particular way. Had this been a motion seeking leave, had it been in order, a procedural motion, I would have argued that it is not going to take precedence over the budget bills. There has been no case made as to its urgency. In any event, nothing is going to happen anytime soon while the inquiry is underway.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for your wise ruling on this matter and I recommend that we get on with the business of the day.

Dr WOODRUFF - On the point of order, Madam Speaker, the Government has the capacity to extend the sitting hours of the House tonight. They have already done that on multiple occasions since this session of parliament re-started. The Government has done it almost every week. We did that last night. This is an urgent issue because it goes to the heart of secrecy and dishonesty. It goes to the heart of what Tasmanians were led to believe was going to happen before the election and what actually happened. This is a matter that is in the Supreme Court for listing because the Premier is refusing to table advice.

Now we have this extra information from Tasmania Police that it does appear that the Government's policy to weaken gun laws would breach the National Firearms Agreement. It is urgent that we have this conversation today.

Madam SPEAKER - It is not a point of order. We have already ruled on this decision and I must admit with your long explanation that I forgot the rest of the words, but apparently it is not a point of order. It was an interesting point, thank you.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Forestry and Mining Jobs in North-West Tasmania

[11.20 a.m.]

Mr BROOKS (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: the number of forestry and mining jobs in north-west Tasmania.

This is a crucial issue not only for those in Braddon, but across the state. Under the Labor-Greens dysfunctional rabble between 2010 and 2014 we saw the destruction of the vital forestry industry. Those job losses were felt in the heartland of Braddon and throughout regional Tasmania including Lyons. The policy not only impacted on business confidence but more importantly on the forest industry across the north-west.

Jobs are important. Business confidence is important for driving jobs growth that you need. Braddon is the heartland of forestry and mining. Those industries are important for continued economic growth. Economic growth continues to become more -

Ms O'Connor - You're floundering.

Mr BROOKS - Coming from you. There are more than 11 000 new jobs in Tasmania under a majority Hodgman Liberal Government. The flow-on affects business and consumer spending.

It is driven by business investment and businesses' belief that they have a government that backs them. The forestry industry was on its knees and sold out by a once proud Labor Party.

Ms O'Connor - Are you aware that in the last term of government 1100 forestry jobs were lost.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order

Mr BROOKS - Some members think they are above the rules.

The proportion of those 11 000 jobs, dependant on mining, mineral processing and forestry in Tasmania, are based in the north-west. When Labor and the Greens were in government, they hatched the jobs-destroying Tasmanian forest agreement. It was an unmitigated disaster. That is what the community said in the 2014 election. Those members might not like the will of the people. They do not understand that the majority of Tasmanians do not like the Labor Party. However, in their normal arrogant way they will ignore that and use it for their own self advantage. The community stood up to the anti-everything brigade and the sell-out policies of the once proud Labor Party in the 2014 election because they were sick of seeing their jobs sold out. Labor sold its soul to appease their Greens cabinet masters. It continues today, despite the so-called promises by the Leader of the Opposition. Mr O'Byrne licks his lips every time something goes wrong for the Opposition. The current Leader of the Opposition would sell her soul to cosy up to the Greens, because she needs their numbers.

At the last election she led the Labor Party to its third worst defeat in history, yet members over there say they want to talk about jobs. You were not keen to talk about jobs when you sold jobs out from industry in Braddon. You were not keen to talk about jobs when you announced in your budget that you would shut 20 schools. That is the legacy of a Labor-Greens disaster. Ms Dow, what is your position on the relocation of Mineral Resources Tasmania? Do you support the relocation of MRT to Burnie?

Members interjecting.

Mr BROOKS - Dr Broad, do you support the relocation of MRT to Burnie?

Dr BROAD - Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, I draw the member's attention to the notice of motion. It is about jobs. It is a very important issue. Trying to bring a straw man argument about our policy is not the intent of the -

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Dr Broad, that is not a point of order. The use of points of order to obstruct the course of the debate is highly disorderly.

Mr BROOKS - Dr Broad's failure to understand standing orders is on display. He does not get what drives jobs. What drives jobs is business confidence and investment confidence. Putting the government agency in charge of mining in the heartland of mining helps drives jobs. We proudly stand on our record of investment and jobs in the north-west, while you on the other side of the House fail. Regarding your policy to move MRT out of Burnie, shame on you for taking more jobs out of the north-west and putting them back in Hobart. Why do you not accept you are wrong for once in your lives?

The announcement of the Hermal project at Hampshire is a game changer that will create another 220 jobs. It would never have happened under the lack of leadership -

Ms O'Connor - Do you realise jobs have crashed in forestry on your watch?

Mr BROOKS - of those opposite. We will not apologise for standing beside industry, for standing up for jobs, for standing up for the community. Those opposite prove they are unable to stand up for that. Therefore they are unworthy of being in government any time soon. They just do not get it.

Time expired.

[11.27 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, jobs on the north-west coast is an important issue. However, Mr Brooks is only concerned with his own job. He continues to cast his mind to the past because he cannot focus on the future. What is his future? That is the job he probably should be more concerned about. The member for Braddon says business confidence is important. It is important. In the forest industry, confidence is everything. That is why businesses do not want conflict in the forest industry because everything has moved on. The Tasmanian Forest Agreement has happened, but when we talk about jobs on the north-west coast, let us talk about projects.

Let us talk about Hydrowood, which salvages logs from beneath the water. It is bringing world-leading technology to Tasmania. Hydrowood and SFM Forest Products extract valuable timber from Lake Pieman. The harvested timber can then be milled to make fantastic furniture for Tasmania. It highlights the good things in our forest industry. That project received its funding from the Tasmanian Forest Agreement. Ta Ann's plywood mill value adds to a value added product, by peeling logs. Ta Ann peels logs, creating a value added product, and then they value add again with a plywood mill. Instead of exporting just the peel, they export plywood. They received funding from the Tasmanian Forest Agreement. Britton Brothers received money from the Tasmanian Forest Agreement to expand. The point of the Tasmanian Forest Agreement was to create new opportunities to transition out of old forestry into the new forestry.

Hermel Group is creating a fantastic opportunity for the north-west coast, Tasmania and Australia. It is a cutting-edge product that can be exported all over the world. They are exploring markets in Australia and the Middle East. How could that project have happened? They are insistent that the only way this project of theirs will work, the only way they are going to put their money and to create those jobs that are so needed on the north-west coast, is an industry that is based 100 per cent of plantations and FSC certified. That would not have happened unless there was a Tasmanian Forest Agreement.

What we saw with the forest industry was the collapse of Gunns. They went broke. That had nothing to do with a Labor government. Gunns left the industry in disarray and half of the industry went with them. Then out of the ashes we had New Forest purchase the plantations, convert them to FSC and that now enables a project like the Hermal Group. The Hermal Group is a result of the TFA. The only reason that a project like that is possible is because of the TFA. If the project was not based on plantations and was not FSC-certified, Hermal would not be in Tasmania making these investments.

We have other investments. We have the Huon Aquaculture smokehouse in Sassafras. That was TFA money. We have Tasmanian Irrigation, the Dial Blythe Irrigation Scheme. That was Tasmanian Forest Agreement money. That is the reason why we have had Costa's expansion at Howarth. Costa also got money through berry exchange for their expansion. A million dollars of funding went to Costa to enable them to expand their operations in Tasmania.

These are job creating projects. They have created jobs. They have transitioned our industry. To put your head in the sand and pretend that the Tasmanian Forest Agreement did nothing and destroyed jobs is completely wrong. It was difficult. There was a transition but you have to remember that half the industry went when Gunns went broke and that has got nothing to do with a Labor government.

It is projects like Hydrowood, the Ta Ann plywood mill and projects on the horizon, like the those the Hermal Group is putting in with the cross-laminated timber factory, that are the new forest industry. It is a sustainable industry, based on plantations that can keep going and going. Plantations can be planted and replanted, then milled again, creating what is a world-leading project bringing expertise into the north-west coast and leading the way.

The member for Braddon always talks about what was happening under the Labor government. The Australia dollar was at a \$1.10. That has nothing to do with the Tasmanian government at all. Then between 2013 and 2014 the Australian dollar dropped and then precipitously dropped when the Liberals were elected to be sitting down at 75 cents, which has had a massive impact on our trade-exposed economy. With a trade-exposed economy sitting at \$1.10 it meant there were questions around potato production at Simplot because they could not compete with Americans dumping product into Australia because the dollar was so high. From what I gather the level is about 85 cents. If the Australian dollar is below 85 cents then Tasmanian products like potato chips are far more competitive. With the Australian dollar sitting at \$1.10 to the US dollar it meant that our country was getting flooded with products like potato chips and wood products. That had a significant impact and put significant pressures on Tasmania's industries.

Since 2013 - and especially after 2014 - we have seen a massive drop in the Australian dollar which has nothing to do with the government. It opened up opportunities to reinvest, as we are seeing in Hydrowood, the plywood mill, in Britton Brothers, and which we are seeing with the Hermal Group.

Also, we talk about mining. The member for Braddon, Mr Brooks, talks about mining.

Time expired.

[11.34 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, Mr Brooks, as the member for Braddon, does his community a terrible disservice because he recycles the same speech over and over again. This morning in the office when the question went out what do you reckon the matter of public importance debate is, we all knew it would be Mr Brooks talking about jobs on the north-west coast. It is the only narrative that he has to offer. He does it for politics and he does not put forward any positive solutions for jobs on the north-west coast. In a staggering display of Trumpism, he completely misrepresents the jobs in the sectors that he was talking about. That is according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics own data.

In the categories of forestry and logging, forestry support services, log sawmilling and timber dressing, other wood product manufacturing, pulp paper and converted paper product manufacturing, pulp paper and paper board manufacturing and converted paper product manufacturing, total jobs in all these categories in Tasmania in February 2018 totalled 2200, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In February 2014, before this Government took office, there were 3500 jobs in those forestry sectors. On the Liberal's watch, 1100 forestry jobs have been lost. That is the fact. The average number of forestry jobs across the Government's

entire last term was 2900 and under the previous Labor-Greens government, as we worked through some of these very difficult issues to transition an industrial, native forest logging industry, the average number of forestry jobs was 3400.

Likewise, in February 2018, the total hours worked in these forestry sectors was 75 600, compared to 143 400 - nearly twice as many hours in February 2014. The average hours worked per quarter during the last term was 107 600 and under the Labor-Greens government, the average number of hours worked was 126 700. Mr Brooks, the numbers destroy your own false narrative.

Yesterday during Mr Jaensch's Budget reply - Mr Brooks' fellow member for Braddon - we had a beautiful little piece of Trumpism. Sean Spicer would have been proud. The minister said:

When our population in a region such as Braddon looks around for evidence of economic growth, things like the number of trucks on the road, the traffic going through our ports and the new products emerging from the Elphinstone Group Manufacturing facilities on our coast, it gives them real confidence, more than any statistics or claims that government might make.

Lies, damned lies and statistics. This sounds like the minister, a minister of the Crown, presenting alternative facts, and we know where alternative facts come from: straight out of the Donald Trump playbook. It is an alternative fact narrative. It is a poor minister and a poor government that ignores inconvenient facts and blows ahead with policies that compromise the development of regional areas in exchange for populist votes.

The minister went on to give a huge spiel about how these old industries are fantastic, how they are known and trusted. Again, this is a false hope narrative. This Government has had four years to prove it can increase employment in forestry. It has overseen a workforce that has had its head count cut by a third and its hours worked cut in half. Part of the reason for this is because there is a minister, the Minister for Resources, who is ideologically superglued to the old ways and a false hope narrative.

When you have look at the statistics, where is the growth in forestry? As Dr Broad said, it is in the plantation sector. It is in forest stewardship certification products. But we do not hear that from Mr Barnett because his approach to this portfolio has been to take a false narrative, whip up false hope in the community, and use it to bash the Greens. It is the same old playbook used by Mr Brooks. Anyone rational, who looks at the position of the north-west coast and where the future jobs are must know it is in sectors that are dependent on the protection of our clean, green, natural wilderness brand. If we had a party in government that was sincere about long-term jobs on the north-west coast, it would establish a Tarkine National Park, just as the Southwest National Park has been an economic boom to Strahan. If you have an iconic national park that has a brand and a marketing budget attached to it, you bring long-term, sustainable jobs to a region.

In this year's state Budget, \$20 million has been set aside for an iconic walk. If we had a government that was serious about delivering long-term sustainable jobs to the north-west coast and whipping up false hope narratives, they would locate that walk in the Tarkine because it is exactly what the north-west corner of Tasmania needs, that beautiful part of our island. Imagine if we had a government that was sincere and could invest that \$20 million, deliver an iconic walk to the north-west of Tasmania and make sure that young people, particularly on the north-west coast, have a long-term, sustainable future.

Time expired.

[11.41 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Education and Training) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for Braddon, Mr Brooks, for bringing forward this matter of public importance on forestry and mining jobs in north-west Tasmania. Mr Brooks would no doubt be proud of the accusation from Ms O'Connor because -

Ms O'Connor - It wasn't an accusation. I put the facts out there.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, he would be proud of the facts because Mr Brooks has brought forward this matter of public importance and is representing his community. Mr Brooks understands and values the jobs in the mining and forestry sectors and jobs right across the north-west coast, of which the agriculture, forestry and mining sectors present a very good resource base for jobs. That flows throughout the community and enables other services to further add value to their own businesses. I will speak about that later on.

I also want to commend the good work and stewardship of the minister, Mr Guy Barnett, who is passionate about forestry and mining is doing in this field. He is also a passionate advocate of the energy sector as well. It just so happens there are 11 000 people dependent on mining minerals and processing and forestry in Tasmania, hence the passion of myself, Mr Brooks, Mr Jaensch and Mr Barnett. Many of those jobs are on the north-west coast.

I mentioned the flow-on effects and I read in the *Advocate* newspaper online today a story about the Living City project in Devonport whereby that investment has had some 60 apprentices employed in it. I am demonstrating that times are very different to where they were a few years ago under the Labor-Greens government because projects like that bring confidence, more apprentices and trainees and more jobs.

Confidence is important in every sector. As well as getting the budget under control after we inherited \$41.1 billion of accumulated deficits and turned that around, the majority Hodgman Liberal Government has now been able to achieve confidence in the mining and forestry sectors as well as the agricultural and tourism sectors. That flows through the entire economy. Rural and regional areas, such as the north-west and west coast of Tasmania, benefit from that confidence, additional investment and the economic activity generated by such wealth-creating industries as agriculture, mining and forestry.

I am excited with my new role as Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries. It is an exciting time for this particular sector, with a number of Tasmanian companies producing innovative products with national and international interest. Mining companies are right up there with the adoption of new technologies and advanced manufacturing. I point to the example on the north-west coast of Elphinstone's, which manufactures a range of specialised underground mining equipment that is exported nationally and internationally. The machinery includes graders, trucks, mobile scissor lifts and many of these products were first used and refined in the mines of Tasmania.

There is good reason we bring forward this matter of public importance, and that is to remind those opposite and the Greens that you have to support these sectors and give them confidence.

They have confidence and they will invest if they know there is a majority government backing them. Last time we had a Labor-Greens government between 2010 and 2014 and I remember it well because they were dark times in these two sectors, particularly the forestry sector when the result of the lack of confidence and goodwill for the future meant there was a loss of some 4000 jobs in that sector. Those jobs were felt most in areas of Braddon - Circular Head, the west coast, Burnie, central coast, Devonport, Waratah/Wynyard and Latrobe. All those areas were affected by the downturn in the forestry sector, the lack of confidence and overall some 1278 jobs were lost in the forestry sector and lost to Braddon.

Mr Brooks - Shame.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is a great shame. There were 1278 jobs in the forestry sector that were lost in Braddon, and they are people and their families and the social consequences of that impact enormously. Mr Brooks mentioned school enrolments. We had almost a double-whammy effect where we had people in rural and regional areas such as the north-west coast losing jobs, searching for work elsewhere, probably in the more urban centres or indeed outside of Tasmania, and yet the view of the Greens education minister at the time was that enrolment numbers had gone down so they would close the schools.

Time expired.

[11.48 a.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I am always very happy to talk about the importance of employment opportunities in Braddon, my electorate. It is important from a history point of view to say that Dr Broad and I were not part of Labor's team then, having only been newly elected at the election.

I was a member of the Burnie City Council and during the last three years I was Mayor of Burnie, so a number of the projects and initiatives which those on the other side talk about I have personally been involved over those three years. I was also part of the advanced manufacturing task force which was formed following the relocation of Caterpillar underground mining equipment to Rayong in Thailand. I have also worked very closely with the Hermal Group with their proposal to establish the timber mill in Burnie, and with those in the mining sector, Forward Mining, with their proposal which has recently received environmental approval, and also with Grange Resources over many years.

There were times then where we saw a contraction in the workforce at Grange and as a council we liaised with them around that. That was due obviously to global economic forces and not the company itself. It was really pleasing to attend their fiftieth anniversary in Burnie recently and to join with them in celebrating 50 years of operation but also in celebrating the very prosperous future that they have in Braddon and the investments that they are about to make. It is particularly important that we, in government and opposition, support them in their undertakings and talk proudly about the contribution they have made to Braddon's economy over many years.

I want to get back to the Hermal Group project because it is a very important project and one I have advocated very strongly for in the past. It is a \$190 million investment in the north-west coast and will see 200 people employed once it is fully operational. It is another important project because, as Dr Broad pointed out before, they are only interested in FSC-certified timber and have come to Tasmania because that stock exists. They invested heavily in R&D around new product development which has enabled them to establish themselves in Tasmania as well. I attended a

community meeting at the Ridgley Community Centre on Saturday where the Hermal Group addressed the community and gave an overview of the proposal. There were mixed views in the room with some concerns raised, but I was surprised not to see you there, Mr Brooks, or a member of the Government there supporting this important project and supporting the group -

Dr Broad - He was not even there.

Mr Brooks - More than happy to have my record compared to yours. What is your position on MRT?

Ms DOW - Mayor Boyd was there and I attended and -

Dr Broad - He was not even there. Disinterested.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Ms DOW - It was a great meeting and it was really good to hear people asking about the products they are going to be developing, the site, et cetera. It would have been great to have you there. There is going to be another one in the next few months and it would be great to have you there since you are so passionate about this project and the benefits it will bring to the people of the north-west coast.

I understand the importance of the traditional industries in Tasmania, my family having been employed in them for many years, but I also have a really good understanding through my role in local government of the need for these industries to change and the importance of research and new product development and innovation. We see great examples of that in Braddon and some of those are leading to different opportunities for employment.

I draw Mr Brooks back to my budget reply speech yesterday and to the budget papers which talked about the declining employment in the north-west coast and current figures suggest that is continuing. One of the reasons for that is the ageing workforce and a decline in the participation rate, which highlights even more the importance of this Government investing in skills and training but also looking at other sectors for employment growth such as the aged care industry. My question to Mr Brooks is, does he value aged care workers and the contribution that they make to the Braddon community?

Mr Brooks - I do, more than you.

Ms DOW - More than me? I worked in aged care for the last three years.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. Mr Brooks, interjections should cease. Ms Dow, through the Chair, please.

Ms DOW - Mr Deputy Speaker, the federal Leader of the Liberal Party this week in parliament made remarks about the value of aged care workers and in a career in aged care. We know we have one of the fastest ageing populations on the north-west coast of Tasmania. Aged care is a very rewarding career that enables us to give back to those in our community who for many years contributed, paid taxes and made our communities what they are today. Aged care is a very important role and one that offers, through the service sectors, many opportunities for employment growth in north-west Tasmania. My question to Mr Brooks is, does he value aged care?

I want to talk about the mining projects that have been mentioned. The member for Braddon, Mr Rockliff, alluded to the importance of advanced manufacturing and how that plays into the mining industry as well and how we have great expertise and capacity in that in the north-west coast in Braddon. It is important to note that during the last term of government, and I alluded to this through my role in the Caterpillar task force, we saw significant job losses in advanced manufacturing in Braddon. That was not just through direct employment but through indirect employment as well through the supply chain manufacturers. Mr Brooks does not talk much about advanced manufacturing but in an attempt to use wedge politics, talks primarily about mining and forestry as he draws comparisons to previous governments, that I note Dr Broad and I were not part of, when he talks about the Labor-Greens accord and allegiance.

Mr Brooks - Yes, but you were advisers to it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Ms DOW - Mr Brooks continues to drone about the Labor-Greens accord and we were not part of the Labor-Greens accord.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2018 (No. 16)

Second Reading

Resumed from 20 June 2018 (page 116)

[11.56 a.m.]

Ms HOUSTON (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, like my colleagues, I have grave concerns about the level of risk in this Budget with no guarantees of outcomes for all the spending it promises. However, there are a number of positives in this Budget. I especially welcome the additional funding for Neighbourhood Houses which do vital work in our communities. In my electorate of Bass I welcome the Launceston and Tamar Valley traffic vision, especially work that will improve traffic flow in and out of our northern suburbs. I am also sure any improvement to parking at the LGH would be greatly appreciated by the people of Bass. The allocation of \$600 000 to Carinya's Mums and Bubs program is money well invested.

We are in this place to serve the people and to provide our communities with stability and the certainty their needs will be met. This Budget does not achieve all of this. We need to look at the interests of all Tasmanians, including our most vulnerable, affordable and secure housing, adequate protection for children at risk, and quality and timely health services, especially addressing the backlog of people waiting for assistance. These are some of the key areas where the Budget has let people down. It fails many Tasmanians, members of the community who need our help the most.

Peak bodies, including the AMA, the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine and the ANMF have said spending in the Budget will not solve the health crisis. There are those on waiting lists for surgery or waiting to see a specialist, those reliant on palliative care, those hundreds of children adrift in the child safety system on any given day, those relying on government services to

intervene and keep them safe, people at risk of homelessness or those already out in the cold. There are plans and promises but they have been made before. These people need services now, they need health care now, they need intervention now, they need adequate housing, reliable and safe accommodation and they need it now.

I recognise the housing crisis is not going to be fixed over night. However more can be done in this Budget to provide these people with essential and stable housing solutions. Emergency housing providers do their best, but the lack of brick-and-mortar structures required to house people, even in the short term, means many people cannot be accommodated. Young people in the north of the state are difficult to house, as are single older women. These people do not receive enough income on Centrelink even for social housing to accommodate them. This Budget provides little comfort for many of these people, especially those needing a home. While there are plans and promises in the Budget, no-one can live on promises.

How long did it take build just 37 houses, let alone the hundreds needed? There were 430 previously promised for 2015 to 2019 and here we are, halfway through 2018, and still most have not eventuated. Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy is a sham because this Government is not prioritising the vulnerable and their needs in Tasmania. The Government needs to take action now, create temporary accommodation while builds are completed and place families in the empty housing stocks in our suburbs, of which there are a number.

I was driving through Rocherlea in Launceston's northern suburbs recently and in just a couple of streets six houses stood empty and boarded up. These are social housing or Housing department stock. They are good houses, in no worse condition than those occupied around them, yet they are boarded up and at risk of being vandalised simply because they are empty.

There are many cases like this all over Tasmania, but what resonates with me is there is nothing being done to address this situation, especially in my electorate of Bass. The Government has failed to adequately manage social housing and homes sit empty while families live in cars, sheds and tents. This must be better managed. Along with new builds, the allocation of housing needs to be streamlined.

Many in the community sector were hoping for more from this Budget. It is fair to say the community sector is a little disappointed. TasCOSS chief executive Kym Goodes said it was a missed opportunity for the Government to rebalance investment and rebuild for the next generation. She said:

When you have a \$161 million surplus and people are sleeping rough, it will be hard to understand why it is a good budget.

We need to leave a legacy and this Budget does not leave a legacy.

Pattie Chugg, executive officer of Shelter Tas, said Tasmania needed to build at least 150 additional affordable rental properties each year above the current Affordable Housing Strategy commitments. She went on to say:

To solve the problem we need even more money brought forward and our public housing debt retired.

While there are funds allocated to Child Safety Service and the promise of new workers, these promises have been made before, yet child safety is even greater crisis than it was previously. Notifications go uninvestigated, children are not allocated a worker, or are left at risk in situations where they are not safe, and this situation has gone on long enough. I am sceptical at best and would like to know when the new child safety workers will be taking on caseloads, because until that happens the \$24 million investment in child safety does not mean a lot.

Health spending seems to be half of what it was promised to be. Tasmanians will be waiting beyond the next election to get anywhere near the spending promise. Aside from that, staff could prove difficult to find. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation's Emily Shepherd said:

With current challenges in recruitment and retention and close to 200 vacant nursing and midwifery positions across the state, there is apprehension that the Government will be able to successfully recruit staff to these new positions.

Bass is in for some disappointment in this Budget. There will be funds for a prison, but not enough to improve education outcomes. The northern prison has become the priority when it comes to infrastructure. The bridge across the Tamar seems to have sunk, but it was always going to, given the state of the river.

There are seven sewerage treatment plans across the Greater Launceston area treating both sewage and wastewater. The project to improve the system has been abandoned in this Budget. The ageing infrastructure will groan under the weight of a growing population and contaminants, including raw sewage, will continue to overflow into our river system. The Tamar River, once the lifeblood of the region, will continue to be polluted and is on the verge of an environmental disaster. For thousands of years the Tamar has been a source of water, food, culture and economic production. This is now largely a source of concern and in some places a source of overwhelming stench. It is in places almost as murky and on the nose as many areas of this Budget.

Time expired.

[12.03 p.m.]

Mr BROOKS (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise on the budget bill before the House and congratulate the Treasurer and my good friend, the member for Bass, Mr Gutwein, on an overwhelmingly positive, constructive budget, but also a plan for Tasmania. It is a plan for the Tasmanians who demanded that we as a government not only act in their best interests but also in the long-term needs of the state.

Ms O'Connor - You fail on that long-term measure.

Mr BROOKS - I commend the Greens, for the one and only time every year, for -

Ms O'Connor - Just so long as you get it right, there is our alternative budget.

Mr BROOKS - Thank you, very helpful, Ms O'Connor. I will not rip it up but it will start a nice fire in my home at some time, no doubt. We will get to the Greens' alternate budget that Ms O'Connor has kindly provided me.

Ms O'Connor - It is 'alternative' budget - watch your grammar.

Mr BROOKS - Alternative, fine. I was not born with a silver spoon in my mouth like you, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'Connor - Indicators alternate.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BROOKS - I apologise for being a tradesman, leaving school at 15 and joining the defence force, something obviously Ms O'Connor regards as poor.

Madam Speaker, I have listened intently to the so-called contributions of those members opposite. What a bunch of whingers and whiners, seriously. They have no alternative, they are weak, they do not have a leader with any spine -

Ms O'Connor - Who are you talking about?

Mr BROOKS - The Labor Party. I said I would get to you, Ms O'Connor. I know you are getting upset that I have not come to you yet, but -

Dr Broad - He's smacking us with a lettuce leaf.

Mr BROOKS - Dr Broad, after your performance this morning, I would be very quiet if I were you. Sit there and pretend not to be seen. That was pretty embarrassing for you, but that is up to you. I suppose you would be used to being embarrassed, being a member of the Labor Party.

Madam Speaker, what a bunch of whingers and whiners. They stood up with their so-called contributions and complained and whinged about anything and everything they could. Obviously they cannot read a budget paper because they do not understand the economy or how budgets work, but then -

Ms Standen - Is that the best you have? Where is your substance, Mr Brooks?

Mr BROOKS - Just wait and you might learn something shortly about how this place works. We on this side have a plan for Tasmania. Your job is to whinge and carp and complain. I must admit that you are doing that very well.

Madam Speaker, we saw the laziness of those opposite who could not even be bothered coming up with anything other than complaining. The so-called contributions from members opposite did not have an outline or anything of substance whatsoever other than to say, 'We think there is going to be a deficit. We can't understand a budget, there isn't a surplus but we want you to spend more money on public servants. We want you to give them all a pay rise that we can't fund, and we want you to spend the money we don't think you have but spend it anyway on all this other stuff.' Rather than coming up with a comprehensive outline and a budget, all they did was make silly statements in the press, embarrass themselves, and not come up with anything sensible or anything that would give them any economic credibility.

Anyone watching this debate this week would be more financially illiterate because of what members opposite have said. If they listened to a word those opposite said, they would now be financially dumber because of it. It was an embarrassment and typical of what we see under the current leadership of Ms White. We know the O'Byrne ultimatum is coming. He is licking his lips

every time Ms White leads with her chin, which is pretty often. As usual, the Labor Party is self-obsessed about their own positions rather than worrying about the people of Tasmania and that is what we saw in the lack of responses by those opposite. Unfortunately, for the community who reads *Hansard* and reads what they had to say, it was an example of what not to do.

I will get to the Greens' alternative budget and then talk about the positive things we have been able to achieve through good, sound, financial management, record investment in business and business confidence growth, which drives the economy forward. I know those opposite would not get that. Let us see what the alternative budget handed down by Ms O'Connor says. What are they going to do? I have not actually read it because it is irrelevant because we all know the only way they will ever be in power will be with the Labor Party again.

There are a couple of things I was interested in. Where is your hatred of V8s? It will be in here somewhere.

Mr Gutwein - Why not do what Ms O'Connor wanted us to do and highlight it?

Ms O'Connor - Like the alternative budget. Yes.

Mr BROOKS - As weird and bizarre as this document is, I give them credit for putting in the effort. It is the biggest alternative budget they have come up with. I cannot remember ones those opposite have done because they are too lazy. To the Greens' credit they have put some effort into this. I disagree with much of it because it would have a negative impact on the economy, jobs and the community. It is a stark contrast to the lazy former finance minister, the triple M sitting opposite who cannot be bothered scrawling anything, let alone something tangible.

I do not like the fact that they do not like V8s. We like the V8 Supercars. It is a great tourism investment.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Mr BROOKS - It is great that people can watch V8 Supercars in Tasmania. Not everyone can afford to fly interstate to enjoy this spectacle. Ms O'Connor has mentioned previously that she does not like the damage to the climate and fuel wastage. Ms O'Connor might like to know that V8 Supercars run on a blend of 85 per cent ethanol and 15 per cent super. V8 Supercars are great for tourism and for those members of the community who cannot afford to go interstate. They can go Symmons Plains and see the V8s for themselves.

That leads to our support of the AFL. The Hawthorn arrangement is great for the economy, great for tourism and great for Launceston. The work the Hawthorn Football Club does in the community is to be commended.

Ms O'Connor - Hear, hear.

Mr BROOKS - They spend a lot of time doing clinics with kids, especially in the north-west and the west coast. Guys like Cyril Rioli spend so much time with the kids. The investment by the Government on behalf of Tasmanian taxpayers provides returns for the economy and the community. The work that Hawthorn does -

Ms O'Connor - Mr Brooks, do you agree that we should have our own team?

Mr BROOKS - Of course I do. It would be fantastic to have a Tasmanian team, but I know how much an AFL team costs to run and be competitive in the AFL system. It is probably \$50 million to \$60 million to have a competitive team on the field.

Ms O'Connor - Where did you pull that number from? Oh, I know -

Mr BROOKS - It has been reported in the media and stated by Jeff Kennett on a media interview previously.

Ms O'Connor - If Jeff Kennett said it, it must be true.

Mr BROOKS - As the President of Hawthorn he probably would know more about how much it costs to run an AFL team in the AFL than you, Ms O'Connor. I will take Mr Kennett's advice on how much it costs to run a competitive AFL team in the AFL rather than yours. The financial reality, which this majority Hodgman Liberal Government lives in, not the financial fantasy that those members opposite live in, understands that while that is an ambition, at the moment I cannot see it happening any time soon.

It is great that clubs such as Hawthorn and North Melbourne spend time with kids. The north-west coast has a tremendous player in the AFL for Hawthorn in Grant Birchall. He is a great local bloke. He spends so much time doing so much work for the community. It is pleasure to know Grant.

We will not apologise for supporting elite level sport coming to Tasmania. The Budget is investing in engagement for women in sport. Those opposite criticised our financial support for local community groups and clubs that work so hard.

I was proud to help the Devonport Bulls Rugby Club in getting \$75 000 to help upgrade their facilities. It might seem weird to pluck this out of the massive Budget, but not only do they do a tremendous job for their men's side, they also run women's teams as well girls and boys teams. The facilities at the club are unsuitable for girls and women, as they are shared. Those opposite have complained about this sort of investment. They have complained because we are backing local sporting and community groups. This will change the future of the Devonport Bulls Rugby Club forever, for their members, for their supporters and for who participates. We have more kids and more women engaged in playing the sport.

It is a wonderful opportunity for kids who might be uncomfortable playing sport because of the lack of facilities, or lack of privacy, or because their parents cannot afford to pay for that. The Government cares. It has the ability to put serious money towards developing and investing in those sporting clubs, raising the participation rates, especially for kids. It is vital for the growth of children who can participate and play sport. Not all of them are going to be AFL stars and play at the highest level, but it is not about that. I love footy and love AFL, but cannot play it. I was not very good at it. I still love it. What I can do here is support engagement for kids who want to go out there and have a kick. It is not about representing Australia. It is about getting them off the couch and off the Xbox and out there having fun with their friends and engaging in the community.

Mr Gutwein - PS4 are the traps now.

Mr BROOKS - PS4s? Thank you, Treasurer. My kids are getting older now and they are more social media oriented. The PS4s have replaced the Xboxes.

Mr Gutwein - We started on Wii.

Mr BROOKS - Wii was pretty good. At least you got to do something. This is one initiative for a sporting club that will change the life of someone, or group. That is possible because of this Government's sound financial management and fiscal restraint in spending, despite the criticism and the whingeing from those opposite. On one hand they say we have wrecked the Budget and are misleading the community on where it is at. On the other hand they want us to spend more and run us further into debt. We proudly stand beside those sporting clubs and groups that were able to get some assistance on behalf of the Tasmanian people. It is vitally important to the future of those kids and the clubs that provide such a great environment. Some of them probably are not from the best home environment. If we can get them and encourage them to be at a sporting club or organisation, that is a good thing.

During the last election there was a lack of debate on the Mersey Community Hospital. I found that interesting. Elections have been run on that issue alone. This majority Hodgman Liberal Government has been able to deliver a record investment on behalf of the Commonwealth with over \$700 million for that facility. We have assured its future and the importance it plays in emergency healthcare in the north-west and in particular Latrobe, Port Sorell, Shearwater, Devonport, east Devonport, and Sheffield. For those surrounding areas it is important to the people of that community. We have had the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Ms O'Byrne, stand up and argue to close it down.

We have been able to deliver ownership and also security for that facility into the future. It was not even raised in the election this time around. The Budget includes some infrastructure development for the Mersey Community Hospital because it is such an important part of our health network across Tasmania.

The excitement of the helipad is good. Some people may or may not get too carried away with that. If we have four major hospitals across Tasmania that are all linked in with state-of-the-art helicopter facilities, that only adds to the capability of saving lives. It adds to the opportunity that in a time of need, we may be able to save a life because of that investment. The only reason we can make that investment is because we have managed the Budget to a point where we do not keep spending more than we have coming in, despite the fact that those opposite cannot count and cannot read a budget paper. We did it because we believe in it.

With the Royal Hobart Hospital rebuild overseen by the Minister for Health, the Labor-Greens government at the time could not lay one brick on that upgrade and did not include a helipad. For such a crucial part of infrastructure for Hobart, surrounding areas and for the state, to not have a contemporary helicopter facility is laughable. It was incompetence on their part of the then government not to consider that and not to do it. We rectified that plan. We have also integrated it with Burnie, Launceston and the Mersey Community Hospital. They all now have, or will have, helicopter facilities. It is imperative that we do things with a longer-term future requirement at the back of our minds.

The helipad and the helicopter facilities are just as important as the rest of the infrastructure for healthcare in Tasmania. When you are in dire need of that emergency transport, it is not just about

the time involved, it also able the stabilisation and the movements, as I am led to believe. I am not a doctor, so I am going off what those who are have told me. It will add benefit to that.

Other investments include our eight-bed acute medical unit in the North West Regional Hospital, \$17.6 million; the \$2.1 million for the antenatal clinic in the North West Regional Hospital; \$6 million for the Burnie Ambulance Station; and \$1.1 million for the Smithton ambulance training facility. As well, there will be 30 more nursing graduates for the north-west at \$1.7 million; and drug and alcohol rehabilitation beds in Ulverstone for \$2.4 million. They all paint a picture of a government that is standing up for the community and delivering in spades what we need to do.

Would we like to employ 1200 professionals more quickly? Absolutely, but for a program of almost \$1 billion of additional investment in health to deliver 1200 more health professionals will take some time to deliver. Our policy plan for health and delivering for the community was overwhelmingly supported by the community. What did we hear from those opposite about it? Whingeing, complaining and criticism. Not a positive idea among them, other than their medi-hotels where they want to dump patients in the foyer of the Grand Chancellor. It was outrageous. This budget delivers for the people something that a Labor-Greens opposition - if they are ever back in government - will never be able to deliver.

I have spoken about kids and engagement in sport, but just as important is our commitment to education. I have been through high schools such as Latrobe High that have been neglected for decades. We have already invested heavily in Smithton and Parklands, and Latrobe High is the next tranche within the north-west high schools that need an uplift. We need to create a learning environment that allows students to do much better. There is \$1 million for Parklands High School, and Spreyton Primary School has \$1.7 million.

What I am really proud of is Devonport High School. My father went there and was vice principal there for a number of years. Devonport High School is an iconic school within the Devonport community, but it needs some serious money spent on it. I was proud to listen to what the community was saying about that school, listen to what the teachers, the staff and the principal and the school association were saying. With my good friend and colleague, the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, Mr Rockliff and of course Mrs Rylah, the former member, and Mr Jaensch, we were able to articulate that it is a really important project. It is great to see that the Government has continued to invest in education, particularly in projects such as Devonport High School and Penguin Community School. It is an amazing aspect of what this Government is striving to do. It is about a better future for our kids.

Part of our plan in rolling out years 11 and 12 is to invest in their future. It is not just about keeping kids in school longer. It is also about following up with the jobs that they need. If you look at the jobs that we have seen -

Ms O'Connor - What about climate action, Mr Brooks?

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BROOKS - If you look at the jobs that we have been able to create - sorry, I will re-phrase. The Government does not create jobs. We create an environment that allows business to create jobs. What we have been able to do is create the confidence or create an environment where business is confident to create that employment. We stand by our policy framework and I

mentioned them numerous times. The growth in the economy is a direct reflection of business and consumer confidence, and that is a direct reflection of Government policy. We will not apologise for standing up for that community and for the jobs we need.

Our kids who are going through school at the moment, Tasmania's children, they have to be provided with the opportunity for work and for career opportunities in Tasmania. Even specific examples such as nurse placements that the Labor-Greens government refused to do for our graduates, when we are providing that and continue to do so. Through sensible economic management we can afford to deliver a policy framework and policy platform that does that. Now if kids want to be a nurse, and it is a tremendous career for them - I am not that good with blood and stuff, so I do not think I would make a very good nurse - we are fixing the education system. We are fixing the facilities around education so that they can go to years 11 and 12. We are supporting investment and growth in university so that they do not have to travel so much and they can be part of that environment. Then we also give them a job in the Tasmanian Health Service, working in regional communities. We have now given more kids more reasons to stay in this great state rather than thinking their only option is to move interstate or elsewhere, which was a tragedy for this state.

What is also vitally important is our support for the west coast. The economy there has to look at how it moves away from the peaks and lows of one decision from one entity and how we smooth out those highs and lows within the economy, but also the jobs market there. We in no way will ever walk away from the most important sector on the west coast, which is mining. It is intrinsically important to not only the economy and jobs on the west coast but also what it delivers to this state. That is why we moved MRT to Burnie, even though those opposite complained about it and will oppose it and take those jobs out of Burnie and send them to Hobart because the unions told them to.

We are investing in the west coast, not only in mining because it is vitally important, but also adventure tourism through mountain bike access, the visitor information centre, \$375 000 for the transformation of the Strahan beach track, and a roads package, again part of the Tasmanian visitor economy. All of those things play a key part in guiding the economy of the west coast in the right direction and improving the opportunities, especially for the kids there where they can get a job on the west coast.

Mining and forestry are vitally important. I know Ms O'Connor does not like mining and she thinks tourism is more important. At the end of the day, if you do not have mining you cannot build planes, you cannot build boats, you cannot even have a laptop. The anti-everything brigade does not like mining but they like using the products that come from mining. I doubt there would be any member in this House does not use a mining product every single day. That has to come from somewhere, and we have the most stringent environmental controls in Tasmania of anywhere in the country and across the globe. There are significant requirements, with an independent audit and study done, but we also support that investment.

That is why it was very important to be able to support my good friend and colleague, Mr Barnett, in his foresight to support a drilling and exploration program across Tasmania. The reason that is important is because we compete for investment and exploration dollars for the mining sector. We have to put in place parameters where we are competing against not only other states but also competing against other countries and jurisdictions. We need to create an environment that does that.

This bill delivers for Tasmania, it delivers on our promises but also sets a better future and a brighter future for Tasmania.

Time expired.

[12.33 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Treasurer) - Madam Speaker, I thank members for their contributions on the Budget. I will take a moment to sum up and touch on some of the comments that have been made. I have taken interest in what a number of members have said, perhaps more in some than others. I have listened to the debate within this place or on the electronic system here in the House.

I will start by working backwards through some of the contributions.

Regarding the member for Bass, Ms Houston's contribution, I honestly believe she should take the time to have a good look at the Budget and what it provides, certainly for her own electorate. There were some erroneous statements made. It is not my intention to ask her to clean those up, but to suggest that there is nothing in this Budget for the Tamar River is patently false. In fact, for the Tamar River there is over \$30 million included in this Budget to begin the programs that were identified by the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce that \$47.5 million was provided from the federal government for. The first tranche of that funding begins in this Budget.

There were programs specific to the estuary itself and the task force suggested funding of around \$1 million a year into programs. That begins in this Budget from 1 January this year. The Commonwealth funding also begins to flow in this year for the structural upgrades that are required. We are working with TasWater on the MOU and developing legislation for the new partnership the state Government will have, subject to local government agreeing, with that partnership taking place from 1 January. I make that point that there is investment in this Budget for the Tamar.

There are a range of other investments that were missed in her own electorate. There is the investment into the Legana School. Ms Houston did not mention the funding in the Budget for the Launceston-Tamar Valley traffic vision. That includes the West Tamar Highway, the Mowbray interconnector, the Charles Street Bridge, and Invermay Road network. A total of \$2.5 million is in the Budget for planning of the new Tamar Bridge crossing. As we said at the election, the first tranche of \$25 million would be in the fifth year and we will work with the federal government to ensure they are on board as well in respect to that new bridge crossing. There is funding for shoulder widening as part of that Launceston-Tamar Valley traffic vision for the Batman Highway. The Launceston Cup is also included and the Mowbray interconnector, which is a significant piece of roadwork at a very dangerous intersection at the bottom of the Mowbray hill. With that, we begin funding the \$87.3 million development at the Launceston General Hospital with nearly \$40 million included in this Budget, with an additional \$5 million towards improving the parking as well. There are significant investments in Ms Houston's electorate.

To give her due she did touch on some of them and I am sure, with all members in this place, the support for Neighbourhood Houses is welcomed across the parliament, with \$8.8 million. In many small communities these are at the heart and soul of those communities. The people who run them, the volunteers who support them, and the people who attend and take part in the activities should be commended for what they do, because they a very -

Ms O'Connor - Some of our finest social infrastructure.

Mr GUTWEIN - I could not have put it better, Ms O'Connor, some of our finest social infrastructure, the Neighbourhood House network.

I will just segue back to Ms O'Connor. The Greens brought down their alternative budget yesterday, or 'Armageddon on the economy', I am calling it. All-out war on the tourism industry is another way of putting it. Taking direct aim at anything that people enjoy like V8 Supercars, AFL football -

Ms O'Connor - Like walking through national parks and the World Heritage Area undisturbed by choppers?

Mr Brooks - But not Bob Brown's chopper. He's allowed.

Ms O'Connor - He was in the Tarkine.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - I picked up from it over four years new taxes of nearly a quarter of a billion dollars, around \$230 million coming from a vacant residence tax, a visitor levy for parks, a bed levy, scrapping the investment into Cradle Mountain -

Ms O'Connor - Yes.

Mr GUTWEIN - 'Yes', says Ms O'Connor. As I have said -

Ms O'Connor - As kooky as it is.

Mr GUTWEIN - In the past I have said 'kooky'. It is dangerous. You have stretched yourselves and there is very little that I support. At least Ms O'Connor and the Greens prepared an alternative budget.

It takes a considerable amount of work and effort. It is Armageddon on the economy. Economic Armageddon is the only way to describe this. It increases taxes, builds a wall against tourism, and removes support for many of those activities that Tasmanians enjoy. It takes aim at V8 owners. There are many new taxes in this Greens alternative budget.

Ms O'Connor - No, there is not.

Mr GUTWEIN - There are. A quarter of a billion dollar or thereabouts of new taxes, \$230 million. They set the bar to a new level in how they might slow our economy and deter people from enjoying what we have to offer in Tasmania.

We have had many discussions on this during Question Time this week. It is a disappointment that the Labor Party chose not to prepare an alternative budget. An alternative budget forces you to commit to those things you want as policies and, importantly, forces you to explain how you will pay for them. It provides a platform. Whether it is economic Armageddon like the Greens budget is another matter. At least we know what the Greens stand for and what they will argue for. That provides with them a platform. Labor, once again, has failed to do so. Whingeing is not a policy and complaining is not a platform -

Ms O'Connor - Mr Gutwein, you take cliches to the next level.

Mr GUTWEIN - Some of them are pretty good.

Ms White provided a very insipid budget response, with not much detail, except the creation of a lot of committees. The one that was missing, to throw in another cliché for the benefit of Ms O'Connor, was the 'ABC', the alternate budget committee. Perhaps Labor could establish a committee to work with them over the next 12 months to develop their alternative for next year.

We all support the progression of the private hospital co-location in Launceston. There is work to be undertaken to ensure the right landing is achieved both in its location and its clinical services mix. The co-location will provide better services for both public and private patients. Not only will the economic activity as the result of the build be good for Launceston, having the co-located hospital with the LGH on that site will provide benefits to Launcestonians, whether they be public or private patients.

Labor said very little about its key policy plank at the last election, the anti-poker machine policy.

I am proud of this Budget. It will provide economic stimulus and it is targeted at those areas where people need assistance. Regarding affordable housing, the first \$100 million flowing of the \$125 million of the five-year affordable housing strategy 2, the additional \$25 million that will flow from 1 July on top of the existing \$20 million that is already in the Budget, more than doubling the spend on the affordable housing strategy from 1 July in conjunction with a further nearly \$10 million that is funded across the Budget for affordable homes, making, in the current coming budget year, around \$55 million available for affordable housing. In affordable housing strategy 1, there was \$60 million, with additional funding in the first year. It was just below \$80 million in total. This is a significant spend, around \$55 million in 2018-19, which will help ensure we meet the aims of that affordable housing strategy.

There is record spending in schools and educational facilities; building new schools in growth areas and significantly investing in others. Just after the GFC day, which was 10 years ago, there were significant funds spent to uplift our primary schools. We will invest in our high school stock. This will enable us to bring more of our high schools up to a contemporary standard to provide the contemporary learning facilities and opportunities our students need to be the very best they can be.

There is about \$250 million-worth of specific budget measures for the north in the Budget. For the south there is about \$434 million-worth of specific budget initiatives, including the \$469 million being spent on the redevelopment of the Royal Hobart Hospital. That \$469 million is the total figure to be spent on the hospital with the final tranches of funding flowing over the next two budget years.

There is more than \$233 million worth of funding in the north-west, including funding for the Mersey. There is tourism investment in Cradle Mountain. That has the potential to be to the north what MONA has been to the south. It is a fantastic location. It needs to be done sensitively. We need to tread carefully. It is fantastic opportunity for the north and one the entire state will benefit from.

The broader infrastructure spend of \$2.6 billion will be invested over the coming four years: \$1.1 billion into roads and rail, significant funding into hospitals, record levels of funding into schools and a record spend into affordable housing.

I am very pleased to be looking after the most vulnerable in our society. We have taken steps to assist those affected by child sexual abuse. This includes the first tranche of the \$70 million for the redress scheme. We have also invested an additional \$18 million, three new tranches of \$6 million, into the Safe Home, Safe Families program, taking that up to a total spend over that period of a little over \$20 million. This will continue what was a nation-leading initiative when it was announced. It is important that we continue to invest heavily in that area. We have also made an additional investment into looking after our most vulnerable children.

The Budget provides for strong operating surpluses across the forward Estimates, around 2 per cent to 3 per cent of revenue. The surpluses are Tasmania's insurance policy against adversity. We know within the past four years we had to face wildfires, a prolonged Basslink outage, and the worst floods that we have seen in 100 years. I commend the Launceston City Council for the work they did over time, in conjunction with the previous government, and with the federal government in building those levees. I will never forget standing atop that levee in the middle of those floods and realising that Invermay was around 30 centimetres from being completely flooded. The height that we were at was at the height of the roof of the house across the other side of the street. Those levees have worked very well and that is a very good example of federal and state working together. It was an initiative under the previous government and I am very happy to give credit for that. That has worked and it saved the City of Launceston from what would have been billions of dollars worth of damage.

Regarding net debt, we hold net cash in investments right across the forward Estimates. We return to a fiscal balance across the forward Estimates. Regarding what is a record spend on infrastructure, it goes without saying that with investing you will draw down your cash and that investment will occur and there is some movement in the level of net cash and investments that we hold over the four years. That is to be expected.

In respect of Glenorchy City Council and where matters are at, this is not something that is in the Budget but it has been raised and I have had a number of questions on it. The Speaker has raised it with me on a number of occasions. It will have some minor spending implications for Government over time. I want to take moment to explain some of the work that has been underway with Glenorchy. The revelation some weeks ago that a 20 per cent rate increase might be on the horizon has been a concern, I am certain, for all members in this place and for the Glenorchy community. The announcement earlier this week that it was forecast to be 12.5 per cent, whilst not 20 per cent and certainly an improvement, it is still a major concern to many people. There will be many people in Glenorchy who will struggle with the 12.5 per cent rate increase. That council has been in very difficult circumstances now for a period of time.

Regarding the Board of Inquiry costs, and from the point of view of Glenorchy's management of these, Sue Smith as commissioner booked the bulk of those costs, around \$800 000, last year. In an operating sense there is very little impact on their operating statement moving forward but in a cash sense we recognise that we needed to take steps. The Government has frozen these costs and there will be no recovery of any of the Board of Inquiry costs this year. Then we have smoothed it over a five-year period. My understanding is that it will provide an annual saving of close to \$200 000.

Ms O'Connor - What about the Board of Inquiry costs for the Huon Valley Council?

Mr GUTWEIN - The Huon Valley Council did it on a three-year payment program. In Glenorchy's case that will be extended out over the next five years with no payment required this year, with five after that period.

We have also had discussions with Glenorchy regarding restructuring their current loan portfolio. I am surprised that Glenorchy has not taken up this option. My understanding is in restructuring and pulling their current loan portfolio together, applying the prevailing interest rate of the day, as opposed to the interest rates that are on some of their loan stock, a saving on a per annum basis in a cash sense of around \$480 000 would be available to the council. I am surprised they have not taken that up. I have written to the council and raised that matter with them this week. We have also offered the council a \$4 million interest-free loan linked to the sale of property with a five-year term so that that can be paid back at the end of five years, or if they were to sell property. They have nominated two parcels of property that they are thinking of selling. One is Wilkinson's Point, which they master planned - and I understand they took it to the market back in 2008-09. The global financial crisis dampened a lot of the appetite -

Ms O'Connor - The global financial crisis? Did you just admit that there was a global recession when we were in government?

Mr GUTWEIN - About a decade ago. We have agreed that we would provide an interest-free loan of \$4 million to improve their cash position, repayable on the sale of the Wilkinson's Point property, or to be repaid within five years. We will be putting those matters in place.

I have written to the council and outlined these positions to them. I have further written to the council this week - the letter would have left yesterday - once again indicating my surprise that the broader restructure of the loan portfolio was not taken up. The letter also asks the council for a copy of their budget. Local government is a separate sphere of government and how they manage their finances is a matter for them and their ratepayers. As Treasurer, I am concerned about a 12.5 per cent rate increase and I am certain that most people in this place would be as well. I urge the council to consider any option that they have to smooth the impact of that over coming years. The people of Glenorchy City are going to find a 12.5 per cent rate increase very difficult.

The rating increase is a matter for council. They are elected to manage the city on behalf of the ratepayers and where they eventually land is a matter for them. The Government has no lever to pull. We cannot reach in and change a decision that is made by the council table about their rating. I urge them to consider the impact that a 12.5 per cent increase this year would have on the basis, as I understand, that ABC were informed yesterday that next year's rate increase broadly would be back to normal, around 2.5 per cent to 3 per cent. In my mind I cannot see why a smoothing cannot occur to take some of the pressure off. I urge the Glenorchy City aldermen to think carefully about where they land in respect of their budget at the end of the day.

The state Government stands ready and prepared to work with Glenorchy and the measures -

Sitting suspended from 1 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2018 (No. 16)

Second Reading

Resumed from above.

[2.30 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Treasurer) - Madam Speaker, I will begin where I finished prior to the lunch break and conclude the Glenorchy matter. They are facing difficult circumstances. I hoped they would find a smoother pathway than the 12.5 per cent rate increase this year.

I have written several times to the mayor, including this week. I have asked for Glenorchy to share its budget with the Government so that we can have a look at it. Ultimately they must make their own rate decisions. The Government, and I am sure all members of this House, believes that a 12.5 per cent rate increase would significantly impact on many Glenorchy residents. The council should be encouraged to take a different pathway.

This Budget will deliver the largest infrastructure program ever proposed by the general government sector. It provides for significant investment into major assets such as roads and rail, bridges, hospitals, schools, and importantly, into affordable housing. The Budget will underpin thousands of new jobs across the forward Estimates. The Budget remains in surplus. Those surpluses need to be viewed as the Tasmanian people's insurance policy against adversity. The Budget will stand this state in good stead. It will build the infrastructure of the 21st century and take Tasmania to the next level. I thank members for their contributions.

Bill read the second time.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Safe Access Zones - Termination Services

[2.33 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Denison - Attorney-General) (by leave) - Madam Speaker, in question time this morning, the member for Bass, Ms O'Byrne, asked me about Tasmania not formerly intervening in a matter before the High Court regarding a breach of Victoria's safe access zones. I have now sought advice and can provide the following details.

The member asked a question related to an unidentified High Court matter, the details of which were not provided. In the absence of suitable information I had nothing of substance to identify the case or reflect on to inform my answer.

On the advice I have, there are hundreds of cases before the High Court. On the advice I have subsequently received, I now understand the member is most likely referring to the matter of *Clubb v. Edwards*, the specifics of which were not immediately obvious, based on the question asked. Since clarifying this point I can now confidently provide an explanation as to why, as the member asked, Tasmania has not formally intervened in the High Court matter. There is no need to. The case referred to is being heard jointly with *Preston v. Avery*, which is an action to which Tasmania is a party. If the member had looked on the High Court website she would know this. The matters

are being jointly heard and Tasmania will present a robust defence of our own legislation, namely the Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Act 2013.

Mr O'Byrne - Just for clarification, what was that other case you are a party to?

Ms ARCHER - The first one I mentioned?

Ms ARCHER - Preston v. Avery. When I say 'and' that means 'versus', but we say 'and'.

Mr O'Byrne - I know that, I just did not get the names.

Ms ARCHER - Well you never know.

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No.2) 2018 (No. 17)

Second Reading

[2.35 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Treasurer) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

This second appropriation bill recognises the unique role of parliament and independent statutory offices in Tasmania's parliamentary and democratic system.

It appropriates \$31 708 000 from the Consolidated Fund in 2017-18. The entirety of this amount is appropriated for recurrent services.

I commend the bill to the House.

[2.36 p.m.]

Mr BACON (Denison) - Madam Speaker, the Labor Party will be supporting this bill, which appropriates \$31 708 000 for a range of different statutory offices. It was a very short second reading speech from the Treasurer. Normally there is not much debate on this bill, but Labor Party has a few concerns, particularly regarding funding for the Office of the Ombudsman. The Government was hell-bent on keeping information from the Tasmanian public during the first four years they were in office. That seems to be reaching new heights today in relation to advice given by the former minister for police to the Premier in the lead up to the election on changes to the Tasmanian firearm laws that seem to be not in line with the National Firearms Agreement.

We are concerned about the Government's honesty and transparency and the way the Office of the Ombudsman is funded. There have been allegations of political interference in the Right to Information process time and again under this Government. We saw it with the first RTI into the advice given by Mr Hidding to the Premier on the changes to the gun laws. Professor Snell's comments show there are concerns about the way RTIs operate under this Government. Due to the backlog within the Ombudsman's office it is almost not worthwhile appealing decisions, because of the length of time it takes to get a result. That is through no fault of the people working in the Ombudsman's office, but due to under-resourcing. The Government can do something to increase the Ombudsman's resources.

It would be in the Government's best interests to be more transparent and put information into the public domain without an RTI. That seems to be beyond the Government. They cover up everything until an RTI comes in. Then it is often knocked back and then you need to appeal. The Government could look at more resources for the Ombudsman's office. They do not appear to be in this Budget.

There was an opportunity following the re-election for the Government to introduce a new approach and be more transparent and honest. That has not happened. We are disappointed in that and think that resourcing the Ombudsman's office would be a small step in the right direction. The Treasurer should rectify that. There is no argument for waiting for next year's budget, given that he overspends his budget every year. He does not come anywhere near his expenditure targets, so why not do the right thing and properly fund the Ombudsman's office before the next budget? He could make this commitment in answer to a Dorothy Dixier next week. That would go a long way to restoring Tasmanians' faith in this Government's honesty and transparency.

[2.40 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, the Greens will not be opposing Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2018. I agree with much of what the shadow treasurer has said about the chronic under-resourcing of our integrity bodies, particularly of the Ombudsman's office. I can answer the last question that Mr Bacon puts, which is why has there not been more funding allocated to the Ombudsman's office given the enormous backlog of Right to Information appeals and other important work the office does. The answer, Mr Bacon, is very simple: the Ombudsman's office is a very important part of the transparency and accountability mechanisms for government in Tasmania and keeping it running on the smell of an oily rag is what a secretive government does.

That is why in our fully-costed alternative budget we allocated \$5.03 million over the forward Estimates to increase the capacity of our integrity bodies, including the Office of the Ombudsman. Any member of parliament - who is not a government member - who has lodged a Right to Information request that has been refused because it is too voluminous, responded to outside the statutory time frames, or received a heavily redacted document or a response exploiting a loophole in the Right to Information Act, they have been delegated to a delegate of a minister and therefore not subject to internal review. To any member of parliament who has been through the Right to Information process in the last four to five years, it is patently obvious that the Ombudsman's office is chronically and deliberately under funded.

I have been in parliament for 10 years come June-July and - did you say hear, hear?

Mr Brooks - Wow, that is a long time.

Ms O'CONNOR - It is, it is a long time. It is a good thing I am having fun in here with you, Mr Brooks.

Mr Brooks - I think it is great. A wonderful contribution.

Madam SPEAKER - Congratulations.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I have been privileged to be in this place for nearly a decade and have been on the opposition side of the House, the crossbench side of the House, and the great privilege of being on the ministerial benches. The Right to Information Act is only as good as the culture of the government of the day. During my time as minister -

Mr Hidding - I am the only one who can say anything and I am trying to think of something.

Ms O'CONNOR - Would you like to raise the level of your interjections so that we can hear?

Mr Hidding - I was just wondering with the 10-year thing whether you had mellowed?

Ms O'CONNOR - No way.

Madam SPEAKER - Do you mind, through the Chair.

Mr Hidding - I do not think she has mellowed.

Ms O'CONNOR - Soft on crime. The point I am trying to make in the face of a wall of interjections from government members is that the object of the Right to Information Act is the foundation for how the act should be applied. Unfortunately I do not have the act in front of me right now, but the object of the Right to Information Act speaks broadly about open disclosure and having an approach to the release of information, which recognises that the information is held in trust for the public and generated by public bodies. In this case it is the government of the day.

It would be fair to say that the object, that is the intent of the Right to Information Act, has not been adhered to by the Liberals in government. I have never had so many refusals for Right to Information. I have never had so many responses that say, 'we cannot meet your request because it would be an unnecessary diversion of resources'. I have never had so many responses that go right up to the edge of the statutory time frame for response and then say 'we are seeking some clarification and refinement of your request therefore the clock is reset'. I have never had so many pages of black sent back.

This Government's approach to Right to Information has been reflectively secretive. It points to a failure to understand that if you want the public to have faith in institutions you need to be an open and transparent government and good governments have nothing to hide.

When I was a minister, the practice of the day was to delegate all Right to Information requests to the department. Mr Shelton, just so you understand the difference between the way your colleagues deal with Right to Information and the way the Greens' ministers dealt with Right to Information, they were automatically delegated to the department. This meant they would be handled independently and efficiently and they were always subject to internal review.

Mr Hidding - Exactly what we do.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, it is not exactly what you do. That is why I get to the gun law issue.

Mr Bacon - What happened to this RTI?

Ms O'CONNOR - I will get to the gun law issue in as minute. What we said to the department was - because it would be flagged that there had been an RTI request and because of the practice of

the Greens' ministerial offices we knew it would be dealt with by the agency - off you go, open disclosure, provide as much information as is appropriate and available and tell us on the day you are going to release it. I remember one Right to Information request which related to former premier Paul Lennon's involvement in the sale of -

Mr Bacon - Relevance. I mean Paul Lennon.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, no, I am definitely not having a crack at Paul Lennon at this point.

The Right to Information request related to former premier Paul Lennon's involvement in the sale of affordable land packages in the Brighton municipality and it was a process that was in part being dealt with by Housing Tasmania. Given the history and the nature of Mr Lennon, in order to be sure that it was an appropriate arrangement for government to be involved in any way, I sought the advice of Crown Law before going along with this. I knew we had done all the right things. Mrs Petrusma in her role as the shadow human services spokesperson then quite rightly lodged a Right to Information request to find out all that it was possible to find out on the public record about this affordable house and land arrangement. A large volume of material was provided to Mrs Petrusma.

Mr Shelton - You were trying to bury them though.

Mr Hidding - That is right. Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - We sought to redact nothing and in fact on the day -

Mr Shelton - I wonder why.

Mr Hidding - You wanted to put a bit in.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, a few red marks against Mr Lennon's name or something, sure.

The point of this story is that if you are afraid that you had done something wrong in the administration of your portfolio I can understand why you would be so secretive about Right to Information. If you have always played to the rules and conducted yourself in the interests of the people of Tasmania you have nothing to hide. Nor should you want to hide it because the information that is generated through government departments - and I am not talking about the frank and fearless advice provisions which we need to protect - is generated at public expense and in the best of circumstances in the public interest.

Good governments are not afraid of scrutiny. Good governments do not seek to subvert transparency processes and the work of integrity bodies. I urge the Liberals in government to recognise that. If you are so proud of how you operate as a government do not be afraid of Right to Information requests. If you have a look at the most recent Right to Information annual report it again points to a failure of this Government to apply the object of the act, which is fundamentally one of open disclosure, the offering of information where it is appropriate and a recognition of the public's right to know.

We have in the Ombudsman's office backlogs of RTI appeals that run into two, three and four years. This Government knows that when a member of parliament or any other person who has lodged an RTI request and has not been satisfied with the response government has given to them

and refers it to the Ombudsman for assessment, it is likely not to be dealt with in this term of the parliament because of the underresourcing of the Office of the Ombudsman. In a healthy democracy you properly resource your integrity bodies. In a healthy democracy your Ombudsman's office has the staff to efficiently, fairly and effectively process appeals and to be part of a healthy transparency process for government.

It is an indictment on the Liberals in government that the Ombudsman's office is running on the smell of an oily rag. It is an indictment on this Government that right to information requests are so often refused or fall outside the statutory time frame and end up in the Ombudsman's office where they are not being dealt with in a timely way because there is simply not the staff there to process the appeals.

In the last term of the parliament we put forward an amendment bill to fix an acknowledged loophole in the Right to Information Act. The loophole was acknowledged by the Premier at the time, which is that if a minister delegates the decision-making to a person in their office, for example, the decision that delegated officer makes is not subject to internal review. If you cannot have an internal review then you cannot lodge an appeal with the Ombudsman's office. It is killing the right to information request stone dead on the first ask. When we raised this with the Premier in budget Estimates in 2015, he said, 'We will make sure that is no longer the practice.' That is fine, but that is not what happened. We had an amendment bill drafted in order to make sure ministers could not delegate decisions and therefore avoid appeals and internal reviews. The bill was rejected by the Premier and the Liberals in government, and he said it will no longer be a practice for ministers to delegate those decisions.

Now that a matter is before the Supreme Court brought by Gun Control Australia, we know now that the practice did not cease and is still part of the modus operandi of the Liberals in government in order to avoid scrutiny. A request for information was made in relation to a firearms policy announcement, which is clearly in breach of the National Firearms Agreement, the minister had delegated the decision to a person in their office and the information was refused. We know it was refused on political grounds, but then there is no capacity for internal review. So we are now off to the Supreme Court where the Government has to try to defend its actions.

The history of this issue is well known and was fleshed out in parliament this morning. The Liberals, in caretaker mode, made a series of promises to the Sporting Shooters Association without obtaining advice from Tasmania Police and probably knowing that those promised changes were in breach of the National Firearms Agreement. There had been communication with the Sporting Shooters Association but there had not been communication with the people of Tasmania. A member of the shooting fraternity got in touch with the Greens and said they were worried about what this might mean for the capacity of shooters and specialist shooters to obtain rapid-fire shotguns, potentially with silencers. They were very concerned about this proposed policy change and, as much as anything else, we are very concerned that it had not been announced to the people of Tasmania. It would be a significant change in gun law policy in Tasmania. The policy was never 'released', which is what we keep hearing from the Premier and others when they speak on this matter. It was actually revealed by the Greens on the basis of information we had received.

Mr Hidding - No, it wasn't.

Ms O'CONNOR - Mr Hidding, you could engage yourself in the semantics, but the fact is the people of Tasmania went to the polls not knowing that you intended to weaken our gun laws. If everything was kosher about the way the Liberals in caretaker mode had conducted themselves on

proposed changes to the gun laws, there would not have been such a huge public reaction when it became known.

Members interjecting.

Mr Brooks - We didn't try to hide it.

Ms O'CONNOR - You did try to hide it. Mr Brooks, let us just wrap our heads around the issue here. Mr Hidding says it was on 100 websites. Do you think that might be an exaggeration? Do you think it might have been on one, the Sporting Shooters Association website, or perhaps the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers website? Was it on that website? It is not honest to say that the policy was made public.

Mr Brooks - It was so.

Ms O'CONNOR - It was so? Really? That is why thousands of Tasmanians, when it became known basically the day before election day, went berserk - because it was known?

Mr Brooks interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Mr Brooks, through the Chair, please.

Ms O'CONNOR - Madam Speaker, the revisionism that is happening here is breathtaking. The Liberals knew it would go down like a stink-bomb and did not make it public, did not make it a next election announcement, did not say to the voters of Tasmania, 'We're going to weaken gun laws if we get elected'. It was not made public. It was discreetly released to a specific, select and small group of stakeholders. That is what happened, Mr Brooks.

Mr Brooks - I disagree.

Ms O'CONNOR - You disagree, but to be fair, you are the member who sat in an Estimates committee and three times told an untruth.

Madam Speaker, it is like 'alternative facts'. I know we have entered a period where truth has apparently become a fluid thing. I know the Liberals are right into alternative facts, but you cannot get away from a couple of things. One is that the cameras caught Mr Brooks three times misleading the Estimates committee. By the third time he clearly knew he was in the poo because he only peeped.

You also cannot get away from the fact that before the election the people of Tasmania did not know that the Liberals had made a promise to the Sporting Shooters Association to weaken our firearms laws to make it easier to get your hands on a highly dangerous rapid-fire weapon, potentially with silencers. This is a push that is happening around the country. We know there are lobbyists and vested interests around the country who want to weaken our firearms laws and they have been lobbying hard and are closely aligned with the likes of the National Rifle Association in America.

I note that the former minister who was responsible for making that promise to the Sporting Shooters Association has fled the Chamber, and so he should, because that careless promise has created enormous problems for his colleagues and angst in the community. If there was nothing to

hide in relation to this promise, the Gun Control Coalition would have been able to request information from government and it would have been provided, but the request was made and was denied through a subversion of the right to information process which prevented internal review.

The reason we know there are huge problems with the way this was dealt by the Liberals is that they did not provide the information and advice and now we know through RTI materials provided to the ABC that Tasmania Police recognised this promise was potentially going to weaken gun laws in Tasmania in breach of the National Firearms Agreement.

We will not be opposing this legislation. I note it relates to both the operation of the parliament and our integrity bodies. Here we sit in a shrunken Chamber of 25 and it becomes clearer by the day that we need to restore the numbers in the House for a whole range of reasons but especially in the interests of the people of Tasmania. Government has diminished, Cabinet has diminished, the backbench has diminished, the population of Estimates committees is diminished, and the quality of debate and legislation that we pass in this place is diminished by the smaller numbers. It is time that we have the maturity as a parliament to do what we know is right and restore the numbers in the House of Assembly. In fact it is now 20 years since the numbers were shrunk and I know there are definitely Labor and some Liberal members who support the restoration of the numbers of the House of Assembly.

Mr O'Byrne - You wouldn't want to be verballed in this place.

Mr Gutwein - It'd never happen.

Ms O'CONNOR - Alternative facts again?

Mr Gutwein - No, he said he would not want to be verballed in this place and I said to him it would never happen - with indulgence, so that Hansard picks it up.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, that is right. On behalf of good governance in Tasmania, I hope that when the House is given the opportunity to restore the numbers it does not devolve into populist, self-defeating partisanship. I hope we can all recognise it is in the interests of good governance in Tasmania that we have a fully functioning House of Assembly.

The final matter I want to raise on this bill is a code of conduct for members of parliament. This is an issue the House must deal with. We had this debate late last year, Madam Speaker, before you were elected. We had all received correspondence from Mr Ivan Dean, the chair of the Integrity Committee and he pointed to the fact that this House had failed to deal with the code of conduct question. A report was released by the Integrity Commission in June 2011 which makes the bleeding obvious observation that all members of the Assembly and the Legislative Council should be subject to a code of conduct. In June 2011 the Integrity Commission made the following key recommendations:

- The House of Assembly and Legislative Council adopt a code of conduct for the members of each chamber of Parliament.
- This report be referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Integrity for timely consideration and reporting.
- The House of Assembly retains but reviews the current Code of Race Ethics.

which all members must recite on the first day of the new parliament.

The Legislative Council gives consideration to adopting a reviewed Code of Race Ethics.

- State Government adopts codes provided for Ministers and for ministerial staff, and that such codes be tabled in Parliament.

...

- A breach of the Parliamentary Code of Conduct should be considered and dealt with by Parliament itself.

...

- The operation of a code of conduct for members of parliament should be reviewed by the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Integrity on a regular basis, such as every three to four years.

The parliament must deal with this. It was possibly too politically febrile late last year when we had this debate on a code of conduct for the Liberals to think clearly about it. It became the subject of populist partisanship, but we all serve our communities better if we adopt a code of conduct and agree to abide by it. That is a matter that this House must address. It is now seven years since the Integrity Commission made its initial recommendations on a code of conduct and while the code of race ethics in the Standing Orders is very worthy and important, a code of conduct that applies to all members of parliament is unfinished business for this House and should be something we all embrace. In the spirit of tripartisanship perhaps we could have this conversation in a constructive and meaningful way and quietly get on with establishing a code of conduct for members of parliament, just as we should quietly get on with restoring the numbers of the parliament so that we have a healthier functioning parliament.

With those few comments I reiterate to the House that we will not be opposing this legislation and I look forward to the rest of the debate.

[3.07 p.m.]

Mr BROOKS (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to talk on this bill and I listened carefully to the contributions of those opposite. It is interesting that Ms O'Connor wanted to rewrite history on a couple of things. I will comment briefly on the RTI system, given the opinion of Ms O'Connor about her experiences of RTI processes when she was a member of the Labor-Greens government. I am still waiting for some RTIs from my submissions to ministers.

Ms O'Connor - Did you send them to Greens ministers?

Mr BROOKS - No - well, sort of; I went to Mr Green. Is he a Greens minister, or just Green by name and Green by nature? I am still waiting for my RTI on how and why he locked up the north-west coast and called it the so-called Tarkine. I am still waiting for a response for that from six years ago. He would not provide me any information on it whatsoever, including the advice I requested and the advice he apparently got around restricting recreational access to a multiuse area and then forgot to mention it at the community meeting in Tullah.

To come in and lecture this Government on RTI processes and how they were the pin-up examples of what happened, it was a certainly different experience I had with my request for RTIs. I am still waiting for that response and information, but as usual, the approach by the then government was not to assist with anything or provide any information. That was pretty much how that government operated. I find it a little bit rich for Ms O'Connor who was a member of the government at the time to outline how this Government allegedly does not provide information when I am still waiting for a response. Ms Giddings was just as bad because she did not respond to a few of my RTI requests, or her department did not. It is typical hypocrisy from those opposite.

This legislation is part of budget week and the budget process. I want to talk briefly about the DPP and the link to the police service that supports a service to the DPP that prosecutes certain cases. The Government has committed to 125 more police on top of the number we have already provided and that is very positive.

Mr Bacon - Relevance to the bill?

Mr BROOKS - I explained why I am talking about this. Were you not listening?

Mr Bacon - I was not listening. It is still the last bill.

Mr BROOKS - I was talking about the service the police provide to the DPP and the DPP is part of this bill.

Mr Bacon - Yes, but the 125 police were in the other bill.

Mr BROOKS - I will get to that if you wait. I know you do not want to hear it. The DPP acts on the briefs provided by police. If you do not have enough police out there doing their jobs and you sack them, like we saw under the previous minister -

Mr O'Byrne - I did not sack one and you know it. You cannot even name one.

Mr BROOKS - Did the numbers grow when you were the minister?

Mr O'Byrne - I am fine for you to outline that and they were very tough times.

Mr BROOKS - You did not sack any but you reduced the police.

Mr O'Byrne - No-one was sacked.

Mr BROOKS - What were the numbers when you became police minister and what were they when you left?

Mr Bacon - You were the only one who was sacked.

Ms O'Connor - What was the crime rate? The crime rate went up 10 per cent in a single year on your Government's watch.

Mr BROOKS - That is because we have more police out there providing better service to the DPP. Thank you, Ms O'Connor, for highlighting how our action on crime as delivered results.

Ms O'Connor - Give us a break. The actual crime rates went up 10 per cent in a single year.

Mr BROOKS - Our action has delivered more convictions. Mr O'Byrne, through interjection, I asked a very simple question. Were there more or less police when you started and finished your ministerial career?

Mr Bacon - What is the relevance of that to this bill?

Mr BROOKS - It comes back to section 5, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. If you do not know how the police interact with the DPP -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr Gutwein - He is providing context.

Mr BROOKS - That is right. I am not surprised they do not like it because we all know there were fewer police under the watch of the former minister, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr O'Byrne - Am I so-called?

Mr BROOKS - Your government was a so-called government because of what it did to industry.

Our initiatives under the previous legislation that was debated earlier - without reflecting on a previous debate - that does feed into the office of the DPP. The police service does provide briefs and the evidence and the circumstances for the prosecution office to then carry out their role. It is funded under this Budget with \$7.252 million.

The actions this Government were able to take enable us to fund these very important aspects of community expectations, community safety and protection and community services. This leads into a very close partnership between effective budget management and listening to what the people want and effecting that expectation with deliverables out there in the community.

We have seen the Attorney-General, my good friend and colleague, Ms Archer, work very well in line with amendments and changes to the judiciary, that again act within the effectiveness of the DPP, because ultimately that is where these things are decided.

The importance of sound budget financial management means that these things can be appropriately funded. We heard Ms O'Connor highlight her concerns about funding, in particular to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman does a fantastic job, not only on behalf of the Tasmanian community but also with any of the specific requests and work that it does. The Tasmanian Audit Office also does a tremendous job.

This bill is an important aspect because it also provides the funding for the House of Assembly. If you were to ask most people in the street, they would think it is a waste of money and they think we are all overpaid and we are all a waste of time. However, we would all commend the wonderful work of those within the House of Assembly. The amazing amount of knowledge that they have and that they share, but also the impartial advice that they give all of us is a very important function of the Parliament. Ms O'Connor mentioned that she has been here for nearly a decade. I am probably about one year-and-a-half years behind you. I have been here for more than eight years.

If you had asked me about why it costs so much to run the House of Assembly before I came here, I would have said 'well that seems very expensive'. I would not understand what functions happened here -

Ms O'Connor - You could privatise it, like the ABC.

Mr BROOKS - No, now you are just being silly, Ms O'Connor. That is just being ridiculous.

Ms O'Connor - No, if you want to sell the Treasury building and the ABC, why stop there? Privatising the Assembly, it is very expensive.

Mr BROOKS - We do not, that is again just being ridiculous.

Ms O'Connor - Of course I am being ridiculous.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BROOKS - Madam Speaker, I know you would appreciate the expertise and the support that goes into the House of Assembly under this bill before us. All of the staff - and some have been here a lot longer than 10 years - have experience and expertise that grows from a care for the community. It is a very important resource that we all utilise in this Chamber and no doubt in the Legislative Council. At the end of the day, we were able to fund all of these things because we have a sound budget position. We have growing revenues, growing economies and that does give the state more ability to add to the service that we provide. I support the bill and commend it to the House.

[3.18 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Treasurer) - Madam Speaker, I thank members for their contributions and support, some more willingly than others, for this particular bill.

For anybody watching this debate, they would not be aware of the smaller agencies we talk about here. We touched on a couple such as the House of Assembly, the Integrity Commission, the Legislative Council and the Legislature-General, the DPP, the Office of the Governor, the Ombudsman, the Tasmanian Audit Office, Tourism Tasmania and a range of statutory authorities as well. They receive funding under this allocation.

While I am not the minister responsible for the Ombudsman, I did have occasion to look at some of the statistics that are included in budget paper 2, volume 2, and they indicate that the Ombudsman's office has been finalising more inquiries. In fact there has been quite a significant increase in the last full year, 2016-17, over the previous 2015-16 year, and the number of complaints to the health complaints and energy ombudsman but resolved in less than three months, continues to trend upwards from around 72 per cent in 2015-16 to 86 per cent in 2016-17, with a target in 2017-18 of 88 per cent. I reject some of the assertions that have been made regarding resourcing because we are seeing a trend in the right direction in terms of the output from the Office of the Ombudsman.

I note the shadow treasurer suggested we should provide further funding for some of these minor agencies. I make the point, and not flippantly, that the Labor Party had an opportunity on Tuesday to bring down an alternative budget and once again provided no information or detail in

respect of those areas of the Budget they either agreed or disagreed with where they felt funding should be provided.

There was a range of other matters raised but they are outside the purview of my responsibility as Treasurer. I was asked where I was on Saturday and I will say I was at Exeter.

Mr Bacon - Hear, hear. Any standout players?

Mr GUTWEIN - That is a very good question, Mr Bacon. I was the proudest father at the Bridgenorth football ground where young Finn Gutwein was best on ground in the under-12s.

Mr Bacon - Hear, hear.

Mr O'Byrne - Is he a mobile mid-fielder or is he down the back line?

Mr GUTWEIN - In the last 12 months he has grown a head taller so he is a short ruckman in today's game, I like to think in the Michael Tuck sort of mould. Thank you for asking. I was a very proud father on the weekend.

Ms O'Connor - Treasurer, before you sit down you should be proud, first of all. Second, why wasn't more money given to the Ombudsman's office? That was the guts of my contribution. How much money is going to other corporate welfare?

Mr GUTWEIN - Obviously you were not listening when I was making my contribution. If you look at budget paper 2, volume 2, you will see that the performance indication of the Ombudsman's office and also in respect of complaints to health complaints and energy ombudsman, the number of complaints being resolved in less than three months is trending upwards, the number of complaints finalised in 2016-17, which is the last full year, was significantly above 2015-16. Obviously we do not have final year figures for 2017-18 or 2018-19. I touched on those matters the member raised.

With that, I will close the debate. I thank members for their contributions. The Budget will move into the Estimates stage next week and then we will be back the following week for the post-Estimates discussion in this House.

Bill read the second time.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2018 (No. 7)

Second Reading

Resumed from 13 June 2018 (page 48)

[3.24 p.m.]

Ms HOUSTON (Bass) - Madam Speaker, I will pick up where I left off on 13 June. Indigenous knowledge of the land resulted in a mosaic of trees and grassland that meant highly combustible eucalypt forests were not likely to create intense bushfires. With the arrival of Europeans, much of this practice gave way as fire became feared rather than harnessed as a tool to manage the scrub. The result was that grass plains gave way to thick scrub and bushland that was prone to intense

fires. ANU's Professor Gammage, an expert on traditional Aboriginal burning, said the use of fire could be adopted across the country and used for a variety of land management problems. He goes on to say:

Fire can be used for one of three outcomes. The first to encourage native grasses to regenerate and produce new feed, the second to reduce scrub and fuel to prevent intense bushfires, and thirdly to promote biodiversity.

It is already in extensive use across the country, but particularly in the north where grasslands grow more vigorously in summer and need to be controlled, and where indigenous communities actively manage the land, because they have remained in situ.

On public land, national parks, public reserves and larger pastoral land it could be applied very effectively. Aboriginal people would apply it to very small areas, if necessary, like back-burning along creeks or riverfronts or pushing back bush into grassland. The adoption of traditional Aboriginal burning requires a sound understanding of local conditions to ensure it is effective and safe. This is why the participation of traditional owners is essential. Local conditions, climate, plants and animals all matter and have to be taken into consideration. This is a mainstay of firestick farming. Gammage also said that land managers need to understand how plants relate to fire and this was local knowledge.

The type and timing of fire is dependent on the season and location. It is important, particularly where grasses dry out and a fire would be uncontrollable, if not managed well. Fire was used at a time following heavy rains while grasses and soil were still damp. Across Australia there are a number of groups that work with farmers and indigenous people and encourage them to work together to share knowledge and manage the land.

In Tasmania, NRM works in this space funding and delivering training and support to Aboriginal communities. It is important to encourage farmers and indigenous people to work together to adopt land management practices closer to those used by Australia's first inhabitants. While the use of fire is not the only tool, it is one that indigenous communities can share in and cooperate with.

In closing, given all this, it is important for traditional land management practices to be used. I have to ask what becomes of the programs delivered and funded by NRM if, as Dr Broad flagged previously, the NRM model collapses in the absence of federal funding. This is a particular concern in the south and the north-west.

[3.28 p.m.]

Ms COURTNEY (Bass - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Madam Speaker, this has been an interesting debate. It shows that there is a lot of passion around the Chamber for the work the NRM bodies do, with obvious recognition for the men and women who spend a lot of their time, resources and energy collaborating and doing things to ensure that Natural Resource management is addressed around the state.

I will work through some of the contributions that were made - and forgive me, as I am reading my notes from a couple of weeks ago. Dr Broad, in his contribution, talked of his concern about the recommendations for the framework that were not addressed in this bill. There were seven recommendations to improve the act and the framework. My advice is the work on the framework that has been recommended will be implemented once the act has been amended. The challenge

was because of things such as the definition of the council in part of the framework: we needed to get the council component resolved through this act mechanism. Once that is done, we will complete the other recommendations. I am getting a nod so my understanding is correct. They have not been put on the shelf. It was just a fact that these needed to be done first, particularly around the council, because the other recommendations within the framework were predicated on the council's deliberation. We need to get the council removed from the framework so we can act upon those recommendations. I understand the department will be progressing those.

Dr Broad asked about the different NRM models in Tasmania and, please correct me by interjection if I am incorrect, also the future of NRMs. I will make some broader comments about NRMs considering the current funding situation. I might parcel that up and make a comment at the end. Hopefully that addresses your questions about the different models we have in Tasmania.

Dr Broad also made a comment about the intensification of farming and the potential harm to the environment because of greater fertiliser use. There is intensification, but we are farming smarter and doing things to minimise the use of agrichemicals. Precision agriculture is being adopted across primary industries. This looks at ways to minimise the use of chemicals and fertilisers and therefore the runoff into areas where we do not want it. That is already being addressed by industry because it is a way to save input costs.

Ms O'Connor talked about the council, the mechanism of what it is and the appropriateness of it being removed. I will read into *Hansard* some of the comments that came out of the review -

Stakeholders value the early role of the council in the establishment of Tasmania's NRM arrangements but noted that this role has diminished as Tasmania's NRM system has matured.

Another comment was -

Stakeholders supported the creation of a taskforce-style group of experts to be convened to consider specific NRM issues as they arise.

These will rely on particularly the proven capacity of regional committees.

It is also important to note that the Minister receives advice on emerging and topical NRM issues ...

This allows the minister to seek advice on what is appropriate and to have the right people in the room to provide that advice.

Ms O'Connor talked about 1080. The Government acknowledges the significant pressure of browsing animals on crops and pastures. It is one part of a suite of measures that are used.

The Government supports farmers. Different types of agriculture and increases in irrigation are encouraging more browsing animals in Tasmania. The Government believes that until a viable, safe and cost-effective alternative becomes available farmers should have access to 1080 poison as one of the tools available to manage browsing animals. The approval process to use 1080 for browsing animals follows a code of practice for the use of 1080 for native browsing animal management. It maintains appropriate safety and environmental controls.

We understand the concerns raised. However, the Government is not ashamed to back the agricultural community. This is only one part of a suite of measures available to farmers. There are stringent rules and regulations about its use, which are monitored closely by the Government.

Dr Woodruff - You do not do any proper monitoring. You have no data about the 1080 use. You do not follow it up. You just hand out permits hand over fist.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Ms Woodruff, you have the first warning.

Ms COURTNEY - Ms Dow asked how we will engage with NRMs. Actively: in the past the Government has engaged with NRMs. There are challenges at the moment getting federal funding confirmed with NRMs in Tasmania. The department has been working actively with the three regional NRMs to ensure NRM service delivery in Tasmania can continue to thrive.

It was nice to hear Ms Dow talk about her personal experience of flood recovery. Hearing stories from people around the Chamber regarding NRM shows the great beauty of natural resource management is its responsiveness to local community needs. I thank Ms Dow for her contribution and her personal reflections.

Members would be aware of the funding situation with the Australian Government and the tenders that were not awarded to NRM South and Cradle Coast NRM. The Tasmanian Government has been assured the Commonwealth remains committed to maintaining national coverage, including all regions of Tasmania. The Tasmanian Government is working closely with the Australian Government to develop alternative approaches to deliver high value, quality-for-money, activities and outcomes in the south and north-west. We are working to support the NRMs because we understand the important work they do.

There will be another competitive tender process for national Landcare program funding to deliver the Regional Land Partnerships program in the south and north-west. The time frame for calling of tenders has not yet been announced. In the meantime, the department is canvassing approaches. They are working closely with NRM South and Cradle Coast NRM to inform their project bids and we will continue to engage in a meaningful way. This is front of mind to me, to my advisers and to the department. We are working with these organisations to support them in this phase and to ensure our regional representation have strong NRMs around Tasmania.

I take this opportunity while I am talking about the NRMs to reflect on some of the good work they are doing. I have worked very closely with NRM North as my home base NRM over a number of years and it continues to perform a really important role in the ALRS funding, as I mentioned from Ms Dow's contribution as well, and the coordination of management agreements with the larger-scale projects under the scheme.

With regard to NRM South, about two months ago I had the opportunity to attend an event and learn what they are doing in collaboration with the Australia-China Sustainable Agricultural Technology Forum. Once again this illustrated to me the diversity within NRM. I guess it is not the first place one would land when thinking about NRM, but the collaboration they have formed with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences is really exciting and they are working closely with the University of Tasmania. This shows that NRM can be about knowledge sharing as well and ensuring that the good practices and the way we do things here can be taught to other places. That is a really exciting initiative and I commend NRM South on their role in that.

Furthermore, it was great to recently meet Cradle Coast NRM and look at the things they are doing in their local community. They have held clean-ups, they are collaborating really closely with the schools as well as businesses in that area and are also continuing to support a lot of the agricultural producers in their region.

When we talk about natural resource management, the Tasmanian Government has illustrated our commitment through the Budget we delivered last week where we saw that the state Government has committed \$4.2 million over four years to enable NRM North, NRM South and Cradle Coast NRM to support regional delivery, so we have increased our commitment to the regional NRMs. Another one I am very excited about is our support for Landcare Tasmania. Landcare Tasmania has had their base funding doubled, plus we have established and committed to a \$2 million Landcare action grants program. This is something that will allow small NRM community groups around Tasmania to be funded to support the important work they do. Some of the work that has been included in this and committed to is the Cows Out of Creeks program. I have spoken to DairyTas about this work and Cradle Coast NRM, because they have played an important role. This is another clear indication of the Government supporting grassroots on-ground delivery of services.

I again reiterate the Government's support for NRM and our commitment to work closely, particularly with Cradle Coast NRM and NRM South, through these challenging times. I also thank the people who work in NRM around Tasmania. Many of them are volunteers who undertake these works and activities in their own time, so I thank them. I also thank the advisors, because much of this work was done prior to my becoming the Primary Industries minister, so I would like to very much thank the people from the department and my predecessor for the work they have done to bring this bill to fruition.

Bill read the second time.

Bill read the third time.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That you suspend the House until the ringing of the bells.

given the early conclusion to the debate on the budget bills and the need to consider the taxation related legislation in the event the Legislative Council may amend it.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 p.m. to 5.41 p.m.

TAXATION RELATED LEGISLATION (HOUSING AVAILABILITY AND PAYROLL RELIEF) BILL 2018 (No. 18)

Bill returned from the Legislative Council with amendments.

**TAXATION RELATED LEGISLATION (HOUSING AVAILABILITY AND
PAYROLL RELIEF) BILL 2018 (No. 18)**

In Committee

[5.24 p.m.]

Council amendments to clause 13 -

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Treasurer) - Mr Deputy Chairman, I move -

That the Council amendments to clause 13 be agreed to and they be dealt with concurrently.

The first amendment is on page 27.

Proposed new section 19E(1)(a) -

Leave out 'located in the greater Hobart area'.

The second amendment is on page 29.

The same proposed new section, subsection (3), definition of 'greater Hobart area'.

Leave out that definition.

Mr BACON - Mr Deputy Chairman, just to inform the House that the Labor Party will be supporting both amendments and I thank the member for McIntyre for bringing those on. If there is an effect beyond the Greater Hobart area I hope that it does improve housing affordability. I have listened to the arguments put forward by the member for McIntyre and the Labor Party will be supporting the amendment and I thank the member for bringing it on.

Ms O'CONNOR - Mr Deputy Chairman, I can indicate that the Greens are comfortable with the amendment. I also thank Ms Rattray, the member for McIntyre for making this amendment, which makes complete sense and improves the bill.

Council amendments agreed to.

Reported the Committee had resolved to agree to the Council amendments.

Resolution agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

[5.45 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Treasurer) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

The Voice: Reimagine Tasmania's Heritage
Robert Legge AM - Tribute

[5.45 p.m.]

Mr HODGMAN (Franklin - Premier) - Madam Speaker, I would like to speak briefly about the release this week of a book titled *The Voice: Reimagine Tasmania's Heritage* and coincidentally the establishment of the Heritage Council under legislation 21 years ago. There are many advantages in having a council so well established and well comprised by so many fine Tasmanians to ensure that we as a Government and a community do our best to protect and preserve and promote Tasmania's wonderful heritage. I appreciate the constructive contributions by members of the Heritage Council. I note the release in 2015 of their strategic plan and mark the fact that there are 5000 or so places currently entered on the Tasmanian Heritage Register. I note the fine work of the council over recent years to restore integrity to that register. I wish the council a very happy 21st birthday.

Unfortunately I was not able to attend the reception at Government House this week to commemorate the occasion but was able to officially launch *The Voice*. It is a tremendous piece of work, which has been contributed to by many Tasmanians who have a great interest in Tasmania's historic heritage. They are acknowledged in the book. I want to identify Tasmania's treasure, writer Heather Rose who has, as you would expect, written beautifully. She is a wonderful Tasmanian. The book is beautifully illustrated by Jose Garcia Cesar, a newer arrival in our state. He has beautifully illustrated a number of extraordinary places of heritage value. I encourage members and the broader community to get hold of a copy of the *Voice: Reimagine Tasmania's Heritage*. It focuses on the stories behind these places as well as people and the places themselves.

Ms O'Connor - The Treasury building has quite a story.

Mr HODGMAN - It does have a remarkable story and it would be wonderful for more people to enjoy that and to see it for themselves.

I extend my sincere sympathies and condolences to the wife and family of former Fingal councillor and Break O'Day mayor, Robert Legge AM, who passed away recently. He was a legendary figure in the Fingal Valley, with strong community connections going back many years. He was a highly respected contributor to his community through local government as mayor. He was associated with the Australian Local Government Association and the Local Government Association of Tasmania. He was also actively involved in community organisations such as the St Helens and Districts Chamber of Commerce, St Marys Lions Club and St Helens Marine Rescue Association. He was on the board of St Marys District Hospital where his ancestors laid the first foundation stone back in 1927.

He deservedly received an Order of Australia medal in 2017 for his significant service to the community, through roles at the state, national and international level, including with the Red Cross. He was a strong figure, but always in my experience very courteous, thoughtful, persuasive and passionate. It was always clear that his community came first and he was a great servant to it.

His family and mine have known each other for many years, so I sincerely pass on my sympathies in this place to Mrs Legge, their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Robert Legge AM - Tribute
Safe Access Zones - Termination Services - Response of Attorney-General

[5.50 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Madam Speaker, I would like to add our voices to the Premier's in sending condolences to the family of Robert Legge, who was somewhat larger than life in local government. I am not sure anyone who had ever dealt with him would forget those dealings. Most members in this House have had something to do with him over time and come away having had a good and positive interaction. Particularly the members for Lyons, Ms White and Ms Butler, have had a lot to do with him over the years. I add my voice and commend the Premier's comments.

I want to speak on a matter raised in question time today when I asked the Attorney-General the following question:

Australia's Solicitor-General and the Attorneys-General from four states - Labor states Western Australia and Queensland, and Liberal states New South Wales and South Australia - have formally intervened in a High Court case launched by an anti-abortion protestor appealing against a conviction for breaching Victoria's safe access zones. Their case is being assisted by the Australian Christian Lobby. Considering that Tasmania led the way with safe access zones, why have you not prepared a submission? Is it a fact that Tasmania has not joined this action because your Cabinet is dominated by the conservative right who do not believe women should be protected from protestors while accessing termination services?

Ms Archer responded by saying:

I have no personal knowledge of that case. I can get information on that, but I am not going to participate in a grubby little political issue that you want to make out of a serious issue of an ongoing case about which I know nothing.

Had Ms Archer just said she would get more information, that would have been fine, but as the Attorney-General of our state, Ms Archer said, 'I don't know' and called the matter 'grubby'.

I was puzzled and shocked. I was puzzled, because if Ms Archer was genuinely claiming she knew nothing, how was she able to refer to an abortion-related matter as 'grubby'. I was shocked that an attorney-general of this state would give such a Sergeant Shultz-style answer to this parliament by saying, 'I know nothing'. It is simply not credible that the Attorney-General did not know because Ms Archer did know.

The Judiciary Act 1903 requires that any party to a proceeding before the High Court is notified on matters of constitutional issues. Ms Archer as Attorney-General, along with every other attorney-general in the country, would have received a 78B notice. Ms Archer as Attorney-General would have also known because of the Preston and Avery case - and when I say 'and', Madam Speaker, I mean 'versus', a fact Ms Archer herself identified when she added to her answer this afternoon. She returned to the House and advised that we were not part of the Victorian matter because the High Court would deal with the Clubb matter and the Preston and Avery matter at the same time - and when I say 'and', Madam Speaker, I mean 'versus' - and claimed there was nothing of substance to turn her mind to and that the specifics in my question were not obvious.

I return to my question, which clearly stated that it referred to an anti-abortion protestor breaching safe access zones. It is not credible that the Attorney-General was unable to derive

enough information from my question to recognise it was about an anti-abortion protestor breaching safe access zones in order to be able to answer it.

If I can make another correction, Ms Archer also said when she added to her answer that there were hundreds of matters before the High Court. As of today the High Court has 50 matters before it. When adding to her answer, however, Ms Archer did not apologise for misleading this House by claiming that she did not know. If Ms Archer denies that she misled this House that can only lead members to the conclusion that she is not across her portfolio.

Madam Speaker, the standard advice to all attorneys-general is to notice, respond and obey. Ms Archer would do well to remember that. Ms Archer must immediately apologise for misleading this House. If she does not because she contends that as Attorney-General of Tasmania she did not know, then I and other members of this House can only conclude that Ms Archer is not credible and is incompetent - and when I say 'and', Madam Speaker, I mean 'and'.

The House adjourned at 5.54 p.m.