

Wednesday 19 September 2018

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

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, it is my great pleasure to welcome the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Chief Librarian and research officers from the Parliament of Samoa who the parliament is hosting this week through the United Nations development program as part of our parliament's twinning relationship with the Parliament of Samoa. Aloha and welcome to our parliament.

Members - Hear, hear.

Madam SPEAKER - We also welcome Miendetta Primary School grades 4, 5 and 6 to the Chamber.

Members - Hear, hear.

QUESTIONS

Royal Hobart Hospital - Patient Accommodation

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER FOR HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.07 a.m.]

You have so chronically underfunded the health and hospital system that your latest plan to address the crisis you have created is to put patients at the Royal Hobart Hospital in store rooms and alcoves and give them hand bells. How can you justify this plan and how can this be acceptable in any modern health and hospital system?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. Yes, we saw her coming. This is a desperate attempt to run yet another medi-scare campaign against the Tasmanian people. The Leader of the Opposition could not have misrepresented what our local clinicians have circulated for consultation more than she just did. It is appalling that you attack our doctors and nurses for seeking to implement solutions in our hospital.

I will begin immediately by debunking the notion that the Government is chronically underfunding health. Labor cut half a billion dollars from health; we have put it back in, with more. Labor closed wards in the Royal Hobart Hospital, the Launceston General Hospital and the Mersey - we all know Labor's story on the Mersey - and closed beds at the North West Regional Hospital. We have reopened them all. We have employed extra staff. The Acting Premier yesterday released our achievement record and our scorecard.

They do not like it because while Michelle O'Byrne sacked a nurse every day for nine months, we have employed an extra 370.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. My colleagues, I remind you we have some very special guests in the Chamber. I would like them to see us all on our very best behaviour and we are not off to a very good start.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, I want to defend our staff because this is not politician-led, it is clinician-led. Two days ago when the Royal Hobart Hospital was under significant pressure, these words were spoken about what the Government should do. Get a load of this, 'The Government should be looking at what other spaces are available that can be utilised so we can support patients to access the care they need'.

Ms White - Not storerooms; actual buildings with beds in them.

Mr FERGUSON - Oh, touchy. The quote goes on: 'All options should be on the table.'

We all know who said that. Touchy. The Leader of the Opposition said that.

Ms White - I did not say to put them in storerooms.

Mr FERGUSON - On the same day the Leader of the Opposition said that, the doctors came up with an idea to support patient care. What is happening here today, if I could be heard - I can see the sensitivity on the other side -

Ms White - I cannot believe you would take that approach. It is disbelief.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Mr FERGUSON - What you are doing is ridiculing the doctors for seeking to implement solutions. You say a storeroom and that is incredibly disrespectful to our staff.

Ms White - It is in the document.

Mr FERGUSON - If the members will listen. If they will show respect for the doctors, they would not put a patient - if I could answer.

Ms White - It says storeroom.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I understand the frustration but I ask for a little more respectful behaviour and we will hear the minister wind up, if he could, please.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, this morning Dr Quarmby has made a very clear statement to the media to clear up this ridiculing which should not be happening. He has made it clear they would never put a patient in a storeroom. Now that we have empowered local clinical leadership and decision-making, what the team at the Royal Hobart is recommending and consulting - you do not want to listen, do you? I want to answer this question. What they are proposing is that an area that was a consulting room which has an ensuite, be used for more patient care.

Ms White - Also the alcoves. We can see the document for ourselves. We do not need your spin.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - What Dr Quarmby has outlined is that they want to support patients. I am not going to rubbish the doctors the way the Labor Party wants me to because this is about solutions.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. We are going to hear the minister finish summing up but it is important information and you do want an answer, as do I.

Mr FERGUSON - I will conclude, Madam Speaker. It will upset members opposite who want to ridicule doctors and our local executive at the Royal Hobart Hospital. This is supported in-principle today by the AMA. This is supported in-principle today by the Australian College of Emergency Medicine. It is clinician-led, not politician-led. I resent what the Labor Party is doing to ridicule doctors today.

Royal Hobart Hospital - Patient Accommodation

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.09 a.m.]

Your plan to introduce the new overcapacity protocol would see patients put into the hospital gym, into the storeroom or alcoves, armed with handbells. Your own proposal for this new system says the situation in the hospital is deteriorating. Even though your proposal identifies staff are hungry, tired, thirsty and stressed, the situation -

Mr Bacon - You are better off in a cupboard with a bell.

Madam SPEAKER - Through the Chair, please.

Mr BACON - Stick them in the cupboard.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Bacon.

Ms WHITE - Even though your proposal identifies that when staff are hungry, tired, thirsty and stressed, the situation can inevitably lead to reduced performance or at worst injury or increased incidents, the document says:

An over capacity space is an area that is used to accommodate an additional patient/s that is over the opened number of beds on that ward. An over capacity space does not require additional staff.

How do you expect the hospital workforce to cope with these extra demands when you will not provide extra staff?

ANSWER

With 370 extra nurses. Madam Speaker, the Government cares about our patients and we want every patient to get the right care in the right place at the right time. The Leader of the Opposition has just read out a document written by doctors. A document that was not written by doctors was Rebecca White's medi-hotels idea. Not a single stakeholder has come to me and said they want to put sick people into hotel rooms.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. We are 10 minutes into question time - just 10 minutes. If we can all show a bit more decorum we might get through a lot more important questions. Thank you.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, the document that has just been read from has been written by doctors. I understand it has a significant amount of clinical support, but during times of overcrowding doctors do not want to see people improvising and laying down on the floor. Doctors, good people, our health professionals, are looking to each other and working through solutions. I am advised that this is not something that has just been created in Tasmania. The proposals it features are not reinventing the wheel. As Dr Quarmby said this morning, other jurisdictions around Australia are using similar protocols to ensure that patients who are the sickest and need care the most get it in periods of high demand. It stands to reason why the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine has backed it in principle.

These are under discussion. The reason the member has a document to read from is because the proposal is being circulated to staff and for consultation to get feedback. What is wrong with listening to staff? Why ridicule? Why jump the shark? Why do this Trump-esque behavior on Twitter this morning? Why ridicule staff the way you have done? What is wrong with listening to what the doctors have to say?

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I am doing my best to keep everyone in the Chamber today but it is really stretching my patience. Ask more questions. Just stop the interjections.

Mr FERGUSON - I understand that Labor wants to score political points -

Ms O'Byrne - That is offensive.

Mr FERGUSON - We have seen it all morning. Just two days ago the Leader of the Opposition said:

The Government should be looking at what other spaces are available that can be utilised so we can support -

Ms White - Rooms with beds in them. I did not realise I had to be so explicit that I had to say rooms with beds, not cupboards with chairs.

Mr FERGUSON - The Leader of the Opposition does not want me to read this into *Hansard*.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Leader of the Opposition, I am sorry I have to give you a warning. I understand you are frustrated but I request that you obey the rules. Minister, could you please wind up.

Mr FERGUSON - I will wind up after I have reminded this House what we are dealing with and in answering this question the Leader of the Opposition two days ago said:

... the Government should be looking at what other spaces are available that can be utilised so that we can support patients to access the care they need.

I support our doctors and our teams at the Royal Hobart Hospital. They are looking for solutions during periods of high demand. On the funding question, we have given extra funding to the Royal Hobart Hospital and the LGH specifically to support our busy EDs. I am disappointed that Labor wants to ridicule our teams for working through solutions locally. Labor has been shown up today. Labor has been called out. Labor is only interested in the politics and you are ridiculing the doctors for supporting patients.

Premier - Absence from Parliament

Ms O'CONNOR question to ACTING PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.14 a.m.]

Management at the Royal is considering putting patients into alcoves, such is the level of chaos in Tasmania's health system after five years of the Liberal Government, yet the Premier is still swanning around in China on a lengthy trade mission. Can you confirm that no premier in the past 30 years has taken an entire week off parliament? The Minister for Primary Industries and Water, Ms Courtney, was also on the delegation yet she came back for parliament. Why could not the Premier? Do you agree his decision to prioritise cosying up to the Chinese Government is both unjustified and disrespectful to the people of Tasmania who expect us to be in here working on their behalf?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. We will check the records as she has stated in her question. The Premier is in China doing a very good job promoting a number of businesses in China. We are proud of the work he is doing.

This is classic xenophobic behaviour from the Greens. It is shameful. The multi-cultural community in Hobart believes it is shameful.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Dr Woodruff and I take strong personal offence to that allegation. They are the talking points of the Chinese government when criticisms are raised about their activities. I ask the Acting Premier to withdraw his statement.

Madam SPEAKER - Acting Premier, would you consider withdrawing that statement, please? Someone has taken offence.

Ms O'Connor - Absolutely.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will consider it, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - Could you do it with a good heart, Acting Premier? It would take a lot of heat out of the moment.

Mr ROCKLIFF - To save the House's time, I will withdraw if the member took offence.

Madam SPEAKER - I appreciate that.

Ms O'Connor - It is a lie.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, that is most inappropriate. The Acting Premier has graciously decided to withdraw that comment and then you accuse him of lying. That is not appropriate. Please resume your seat.

Ms O'Connor - Did you see *Foreign Correspondent* last night?

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Madam Speaker, Ms Courtney was overseas as well, representing her constituency in Primary Industries. The Premier is overseas representing all, promoting Tasmania, growth in our tourism and hospitality and our primary producer businesses.

The Greens seem to have a problem with trade, with Tasmania's brand and the opportunities we have at this present time. We make no apologies for taking Tasmania to the world. That means jobs and promotion here. We are proud of the MOUs that have been signed over past week. That is why we have promoted them publicly. I am not sure Ms O'Connor, when she was a minister, was as transparent as we have been. Is Ms O'Connor going to table the MOU on the Antarctic Corporation signed by the Labor-Greens government with the Chinese Government in 2013?

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I am trying to assist the Acting Premier not to make a fool of himself. That MOU is in the Parliamentary Library.

Madam SPEAKER - Unfortunately, it is not a point of order but it was of assistance. Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Madam Speaker, the Labor-Greens government signed an MOU with the State Oceanic Administration on Thursday, 12 September 2013 to maximise the opportunities for the Chinese Antarctic research expedition to use Hobart as a gateway for its activities. It highlights the Greens' hypocrisy. The member wants to do a bit more research than the past two weeks and go back at least five years when her government was doing exactly what governments should be doing and that is promoting opportunities in Tasmania to the world.

We make no apologies for taking Tasmania to the world. Nor will the Premier, who is doing a fine job promoting Tasmania, selling Tasmania's brand and the opportunities we have in the tourism, hospitality and primary industries sector. Not only that, the Premier is leading a

government that has balanced budgets and is reinvesting in essential services such as health, education and public safety. I will remind the member -

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Mr O'Byrne, this will be your first and only warning. I do not want this to be a habit for the rest of this term. Acting Premier, I assume you are about to wind up?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am about to wind up, Madam Speaker, but I want to reinforce the point of the hypocrisy of the member. I am very concerned about the language she has been using which some members of the Chinese community could well take offence to. She has to be very mindful about that. We make no apologies for selling Tasmania and taking Tasmania to the world because it benefits local jobs. When the member was in government and a cabinet minister between 2010 and 2014, we lost 10 000 jobs in Tasmania. It just so happens, over the last four years we have created 15 000 more jobs, and we make no apologies for that either.

Royal Hobart Hospital - Patient Accommodation

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.21 a.m.]

As Health minister, you are presiding over an extremely dangerous plan to keep people out of hospital beds and place them in spaces like storerooms. It is a part of your plan - storerooms - page 7. The state of the crisis in Health becomes larger and larger each day and staff are desperately trying to find solutions. You are now requiring staff to stick to a script when kicking patients out of bed, which requires them to say - and I quote:

We are currently experiencing high demand for beds within the hospital. Until more beds become available, we need to utilise additional space in the ward.

There will be no new beds for at least the next 12 months. Do you expect patients to sit on chairs in storerooms for another year?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for her question but I find the description she has used despicable. Ms White is now saying that the clinical director of the Royal Hobart Hospital, Dr Craig Quarmby, is downright dangerous. I find that an outrageous slur against clinical leaders who have been encouraged by this parliament, this House. We have empowered that hospital to have operational decision making at the local level. We look to them to find solutions not all the time, but during periods of peak demand like we saw last weekend, and to find practical solutions to support our patients. To describe that as - I think the words were 'downright dangerous' - is an outrageous slur against the clinical team that wrote that document and is circulating it for discussion with their colleagues seeking feedback.

I have asked to see a picture of the room in question. I have it here; I know that it will not show up on the webcast and members here may struggle to see it, so I will table it. Madam Speaker, I am happy for members to see this. This is not a dirty old cupboard. This is a room that is currently used to store materials - its current use - so do not mislead people, Leader of the Opposition -

Ms White - I'm quoting directly from your document.

Mr FERGUSON - Yes, but if you informed yourself you would know that doctors would never put outpatients into a cupboard. I wish to explain and set you straight.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - I can see you do not want to listen -

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Ms O'Byrne, you are on one warning, too.

Mr FERGUSON - Very rude. You were an appalling minister and you did terrible things like sacking nurses. Just have the courtesy to listen.

This room is currently being used as a storeroom but it was built as a consulting room and it has an en suite. As Dr Quarmby was at pains to point out this morning, that is not dangerous, that is a safe use for that room during periods of exceeding capacity and we, as politicians, should respect that our clinicians want the best for our patients.

If the Leader of the Opposition has any other brilliant solutions, let us hear them. In terms of sending patients to hotel rooms, we are not for that and I do not know a single doctor who wants that to happen. Do you?

Ms White - Do you want them in a storeroom? I don't think any patients want to be in a storeroom.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, I table this picture for members' benefit; that might serve a purpose to put some balance back into this. This is open for consultation. I hope the consultation is useful. The Leader of the Opposition is riding roughshod over good people who are working in a hospital that is currently being redeveloped. We are one year away from the real solution here, which is a new building with 250 extra beds. Until then we have to be willing to work on solutions that help in the meantime.

Last Sunday we had 203 people present at the emergency department. Whose fault is that? It is no-one's fault. What we do to respond to it is our obligation and our duty. We do not want to see people improvising and lying down on the floor. Good people are working on solutions. I do not want to see them ridiculed anymore. I stand with our clinical team and the people who wrote that document. I am thankful that this morning I was advised that the Australian College of Emergency Management and the AMA have welcomed it in principle. They do not want to see patients thrown in cupboards; that was never the proposal in the first place. Shame on Labor for ridiculing our doctors the way they have here this morning.

Education - Employment of More Teachers

Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.26 a.m.]

Can the minister please update the House on the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's progress in employing 250 more teachers in our schools?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons, Mr Shelton, for his interest in this matter. Education has from the outset been at the heart of our plan for a better Tasmania. It is simply the best investment that we can make as a government in the future of this state. We can see from our recently released scorecard that in Education our plan is working and we are making a real difference. We now have 38 schools extended to year 12 as part of our plan. Unfortunately those opposite are not on board with that yet. The schools have embraced the opportunity, but unfortunately Labor has not. We have also seen an 11 per cent increase in young people staying at school and gaining a TCE. Further, since 2014, as our scorecard demonstrates, we have employed 193 more teacher assistants and 142 more teachers in our schools. We know there is more to do and we are getting on with the job. Over the next six years we will employ 358 more staff in our education system, including 250 more teachers. This is the plan we took to the election, the plan that Tasmanian people endorsed and the plan that we are delivering.

This morning I launched the largest ever teacher recruitment drive for Tasmanian government schools. This weekend advertisements for Tasmanian government school teachers will be placed nationally in print and through social media and we encourage eligible teachers, both in Tasmania and around the country, to apply. These positions will be in place at the start of the 2019 school year. This is a national campaign simply because we need so many teachers and nationally the market is tight. We want to compete nationally for the best and brightest and, importantly, for the best and brightest Tasmanian graduates to have a great opportunity to stay here and work.

The increase provides a huge opportunity to reshape the education workforce. Teaching jobs will be targeted to improve literacy and numeracy by placing a literacy coach in every Tasmanian government school to implement a new literacy and numeracy strategy, just as our election commitment stated. Further, there will be a continued focus on early years education and increased specialised expertise in areas such as agricultural education on our school farms. More teachers will enable us to focus on hard-to-staff subject areas and give a boost to hard-to-staff locations and, importantly, extra teachers will free up principals to lead.

Our plan is about quality, not quantity, and we are already working to ensure we are best placed to attract and support our teaching profession into the future. As I always do, I simply have to point out the differences that have been made in education under this Government and the abject failure of the previous government. We have a plan, we have ideas, we have investment in teachers, but all they could come up with over their four years was to close 20 schools to balance the budget. That was your plan for education. The failed Tas Tomorrow experiment is an example of that. We are getting on with the job; 250 more teachers over the next six years and we have 142 more teachers now than we had four years ago and our education results and outcomes demonstrate this extra investment.

Royal Hobart Hospital - Patient Accommodation

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.30 a.m.]

You have demonstrated no empathy for the staff and the patients who are battling the crisis in the health and hospital system that you have created. Would you be happy if an elderly relative of your own was asked to sit in a storeroom with a handbell when they are sick?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, no member of this House or this state would want an elderly family member housed in a cupboard in a hospital and no-one is proposing that. The only person who is ridiculing our doctors is the Leader of the Opposition.

Royal Hobart Hospital - Patient Accommodation

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.31 a.m.]

The new over-capacity protocol that has been proposed for the Royal Hobart Hospital resembles a plan that would probably be more appropriate in the event of a natural disaster or a state emergency. Are you happy the health and hospital system, under your watch, is in such crisis that the Royal Hobart Hospital will run each day at a level usually reserved for the most disastrous and catastrophic circumstances?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Government is committed to better patient care, more beds, more funding, re-employing nurses and opening wards that were closed by the previous government. There is a reality Ms White and every member of this House has to be honest about and that is, at times, like last weekend, the Royal Hobart Hospital was very busy. Staff need tools in their tool kit to be able to cope with that without compromising patient care. Why the constant ridicule of a practical solution that has been developed, not by me, not by politicians, but by doctors wanting the best for those patients? Why create the false argument that it is about putting my elderly relatives in a cupboard which is what you asserted earlier? That is ridiculing our team. That is a shameful slur on good people who are working on solutions. What the Leader of the Opposition has said and her conduct this morning demeans the Leader of the Opposition's role. It is beneath the role because the Leader of the Opposition is not being responsible.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. On all sides of the House please.

Mr FERGUSON - Any suggestion that this is somehow to be situation normal is rejected. It is an overcrowding support protocol that is being used in reputable hospitals around this country and internationally. If I was not right about that, why would the Australian College of Emergency Medicine be backing it? Why would the AMA be backing it?

Honestly, if the Leader of the Opposition thinks the Government should be doing something we are not doing, let her say so. If she thinks we should be opening beds in a particular room or ward that we are not doing, let her say so.

One thing we will not be doing, which the Leader of the Opposition has been calling for, is putting sick people into motels. We are not for that. We do not know clinicians who think that is a good idea. That is a dangerous plan.

One other thing the Leader of the Opposition, I hope would support is that in July we opened the extra 22 beds at the Repat. That has been a wonderful addition to our health system. That has been fantastic. It has been widely supported. It is a beautiful new facility but what matters is the clinical care that is provided. We have more than 60 staff this Government has funded to open those 22 beds. The staff tell me it is helping. The staff at the Royal Hobart Hospital say to me, it has helped since those beds opened.

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - I ask those mumbling to my left to be little quieter.

Mr FERGUSON - As the members have lost interest, Madam Speaker, I will conclude my comments.

Local Government - General Manager's Roll

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for LOCAL GOVERNMENT, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.34 a.m.]

Are you concerned by accusations expressed by Hobart City councillors and the community, that the general manager's roll is being rorted to stack an election outcome? The general manager's roll for Hobart has closed with 1916 people and businesses, with 589 people who are not Australian citizens being empowered to vote. That number is sufficient to elect -

Mr Bacon - I thought you wanted the Chinese to vote. I thought that was the whole point.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Bacon.

Mr Bacon - It was not racism; you did not like the authoritarian regime.

Madam SPEAKER - Mr Bacon, I have you on warning.

Dr WOODRUFF - That number is sufficient to elect one councillor with a full quota and two if the campaign is organised, let us say among international students. Do you agree the general manager's roll presents a risk to fair and free democratic outcomes for local government elections, and if you do, what are you going to do about it?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for that question and for once again convincing this House that there are very strong xenophobic undertones coming from the Greens at the moment. It is quite evident in the way that the question was worded that they want to target a particular race of people. That is what you are doing.

The Local Government Act governs the general manager's roll, the same Local Government Act that was in place when you were in government and the rules were exactly the same.

Ms O'Connor - The CCP was not doing then what it is doing now. It is a surveillance state.

Mr GUTWEIN - It is hard to comprehend -

Ms O'Connor - Did you see *Foreign Correspondent* last night?

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, I am going to have to put you on a warning if you continue to interrupt the Treasurer.

Mr GUTWEIN - It is hard to understand what is obviously a deep-seated hatred of a particular race of people.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The minister was asked a specific question. Is he concerned there is a risk? It is a simple question. Is he concerned and if he is, what will he do about it?

Mr BARNETT - On the point of order, Madam Speaker, it was a very lengthy question, quite comprehensive, and the minister is attempting to answer the question. You cannot tell the minister how to answer the question.

Madam SPEAKER - I know the member cannot tell the minister how the answer the question - that is lovely standing order number 45 - but there was a direct question involved. I am sure the minister is going to try to get to answer it.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I have taken personal offence at an absolute mistruth that the minister just said then about a particular race of people. You know very well this is not about a race of people, it is about a government.

Madam SPEAKER - I did not hear any particular race of people being mentioned in the question. Minister, if you could fix the offence that would be fantastic.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, I have not been asked to do anything. I would hope that you are offended because you should be by the way that you have been behaving in this place.

Madam SPEAKER - Minister, I did hear Ms O'Connor say she was offended. As we have a rule in here of trying to fix offences between individuals, could I please ask that you retract the word, 'xenophobic'?

Ms O'Connor - He said I had a specific hatred of a certain group people, which is untrue.

Mr GUTWEIN - On what basis would I retract the word 'xenophobic'?

Madam SPEAKER - You accused another individual of being xenophobic and she has taken offence. In the interest of time - we are going to run out of questions - if you could find it in the goodness of your heart to use some other word.

Dr Woodruff - Are you challenging the Chair?

Mr GUTWEIN - No, I am seeking advice. If you would like me to use a different word to 'xenophobic', which is what you just asked me to do -

Madam SPEAKER - I ask you to retract the word 'xenophobic'.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, I retract the word 'xenophobic'.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you. Please proceed.

Mr GUTWEIN - The behaviours are deplorable and in fact if we look at the *Hansard* in terms of that question, very clearly it was targeted at international students, the vast majority of whom, it is well understood, are Chinese.

Dr WOODRUFF - Madam Speaker, with respect, this is tedious repetition. He has not listened to your ruling. I am not specifically targeting any group. I am reflecting concerns in the community. Is the minister concerned?

Madam SPEAKER - I do think that is a valid point you have made. Treasurer, thank you for withdrawing the accusation.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, as I have indicated, the Local Government Act is the same Local Government Act that was used in terms of elections when members opposite were in government. The act is being complied with and on that basis I am certain that this election will be conducted as it should be.

Compulsory Union Membership - Referral to Anti-Discrimination Commission

Mr BROOKS question to MINISTER for BUILDING and CONSTRUCTION, Mr BARNETT

[10.40 a.m.]

Can the minister update the House on measures to ensure that laws preventing compulsory union membership are not being breached in Tasmania?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his very important question. The Labor Party has blurred the line between taxpayer-funded staff and union and Labor affiliation. Advice we received yesterday revealed that the Labor Party has published advice telling potential job applicants that to get a taxpayer-funded job in the office of the Leader of the Opposition you have to pay a membership fee to the Labor Party and the union. This is a clear breach of the fundamental principles underlying our industrial relations laws in Tasmania and across the country -

Ms O'Byrne - If you work in the Premier's Office then you have to be prepared to troll, don't you?

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Byrne, you have not received a warning yet but you have now.

Mr BARNETT - and in clear breach of the industrial relations laws in Tasmania and across the country and with respect to our antidiscrimination laws. It is a very serious matter.

Mr Brooks - Shameful. It is illegal.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Brooks.

Mr BARNETT - The Leader of the Opposition, not the state secretary, is accountable for the hiring practices of each and every member of the state Labor Party.

I can advise this House that the Government will refer this matter today to the Anti-Discrimination Commission for investigation. This is a discriminatory practice and needs to be investigated. If a business or a government agency put up a job advertisement that said you had to be a union member and pay fees to that union to get that job, you would rightly be condemned and you would end up in the courts. Similarly, if an organisation put up a job advertisement with a condition of employment that employees not be union members, likewise they would be condemned and legal action would follow, be assured. The Labor outrage machine would go into overdrive in that case.

How then can it be possible that Labor's condition of employment is not illegal? You cannot publish that expectation, make it clear that is a requirement of the job, and then claim after the fact that it does not really apply to you. Seriously, that is a joke. The Leader of the Opposition and every member sitting opposite in the Labor Party believe that our industrial relations laws and our antidiscrimination laws do not apply.

Mr Bacon - Eric Abetz is never going to let you back in the tent.

Member suspended

Member for Denison - Mr Bacon

Madam SPEAKER - Mr Bacon, it is time for you to leave the Chamber.

Mr Bacon - For how long, Madam Speaker?

Madam SPEAKER - Until the end of question time.

Mr Bacon withdrew.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Madam Speaker. In the silence that now prevails I can say this is now a national issue where the federal jobs and industrial relations minister has called on Bill Shorten to intervene and direct the Leader of the Opposition to stand up and overturn this discriminatory behaviour.

It is clear that the membership fees-for-jobs scheme has netted unions massive amounts of money. Analysis of staffing numbers in Labor offices since 2013 shows that unions have netted in the order of \$178 000 from compulsory unionism from state Labor staffers. In 2013-14 there were approximately 90 staffers in state Labor offices, with Labor employing a minimum of 13 taxpayer-funded staff in opposition. With Labor rules requiring each of these staffers to pay a union membership of up to \$796 per year to get their jobs, unions have benefited from this discriminatory scheme by up to \$178 000 over those last six years and the state Labor Party has benefited by tens of thousands of dollars. This scheme certainly has echoes of the Victorian Government.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order; there is mumbling from both sides of the House and it is very difficult to hear the minister speak.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Speaker, there is a very similar analogy here, a similar case in Victoria where we know that the Labor red shirts riot was being investigated, and what happened? Victoria Police have investigated it and it has been slammed by the Victorian Ombudsman for breaking parliamentary rules. There is much more to go and the Labor Party's entire defence rests on the completely unbelievable argument that they do not need to enforce their own party rules. What a joke. These are the rules set by the state Labor Party at the state conference just a few weeks ago. There is no move at all to remove the rule or allegedly to not enforce it. These rules make it very clear that unions tell Labor who to hire and who to fire. Unions are in charge. They are owned by the union movement. Labor is using the lure of taxpayer-funded jobs to force job seekers to pay union membership.

This is an example, Madam Speaker. What does -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under standing order 48. The minister has had sufficient time to answer this Dorothy Dix question; he has run into six minutes now. There is a legitimate question about whether or not - and it is not - this is an appropriate use of taxpayers' money and time.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you. I have just looked up standing order 48, and the answer can be terminated after sufficient time. Unfortunately I was not timing that particular answer, so I will check with the Clerk.

Ms O'CONNOR - On the point of order, Madam Speaker, it has just clocked six minutes.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you very much for your accurate time.

Mr BARNETT - I will wrap up, Madam Speaker, if I could.

Madam SPEAKER - That would be really good.

Mr BARNETT - What does the dear leader say in an interview with an 18-year-old job seeker straight out of school? 'What union are you a member of? Please sign here and join up.' An impartial public servant who seeks to develop an opportunity in the leader's office need not bother applying. Madam Speaker, there is a lot more to unfold on this story.

Tasmania Fire Service - Provision of Helmets

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

[10.47 a.m.]

You would be aware that Tasmania Fire Service officers are being issued with new-generation helmets to keep them safe on the front line. Can you confirm that the helmets cost nearly \$600 each and, as such, their rollout is being staged over time? Given that there are frontline fire officers who have not yet received this essential safety equipment, do you understand why they might be angry that you have accepted one of these helmets as a gift, complete with your name printed on it? Have

you ever worn this helmet, or is it just an ornament on your shelf gathering dust while a firefighter could be running into a burning building wearing old equipment?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Braddon for his question. I have been presented with a helmet. I am not sure if it is exactly the one you that you have shown in that photograph. I felt very honoured to be presented with it -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Mr FERGUSON - If I could answer the question that would be great. I felt very honoured and I will explain in a moment why, but since I have received it I have had a conversation with our chief officer, Mr Arnol, and asked him to take it back because I would like it to be used for firies on the front line.

Madam Speaker, now I would like to unpack that a little bit more. Last week I had the great privilege of spending time at Cambridge with some of our career firefighters who took me through a training exercise. It was one of the honours of my life in this job because I was able to go into a training situation just as rookies would do and was fitted out with all the protective equipment that is necessary for that to occur safely. I was blown away by the professionalism and the fantastic work that our career firefighters -

Ms O'Byrne interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - I do not know what the joke is. Our firefighters put themselves into situations of great peril.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I make the point that I can hear the Government from this side as well. I am trying to be even to both sides of the House and I do not appreciate mumblings coming from this side of the House either. Ms O'Byrne, I caution you one more time.

Mr FERGUSON - I was unaware of the value of the helmet until you just told me, Dr Broad, but in any case it is going back. I have not worn it, I do not wear it; it is still in its box. I understand it was an honour to receive such a thing, knowing that it is a symbol of the profession.

I will conclude by saying that the Government backs our firefighters. We have strengthened the presumptive legislation around cancers. We have built up the fuel reduction program making our state safer, it is tenure blind as well. It has been a great success of this Government. It places us in a strong position to respond during a season in which we have been advised there will be increased risk of fire. Thanks to our career firefighters and volunteer firefighters. We are backing you as you keep our state safe.

Tasmanian Economy - Growth

Mr HIDDING question to TREASURER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.50 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on the state of the Tasmanian economy and outline what plans the Hodgman majority Liberal Government has to ensure our economy continues to grow and jobs continue to be created?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Mr Hidding for the question and his interest in this very important matter.

Tasmania's economy is going through a period of sustained growth under the Hodgman Government, growth that the Labor-Greens government could only have dreamed of. Early this month ABS confirmed that in the June quarter Tasmania's economy was growing at the second fastest rate in the country. This side of the House second faster rate; that side of the House going in reverse.

The private sector has been producing that growth. The private sector is made up of just under 40 000 businesses with over 35 000 small businesses. That is the economic engine room of Tasmania. Private investment is 12.5 per cent higher now than it was 12 months ago. That is the fastest annual growth rate in the country. This Government is business's best friend. We are backing business and business is booming in this state.

The Hodgman Government enjoys the highest level of support for its policies of any state government in the country. Support for our policies is at the highest level ever recorded by the Sensis Business Index. Under Labor and the Greens, prior to the 2014 election, two out of every three businesses felt that their government, the Labor-Greens government, was working against them. The results were there for all to see: 10 000 jobs lost and an economy that was in recession. As a result of the growth in our economy jobs are now at an all-time high. For the first time in the state's history more than 250 000 Tasmanians are in work. Under this Government 15 300 jobs have appeared in the economy. Under the Greens and Labor 10 000 jobs disappeared.

I was also asked what we are doing to keep the momentum going in our economy. Yesterday I announced what we are doing at Macquarie Point. We are moving from the remediation phase into the development and investment stage. The level of interest we have had on that site in recent times has been significant.

The member for Denison, Ms O'Connor, might want to block her ears because some of the interest has come from investors who may be from overseas. I know in this place I cannot call Ms O'Connor xenophobic. What I can do is call her hypocritical because the proof is there for all to see. Not only did we hear this morning that under the Labor-Greens government an MOU was signed under the same circumstances one was signed under this Government, but - and I know Ms O'Connor has been trying to air brush this bloke out of their history - when Mr Booth was leader of the Greens in the last term and the MOU was signed between this Government and the Chinese government and the Chinese president visited Tasmania, Mr Booth said:

The memorandum of understanding establishing Hobart as China's gateway to the Antarctic is a fantastic development.

Ms O'Connor, you will twist in the wind to make what you can out of any circumstance into a political advantage for yourself. That is what you have been doing this week.

Next month, we will introduce legislation into this House that will outline a clear plan for development of the site at Macquarie Point that is faithful to the MONA vision and will help unlock the site's massive potential. I know that side of the House likes to whinge and whine about a range of issues -

Ms White - It is not a policy though, is it?

Mr GUTWEIN - I can tell you no, whingeing is not a policy. Complaining is not a platform. It is good that the Leader of the Opposition is taking on board the lesson.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The minister has had enough time to answer the question. We are now over five-and-a-half minutes, which means with four Dorothy Dixers at six minutes each that is 24 minutes of question time on self-indulgent, self-congratulatory questions.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you. I believe the minister was getting to his point. We are short on time for questions, so if you would oblige, please.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, in winding up, from that side of the House whingeing is not a policy, complaining is not a platform. My challenge to them is simple: get behind the legislation that we will be introducing, to energise and to move the Macquarie Point site into the investment stage, so that site can go from strength to strength and capture the hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of investment that will create more jobs for more Tasmanians.

Recognition of Visitors

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, I acknowledge students from grades 10 and 12 from Scotch Oakburn College, and members of the Tasmanian Fire Service. I extend to you a warm welcome.

Members - Hear, hear.

Royal Hobart Hospital - Mental Health Patient Accommodation

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.58 a.m.]

This week we have seen shocking images of patients seeking treatment for mental ill health forced to lie on the floor of the Royal Hobart Hospital emergency department. Two of these patients were still trapped in the emergency department last night, after waiting for help for more than 100 hours. You have axed mental health beds at the hospital. Yesterday you said you could not

guarantee keeping your election promise to open 10 new beds at Mistral Place, or where any new beds might open. How is it acceptable that these patients are still waiting in the emergency department after seeking help and making personal pleas to you through the news and the media more than 100 hours ago?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am not in a position and I will not speak about individual patient cases, but I can tell the Leader of the Opposition her facts are not correct. She is going on reporting. That is all I will say about those cases. They are very sensitive matters. Clinicians make difficult judgments. I respect and do not want to ride roughshod over those judgments. I can indicate through you, Madam Speaker, to the Leader of the Opposition that Ms White is wrong.

Tasmania and China - Trading Relationship

Mr SHELTON question to ACTING PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.59 a.m.]

Can you update the House on Tasmania's ongoing relationship with China? Are there alternative policies?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable member for Lyons for his question. It is not surprising that the increasingly hypocritical Greens in their increasingly hypocritical and extremely offensive views of one of our major trading partners, continues to attack our major trading partner at the expense of jobs in Tasmania. The Labor-Greens government signed an MOU, as I have said before, with the State Oceanic Administration on Thursday 12 September 2013 on a trade mission in Beijing. The premier, Lara Giddings, said at the time that agreement would include, and I quote:

... maximising opportunities for the Chinese Antarctic Research Expedition to use Hobart as a gateway for its activities ...

Mr Gutwein has outlined leader Mr Kim Booth's comment who welcomed -

Ms O'Connor - Do you know where Mr McKim and I were? We were standing with the Tibetans on the corner.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, through the Chair, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Leader Kim Booth welcomed President Xi Jinping. Not irrelevant at all - he spoke for all of you in welcoming the President to -

Ms O'Connor - We were with the Tibetans on the Brooker, getting drowned out by big red flags.

Mr ROCKLIFF - He speaks for you. He said 'Greens', the whole lot of you. You all welcomed the President in 2014 -

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Member suspended

Member for Denison - Ms O'Connor

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, I am going to have to ask you to leave the Chamber. I request that you re-join us when we get to introduction of bills.

Ms O'Connor withdrew.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Ms O'Connor may also be well aware that the Tasmanian Polar Network has been travelling with the Premier on his trade mission. As many members would know, the Tasmanian Polar Network is a group of businesses and scientific organisations based in Tasmania that all have a common focus on serving commercial and scientific activity in the Antarctic, Sub-Antarctic and Southern Ocean. Soon after getting home from the trade mission, the chairman of the Tasmanian Polar Network, Richard Fader, put out a statement which included the following key statements and I quote:

... the recently held Premier's Trade Mission to China has delivered outstanding opportunities for growth in the Tasmanian Antarctic sector.

...

China, a signatory to the Antarctic Treaty System, will have an opportunity to expand the long established science relationships with the Australian Antarctic Division and University of Tasmania whilst the Xue Long is berthed in Hobart.

This confirms that the Tasmanian Polar Network believes that not only was the trade mission a success but also the member for Franklin's increasingly extreme views expressed in this place and the media are simply not correct. That is not all Mr Fader and his Tasmanian Polar Network did when they returned home from the trade mission. I am informed that the Tasmanian Polar Network made contact with the member for Franklin's office to express their disappointment at her recent media comments and also to arrange an urgent meeting with the member to explain that she was in fact incorrect. The member needs to be very careful about throwing words around the Chamber and outside about the word 'cowardly', because my understanding is that Ms O'Connor is not meeting the Polar Network, so they can explain. That to me says that the member for Franklin is very cowardly in her approach when it comes to this matter.

Dr Woodruff - You just signed an MOU with the State Oceanic Administration, and that specifically intervenes to change our arrangements to refocus on China's strategic interests.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As the Premier has said clearly in the media, it is not the view of our Government nor the national government that China's engagement in Antarctica is based on military interest. The view has been further informed -

Dr Woodruff - You need to wake up and listen to the international strategic -

Member suspended

Member for Franklin - Dr Woodruff

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Dr Woodruff, you can leave the Chamber too, please. You can come back at the same time as Ms O'Connor which is for the introduction of bills.

Dr Woodruff withdrew.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Madam Speaker, Tasmanians who elected two members of the Greens Party to represent them in this Chamber will be very disappointed to see the two empty seats there as a result of their behaviour today.

The view has been further informed from consultation with a range of stakeholders from the Australian Antarctic community who have been travelling with the Premier on the trade mission. These stakeholders included senior officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs, members of the Tasmanian Polar Network, Antarctic Tasmania and University of Tasmania.

Australia has worked with China on joint science projects for well over 40 years and China's engagement with Australia and Tasmania as the national gateway to Antarctica has always been a positive experience. In addition, China is a signatory to the Antarctic Treaty System and their activities, along with every other nation that has a presence in Antarctica, are managed and regulated appropriately.

It is important to remember that this treaty system indefinitely bans all mineral resource exploration and includes strong protocols to protect the natural environment for the benefit of present and future generations. In addition, all military activities, other than peaceful ones, are prohibited.

I believe that Ms O'Connor needs to cease her attacks when it comes to the Premier representing Tasmania as capably as he is and also in doing so cease her attacks which are damaging Tasmania's relationship with China. She should apologise to the Chinese community in Tasmania for her highly offensive comments, to the Antarctic scientific community for attempting to significantly impact the amount of science conducted in the Antarctic and to the Tasmanian people for the needless impact her views will have on the Tasmanian economy if she persists.

I encourage Ms O'Connor to meet with the members of the Tasmanian Polar Network who claim Ms O'Connor is wrong so they can put their views to ensure that Ms O'Connor fully understands the facts around this matter.

Time expired.

CORRECTIONS AMENDMENT BILL 2018 (No. 33)

First Reading

Bill presented by **Ms Archer** and read the first time.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Health

[11.09 a.m.]

Madam SPEAKER - We now have the member for Braddon, Ms Dow, and her MPI today is going to be on health. No?

Mr FERGUSON - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The Government has no opinion on who should be doing the Labor Party's MPI but it has been placed before you for approval for today in accordance with the Standing Orders by the member for Braddon, Ms Dow. We looked away yesterday when this happened. It was tabled by Ms Dow and moved by another member. It is quite irregular and not really good form, Madam Speaker, and I ask you to consider that as you decide a call.

Madam SPEAKER - The Clerk has just ruled that this is a little unparliamentary but I am going to give indulgence in this case to Ms Standen and she can take the MPI from the Labor Party on the subject of health. Please be sure this does not happen again.

Ms STANDEN (Franklin) - Thank you, Madam Speaker. Apologies for the administrative error.

I have to say that an administrative error in raising this MPI pales into insignificance in relation to this failed Health minister, Mr Ferguson, who has had more than four years now to fix the crisis in the health system. Under his watch the situation has gone from worse to worse. You would think that in a situation where staff and community are increasingly desperate, coming out of the woodwork, telling their stories, that he would stop to listen. Yet at the Launceston General Hospital we are approaching more than 100 days where staff, in their own time before and after shifts, have been picketing to get into the ear of the minister to explain to him the intolerable work situation at the LGH. Then we have situations like Dr Frank O'Keeffe likening the system to putting petrol in a car that is up on blocks. What is needed is more beds. Today we have a release of an over-capacity protocol that is purported to address the situation. We had the minister in question time claiming that 370 extra nurses was the answer to the problems in the health system. If it is just about resourcing why is this protocol required? Why is it that we have the executive clinical director at the Royal Hobart Hospital taking up his time outlining this extraordinary over-capacity protocol that I believe would fail to address the average person's concerns about the failures in this health system?

The protocol talks about 'the Royal Hobart Hospital continuing to operate with a deteriorating escalation status, with overcrowding inevitable'. When this Government announced a supposed fix of \$757 million, why is the majority of that funding in the four out-years and not being directed to address the situation right now? Why are the staff at the Royal Hobart Hospital continuing to have to scratch their heads to come up with novel solutions to address this dire situation?

The proposal for change talks about an over-capacity space being not necessarily a bed space, but, 'rather, a gym, a patient lounge or a recess off a corridor', and the appendix itself refers to exactly those spaces. These are supposed to be in order of preference, the first being an alcove off a corridor across from a reception desk where there are no toilets, no access to gas, and there is a chair rather than a bed or a trolley. The next suggestion down the list is a waiting bay where again there is no access to gas and no toilets, and going down the list an alcove, a family room, a patient

activity room and then a storeroom, a gym and a waiting room. One would think that a waiting room would have calls upon its space every day of the week.

This is all supposed to be, and I quote, 'about sharing clinical risk'. How dire is this situation for the hospital to come up with a change proposal that purports not to direct additional resources but to 'manage and share the risk'? It says that no additional staffing will be required to support this change and that transfers from the ED or critical care are not to be delayed due to breaks, change of shift and/or other unit activity, so with no further cost and no further staffing, how on earth are overstretched staff supposed to rise to the occasion and cope with this situation?

The protocol, of its own admission, says that in the event of an infection outbreak, flu pandemic or major incident, it may not be possible to adhere to all aspects of this protocol. Just exactly under what circumstances is this protocol going to be enacted?

This minister has had more than four years to fix this crisis. Under his watch the situation has gotten worse. Desperate Tasmanians are telling their stories to the media, stories of mental health and ill health. We have had stories in recent weeks about wage theft of construction workers at the new K block. We have a critical shortage of psych beds. For the last 10 months now Tasmanian women have had to travel interstate to access reproductive health services. We have had the hospital at the highest escalation levels on a regular basis over the last few months. We have had ambulance ramping, emergency departments overstretched and risks to loss of accreditation.

Yesterday I raised the important issue of meningococcal disease which the minister just waived away and accused me of being irresponsible. Nothing concerns me more than the health of Tasmanians, and in particular our young people. The department's own statistics show that there is less than 50 per cent penetration of that program into the community of the eligible cohort, and amongst the 15- to 20-year-olds who are at high risk not only of contracting the disease but of being carriers, there is a woeful uptake. Whilst there was a focus on school-based programs in 2017-18 and perhaps in the particular outbreak area in the last few months, what is the plan to ramp up to ensure we have coverage for our young people? Why is the Government not looking at further school clinics, clinics within our colleges and even the university? What is this Government's plan to ensure that this community is safe from the terrible risk and concern of meningococcal disease in this state?

We have a small population and an opportunity to put the cart before the horse to get ahead of the game, to invest not only in vaccinating against the A, C, W and Y strains but also meningococcal B. Why not make that the focus of public funding and a trial of our own in this state to assist with those 15 to 20-year-olds and particularly people in rural Tasmania?

Time expired.

[11.16 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Health) - Mr Deputy Speaker, Tasmanians have every right to be sick in the guts from all the negativity and carping from the Labor Party on health. I do not mind that the Labor Party wants to bring on a matter of public importance on health, but I wish they would come forward with solutions and not simply another lazy menu list of grievances, which is exactly what the member for Braddon has employed.

It fails the test of a responsible opposition. What are your solutions? You have no solutions because you have no plan. The Leader of the Opposition claimed at the election that health was her

number-one priority, but straight after the election she ran away from the Health portfolio and dumped it. She is not even here today. When we brought down our Budget in May this year, once again the Labor Party could not even be bothered to publish an alternative budget. If they had one, Ms Standen would be able to say today, 'We have provided x million dollars for meningococcal B vaccine', even though it is not recommended for a public health intervention by public health services. Instead, Tasmanians are served up with this daily diet of negativity and carping without solution. It fails the test of an opposition.

This Government gets health. We care about it, we have improved it and have more staff. We have opened 120 more beds. You keep saying 'on my watch', and it is true that on my watch there are problems but the reality is that we have addressed many of the legacy issues we inherited. The member does not like it when we go back in history, but history is important because we inherited a busted-up system with disjointed services, four different health competing health organisations and in some cases dangerous services which the previous minister knew about and did nothing about. We have been dealing with those and investing in health.

I have reversed every one of Labor's cuts. They cut half a billion dollars, we have put in \$700 million. We know there is more to be done, but a grievance list of present-day problems does not make the argument that health is today Labor's number-one concern. It is not. The Leader of the Opposition cannot even be bothered being here.

During question time today, any fair observer would conclude that the Labor Party has ridiculed our doctors for circulating a proposal to provide more support to patients. Good on them, I say. We need to see more of that. That is exactly what this Government's agenda is, to empower local decision-making. As soon as we start to see some evidence of that, the Labor Party recklessly rides roughshod over the top of the lot of them, which is enough to say to them, 'Don't bother coming forward with solutions in future'. I wrote it down. Ms Standen said, 'What we need is more beds'. Where are your more beds in your alternative budget? That is right, you do not have one. Second, where would you put those more beds, Ms Standen, that you demand the Government open? This Government has made so many investments into our health system we are now at maximum capacity. We have opened up all the areas that could be opened up. If you want more beds, and I think you do -

Ms Standen - I know you do not want to take responsibility.

Mr FERGUSON - So do I, I want more beds and you know what we are going to do to open more beds? We are going to build more buildings. Until we build those buildings, we should be supporting our doctors at working on innovative solutions to support patient care.

It is not like they are reinventing the wheel. This is a practice implemented in other states. I wonder why we have not done it before. Our doctors want to do it; they are consulting. It is not a fait accompli. They are listening, I should listen and you should listen. We should all be willing to listen to people who have spent 10 years in medical school and registrar training programs who actually know what they are doing. Show some respect for the clinicians.

As for meningococcal, yesterday's matter of public importance is one of the most irresponsible MPIs I have ever seen brought forward from the Labor Party. You were riding roughshod over our hard-working public health services. Do you know they are doctors as well? They are specialists in public health physician training. They understand the epidemiology of this.

Ms Standen, you and your Labor colleagues should be supporting their message. Their message is not to scare people on meningococcal B. Their message is to encourage parents to get the vaccine for meningococcal W through our free ACWY vaccination program.

We know we are not a perfect government. I know I am not a perfect minister. We understand that the health system is not perfect, but we are striving for improvement every single day. We have our waiting lists down, we have our nursing numbers up, we have opened 120 beds, we have brought our health services together under one health system, and we have empowered local operational decision making.

If Labor genuinely cares, then bring forward your considered policy documents. Do not be so lazy. The Government is going to continue to make more investments in mental health. It is a particular passion of mine. We are seeing increased demand in this area. We have a plan for 25 more beds in southern Tasmania because we know there is a real pressure point in southern Tasmania. It is \$95 million. It is in the Budget. I do not try to shame Labor for that fact that it is four times the size of what Labor promised at the election. I sense Labor is dumping that policy. Labor has no direction. It is just daily negativity, bringing incorrect statements into the House, scaring people who might catch something on the news tonight where they might see the Leader of the Opposition claiming that elderly Tasmanians, vulnerable people, are going to be put away in cupboards. Seriously.

Ms Standen - Well, you said it.

Mr FERGUSON - Are you nodding?

Ms Standen - With a bell; a storeroom.

Mr FERGUSON - You are actually nodding. That is just shocking -

Ms Standen - It is your protocol.

Mr FERGUSON - You are accusing our doctors of wanting to put elderly, vulnerable people in cupboards, and you mockingly ring their bell. This is the House of Assembly; this is the people's House where we bring forward concerns, ideas, and have a debate. You bring that rubbish in here, waste the parliament's time with a nothing argument and you expect to be taken seriously as an alternative government? It is contemptible. You failed the basic test. If this is an audition for being Labor's shadow health minister, I say woe betide if that is where the Labor Party has fallen. You have failed.

Time expired.

[11.24 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I find it concerning to speak in a Chamber where people are slinging personal insults across the room. That is really disgraceful and it brings a level of disrespect into this place that we should all try to rise above.

This is, as everything is in health, a complex situation. It is on the Liberal Government's head from the first two years in Government, when it made a crucial decision to remove \$210 million from the Health budget. There are reasons they had to do that. One was to cut back on the public

delivery of health services in this state, but the outcry was so extreme and the pain was so huge that they were forced to put \$100 million back in. They are still trying to recover from that.

Subsequent budgets have not been keeping up to the real costs of running the hospital system. It is not keeping up with the real rise in numbers of patients attending the emergency departments. In the past three years we have had high numbers of people in the emergency departments at the Royal Hobart Hospital and Launceston General Hospital. It has been on the front pages of the *Mercury*, the *Advocate* and the *Examiner* on numerous days, sometimes multiple days in a week over the past two-and-a-half years. That is what happens when you take money out of essential services.

The Government has promised to put \$145 million into funding 106 more beds at the Royal Hobart Hospital, but \$145 million over four years is only \$36 million a year. We are still suffering from that deficit.

The Greens had an alternative budget this year. We funded those beds.

Mr Ferguson - You did. You actually had a budget.

Dr WOODRUFF - We do it every year, Mr Ferguson.

Mr Ferguson - I agree.

Dr WOODRUFF - The Greens do it because we know it is important to talk about what you are prepared to cut. It is all very well to talk about what you are prepared to fund but you have to get the money from somewhere so we made a deliberate decision to defund Tasracing. We made a deliberate decision to force Federal Hotels to pay a community service support levy. We made a deliberate decision not to put money into pokies. We made those decisions so we could fund the beds that are required.

This issue at the moment in the Royal Hobart Hospital is about mental health patients. The Mental Health Council and its members stood together just last week and made a plea to this minister, to this Liberal Government, to make sure they continue to work towards preventive health and early intervention, the step model of care. We must have a functioning emergency department.

I do not let this minister off the hook about that fact it is not functioning properly at the moment. The withdrawal of money from the health sector, the starving of services in regional areas, the failure to plan for mental health stepped care facilities four-and-a-half years ago means that people are now forced to go to the emergency department because there is not appropriate care for them in their home and there is not appropriate care for them in the community. We need intervention so that people do not end up in the emergency department. It is not the place for a mentally unwell person. It is not the place for a person in distress -

Mr Ferguson - Hang on, it might be appropriate for some.

Dr WOODRUFF - Okay, no, I will withdraw that. It is not the place for the majority of people. It is not ever going to be a spot that people want to land and stay in. The minister agrees with that statement.

Bring on that money now. Bring on Rethink Mental Health now. Do not hold on to the dollars because it is only going to get more difficult for people if they do not have those services. It is not just about having beds. You are in Government, minister. It is about funding. It is about providing clear pathways for general practitioners and primary care providers. People in the community need clear pathways so they know who to go to and where they are going to be sent.

That is the job of this minister. You need to bring it on much faster, minister, because you have sat on that money and you have not rolled it out in the mental health space as fast as you should. It is your responsibility, your duty and to the greatest extent your fault that the emergency department is bursting with people in mental health distress. We cannot leave those people in a place like that because it is not a place for people who are mentally unwell.

Time expired.

[11.30 a.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, Alison Standen, member for Franklin, for bringing this very important topic on for the MPI today. I will focus on the constituents in the electorate of Lyons and the difficulties they experience with accessing appropriate health services. When I saw this release of the over-capacity protocol this morning, it is truly disturbing. One of the most disturbing aspects for me as a person who represents the people of the electorate is how much of a mess the system is in. People in the electorate are already finding it difficult to access hospital services, especially emergency services. This, to me, explains in yards how desperate things are becoming. What a horrible onus of responsibility is being placed on the staff in those hospitals; good people trying very hard to provide a service to their communities and to the general public who need the help provided at those hospitals.

I had a look at the checklist, which is on appendix 1 of this protocol and it talks about staff having to provide assistance to patients wanting to use the service. If they want to get the attention of the staff they need to ring a handbell to get their attention. We know there is a space in an alcove of a corridor across from a reception desk. There is one space in there and there is one space in a waiting bay. It does not say how much space is in the alcove off another corridor. There is a family room, which has carpet behind it. Whether that means it is potentially a little more comfortable than having a tiled floor, or a patient activity room where there is space for two to three people, one is a storeroom, but there is a bathroom on that, so that must be the ensuite that the minister was referring to. There is a gym as well where there is space for three people if there is an overflow, and a waiting room which has space for one person.

It is so desperate for good people; good staff to have to come up with such measures to try to deal with the over-capacity and the underfunding of the health services run through that hospital. The people of Lyons are already feeling the strain of poor services to communities and often the Royal Hobart Hospital or the Launceston General Hospital is the last resort to accessing mental health services and other services.

We know there are combined barriers when attempting to access services, including but not limited to geographical barriers, transport challenges and cost concerns. Social and geographical isolation are barriers as well, particularly in relation to higher rates of suicide, and we do know that the electorate of Lyons has very high rates of people who take their own lives. I have a quote here where a constituent who has explained how geographical distance can be a huge barrier alone. For many people located within a rural or remote area there is a combination of circumstances also influencing their ability to access those services. The quote:

I have to travel 230 kilometres return to see a psychologist and I am very disabled and it takes a lot to get ready and travel the three hour return trip for a one hour appointment. Most people cannot do this especially without a support person to help them.

Often access to GPs in rural and remote areas may be limited. Those GPs who are available are not always equipped to deal proactively with mental health concerns.

When we consult to get a gauge from our communities about how health services are being delivered to them in their communities, it keeps coming back with the same responses. Once they are able to access a health service there is often a really long time lag from when they have sought help to when they can actually start receiving assistance. It is not just access. It is also affordability and sometimes it is just the remoteness and being able to get to those appointments.

In the case of a person I would like to quickly talk about, they tried to access a health service at the Royal Hobart Hospital. They had bipolar disorder and they were brought to their regional hospital by an ambulance. They had a problem with their medication, and were brought by an ambulance to the Royal Hobart Hospital. They were there for 12 hours waiting for assistance. No assistance came. They were really spiralling at this stage, very unwell, and they asked for assistance again. It is not the fault of the staff. The staff were doing the best they could do. When that person actually heard for about the fourth or fifth time after waiting for 12 hours in a very uncomfortable chair they kicked the chair and they were then charged.

Time expired.

[11.37 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Education and Training) - Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for acknowledging the matter of public importance today. However, I would like to point out that all those in the Chamber at the moment are new members, relatively new members of parliament; no member of parliament from Labor or the Greens who was here between 2010 and 2014 is in the Chamber listening to this debate. I understand why; that was a very painful period when it comes to health between 2010 and 2014.

I remember it well because I was shadow minister for health during those quite dark days. Through those days I attended three major rallies - a mental health rally not far from here, a rally in Launceston about the cuts to health after the disastrous 2011 Labor-Greens budget, and a rally in Burnie. The then Leader of the Opposition, now Premier, addressed the health rally in Hobart.

During those four years, particularly in the disastrous 2011 budget when we had 12 schools on the chopping block as well, we saw \$500 million cut out of health, which resulted in the closure or shutting down of beds, and the sacking of nurses. We often say that the now Deputy Leader of the Labor Party who was then the health minister sacked a nurse a day for nine months. They closed wards at the North West General Hospital in Burnie. We had beds in storage in Launceston not being utilised by patients. Such were the consequences of the Health cuts between 2010 and 2014. I do not blame anyone in the Chamber in terms of the impact because they were not in the Chamber and part of the team, but I know many of the Labor and Greens team were here between 2010 and 2014. They were dark times.

Since 2014, with the leadership of our Health minister, we have invested more in health services because we recognised going to the 2014 election that Health was crying out for better

management, better leadership and more investment. That is what we have delivered. As a result of that delivery we have 370 additional full-time equivalent nurses in our hospitals and more than 1200 additional surgeries.

I acknowledge the challenges; we all do. We do not shy away from the challenges and peak pressures and demand such as we have experienced very recently, but we are investing significantly more and employing more people, particularly on the front line with some 600 more in Health. We are turning the Labor-Greens disaster around but acknowledging always there is more to do. We have seen the gains, with 120 new beds since we came to government in 2014, recruiting over 600 FTEs of frontline Health staff to support our health system, and \$100 million of additional funding for elective surgery since coming to Government in 2014. This is all about delivering more for Tasmanians in terms of health.

Right around the country and around the world demands on our health systems are growing. We acknowledge the challenges posed by those increasing demands and the complexity of our local health system and we are determined, as we have demonstrated, to make the necessary investments to support our Tasmanian community with health care. Our plan for Health is threefold: investing more frontline services over a short and longer term; addressing the health infrastructure constraints our system is presenting following decades of underinvestment and in the face of demographic challenges; and planning for the future of our health system to ensure it is aligning with community needs and expectations, as you would expect the Government to do.

We are getting on with the job. We are investing an additional \$757 million into Health over the course of the next six years, as we committed to do in the 2018 election. This will result in 300 new hospital beds, a greater range of services right across the state and over 1300 more full-time equivalent frontline staff in our health system.

Over the next six years we can look forward with confidence to other developments within our health system. The Royal Hobart Hospital project was stalled under the previous government and we can see now it is well and truly on track as a result of the Hodgman Liberal Government and under the leadership of our Health minister, Mr Ferguson. Over the next six years we will see 25 new mental health beds and inpatient child and adolescent mental health facilities for the first time ever, 42 new rural and regional paramedics and a dedicated aeromedical retrieval service.

In response to the member for Lyons, Ms Butler, St Helens Hospital on the east coast in our regions is near completion, a \$12 million investment. Surely the member for Lyons welcomes that. It will be a very good service for the local community. There will be 180 more graduate nurse positions -

Time expired.

Matter noted.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2018 (No. 25)

Second Reading

[11.45 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management - 2R) -
Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

The purpose of the bill is to make a number of amendments to the Emergency Management Act 2006, which provides for the protection of life, property and the environment in the event of an emergency, establishes emergency management arrangements in Tasmania, and provides for certain rescue and retrieval operations.

The Emergency Management Act 2006 has been under review since 2012. Progress was halted at times due to awaiting the outcomes from a number of independent or government-led reviews of emergency events, such as the 2013 bushfires and the 2016 floods. The outcomes of these reviews have in turn been utilised to inform the review into the act.

Of particular significance was the independent review of emergency management arrangements undertaken by the Department of Justice from late 2014 to 2015. That review reported 52 recommendations, eight of which had implications for the Emergency Management Act. There was also a review of recovery arrangements that followed the 2016 floods. Drafting commenced in March 2017, following the recovery review, and I am pleased to report that the amendments being introduced today will achieve all eight recommendations of the Department of Justice review that relate to this act.

All state and local government agencies are key stakeholders in this legislation and consequently were heavily consulted throughout the review process and during the drafting of the bill.

I will now provide details on the amendments proposed under the Emergency Management Amendment Bill 2018. The amendments will create the standing Ministerial Emergency Management Committee, chaired by the Premier. Provisions will include membership, functions and powers of this committee.

The process for the expedient authorisation of emergency powers will be simplified by providing the option to authorise all of the emergency powers to a specified authorised officer if the type of powers required are initially unclear but urgent attention using emergency powers may be required at short notice. The authorisation of emergency powers will be more forward-looking and will be available in the event that an emergency 'is likely' to occur. This will be achieved by reinforcing one of the preconditions that there need only be a significant threat of an emergency event, which aligns with the existing definition of 'emergency'.

With regard to declarations of a state of emergency, the amendments will also reinforce that there need only be a significant threat of an emergency event for a declaration of a state of emergency by the Premier. Additionally, a new declaration of a state of alert by the State Emergency Management Controller will provide more of a graduated scale of emergency and an ability to be more forward-looking and pre-emptive.

Also with regard to declarations of a state of emergency, section 42(1)(b) will be removed from the act to further simplify the preconditions for declaring a state of emergency by the Premier. This means that the Premier need not concern him or herself whether emergency powers alone will be insufficient to manage the emergency. All other preconditions remain, such as the existence of an emergency or threat of an emergency, and that special emergency powers may be required.

The amendments will better reflect the reality of municipal roles and capabilities by including in the functions of municipal emergency management coordinators and municipal recovery coordinators the establishment and coordination of evacuation centres and recovery centres. New municipal-level recovery provisions such as functions and powers of a municipal recovery coordinator and some expanded roles for municipal emergency management coordinators have also been included to provide greater clarity on municipal-level roles. Provisions for municipal emergency management plans will remain, which provides all other municipal emergency management roles and responsibilities.

The amendments provide a new division covering the administration of recovery. They make new provisions for a State Recovery Advisor, a Recovery Taskforce, recovery committees, State Recovery Coordinator, Municipal Recovery Coordinator and provisions for the transition of responsibility from a regional or State Emergency Management Controller to the relevant recovery authority. The division includes applicable functions and powers and is aligned with the State Recovery Plan.

In support of speedy and effective recovery, the amendments will include a new emergency power to remove debris from, or demolish, premises affected by an emergency. The power, once authorised by the State Emergency Management Controller, may be exercised if, in the opinion of a specified authorised officer, the removal or demolition is necessary to avert an emergency, or to minimise the possibility of aggravating an emergency. The existing reasonable notice provisions for exercising this power shall apply. This means that up to three days written notice must be provided to any occupier unless the occupier consents, the premises are open to the public, or circumstances are such that immediate action is necessary to protect people from distress, injury or death.

The administration arrangements will be enhanced and updated throughout. The amendments provide regional emergency management committees and municipal emergency management committees the same power as the State Emergency Management Committee to establish subcommittees for the purpose of assisting them in the performance and exercise of their functions and powers. This provides greater consistency and flexibility across the three levels and reflects current practice.

The amendments remove the default appointments of State Emergency Service personnel to the positions of executive officer of the regional emergency management committees and the State Emergency Management Committee. Instead, the State Emergency Management Controller may appoint any suitable member of those committees to the role of executive officer for a specific term. This provides greater flexibility and addresses the concerns that current SES executive officers can be distracted from operational responsibilities if also required to perform executive officer functions.

The administrative provisions are further enhanced by removing the default appointments of the municipal emergency management coordinators to the position of executive officer of the Municipal Emergency Management Committee. Instead, the municipal chairperson will have the flexibility to appoint any suitable member of the committee to the role of executive officer for a specific term.

The amendments will provide consistency across municipal and regional levels regarding the requirement to report to higher authority on matters that relate to both the functions and powers of that higher authority. Some authorities are currently only required to report on matters relating to

'functions' and others on 'functions and powers'. The consistent inclusion of 'powers' will allow recommendations to be made on the need for emergency powers, for example.

The amendments will also clarify the appointment arrangements for regional emergency management controllers on occasions where the appointments are not made by the minister. Instead of the appointments being 'determined' by the Commissioner of Police 'in consultation with' the State Emergency Management Controller, the amendments will make it clear that, in such circumstances, the State Emergency Management Controller can approve these appointments once a suitable candidate is determined by the Commissioner of Police.

The amendments will provide added flexibility for the Deputy State Controller, deputy regional controllers and deputy municipal coordinators to sub-delegate any of the functions and powers that have been allocated to them in their capacities as deputies. The power to delegate their role will allow for more effective continuity of emergency management relief when deputy appointees are on planned absences from work.

The amendments update nomenclature for certain positions within the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. Under the current act, the default appointment to the Deputy State Emergency Management Controller position goes to the 'Deputy for the Head of Agency'. However, following a departmental restructure in 2016, the 'Deputy for the Head of Agency' position is now more responsible for business and executive services and would have to delegate the role of Deputy State Emergency Management Controller to the Deputy Commissioner of Police, who has always performed this role. Accordingly, the amendment will require the Deputy Commissioner of Police to be the Deputy State Emergency Management Controller if no ministerial appointments are made.

The amendments will correct a previously unnoticed drafting error within the act by removing a 'double negative' situation and omitting the word 'not' from provisions describing the time limitations for declarations of a state of emergency. The current provisions state that 'a state of emergency may not be made so as to have effect ... for a period not exceeding 2 weeks'. The amendments will omit the second 'not'.

The definition of 'emergency management' will be modernised to include measures that provide community resilience against emergencies. This is required primarily due to Tasmania's commitment to disaster resilience and will be achieved by adding the words 'resist' and 'adapt to ... an emergency' within the current definition of 'emergency management'.

Any reference to the Tasmanian Emergency Management Plan will change to the Tasmanian Emergency Management Arrangements - or TEMA - to better reflect its actual content and purpose.

In support of emergency management volunteers, the amendments ensure volunteer emergency management workers authorised to provide emergency services outside Tasmania receive the same workers compensation protections as employees under the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988. The secretary of the department responsible for the administration of the Emergency Management Act 2006 must provide consent.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this bill will take effect upon royal assent.

I commend the bill to the House.

[11.57 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, Labor will be supporting this bill.

This bill is based on a number of reviews, as the minister has outlined, including the review of the act by the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management in 2012. That process was updated by an independent review of Tasmania's emergency management arrangements in 2015 as the result of the 2013 Tasmanian Bushfires Inquiry following the Dunalley fires. Subsequently the state of recovery arrangements was reviewed by Premier and Cabinet following the 2016 Tasmanian flood emergencies.

These are sensible changes. They cover all eight recommendations made as part of these reviews and make sensible changes to the Emergency Management Act from 2006. This is a good example of learning lessons from the past. In Tasmania we have a history of learning lessons from the past. I will talk about that later. There have been a number of disasters in Tasmania since settlement, in recorded history. We have learnt lessons from each of those. This extends that process.

Following the Dunalley fires and then the floods of 2016 it became clear that in some regions and among different emergency services there were operations in place that were not formalised. They may have worked in the past but if things are not formalised there is always the chance of breakdowns. The two reviews, especially the review after the Dunalley bushfire, noted there were issues with lines of communication and who was in charge. The human capacity to be on the job managing an emergency for long periods of time needs to be taken into account. The previous legislation was quite restrictive on who could be managing emergency events. These amendments simplify and provide greater flexibility for the authorisation of emergency powers by allowing the state emergency management control to authorise the exercise of all emergency powers of a specified officer in the type of emergency powers for developing emergencies. These were initially unclear. This allows for someone who has been playing a significant role in managing an emergency to receive a period of relief and, in issues of legality, making the delegations clear and acceptable.

It also provides capacity to authorise emergency powers in the event an emergency is likely to occur: for example, if a tsunami is coming and we know when it is going to hit. A more likely event is on an extremely high fire danger day we have the ability, under these amendments, to authorise emergency powers to evacuate people and prepare for an emergency.

To improve simplicity and flexibility, the Premier does not need to be satisfied that the authorisation of emergency powers should be declared. This should be run by the appropriate personnel. While the Premier and the Government may have a role in managing emergencies, that declaration should be done by the state emergency management controller, or appropriate people. Obviously Government does have a role, especially in recovery. The forward-looking and pre-emptive declarations of state emergencies is a really good move, and one of the strengths of this bill and the amendments.

During, and especially after, an emergency a lot of the grunt work is borne at the municipal council level. Clarifying municipal emergency management functions and responsibilities is a good move. This includes municipal coordinators establishing and coordinating evacuation recovery centres and creating new positions, called municipal recovery coordinators, to perform specific functions in relation to that municipal level recovery. When I was councillor at Central Coast Council there were two floods, one in 2011 I think, and one in 2016. Both floods were in excess of

the one-in-100-year flood level height. The area impacted was not like Latrobe, where the town was flooded. Many farms were affected.

Enhancing the emergency management provisions by specifically including a new division which will establish a state recovery adviser is very important. Being able to establish a recovery task force, a state recovery coordinator, recovery committees and transferring responsibility from state controller to the relevant authority are good provisions. Clarifying roles and pre-empting emergency situations are the two big things. That came out of the reviews. You do not want to be going into an emergency cold. You are better off being prepared and being pre-emptive and in some instances you are far better over-reacting in the early stages than under-reacting and then having to ramp up. The ability to be so forward-looking in the way these amendments are drafted is an exceptionally good idea and certainly born out in the reviews, as is the clarity on who can be appointed to various positions. There is a need for clarity. The last thing we want is confusion about who has authority and what the chain of command is. If there are any doubts it can lead to trouble.

The bill says that to overcome confusion about the approval authority of regional controller appointments on occasions when they are not appointed by the minister, in these circumstances, the Commissioner of Police will continue to determine a suitable police officer for the role of regional controller. However, the state controller will approve the appointment.

Providing clarity and being forward-looking makes this a very good bill. That being said, there is no doubt that down the track in the event of another disaster - and there is no doubt there will be future disasters - we will take this process, learn and improve. The idea of constant improvement is a good one.

From what I understand, in the event of a disaster, for example, if a roof is about to blow off a building - and the last thing you want in heavy wind is for a roof to become a projectile and create further trouble down the track - SES staff and volunteers do not have the power of entry unless there is a police officer or fire officer in that group. If any SES staff see a roof about to blow off, from a legal standpoint they technically do not have right of entry so could not enter and tie that roof down. I know that the practice has been that if they see a roof about to blow off they go in and do it anyway. There is a section here that alludes to improving relief recovery and reconstruction powers by including new emergency power to remove debris from demolished, damaged premises. The bill says that if the removal or demolition is necessary to avert an emergency or effects of an emergency, the same notice for entry provisions apply to the exercise of any other emergency powers relating to premises. Is that the amendment that would give SES staff, in that example, the right of entry to go and tie down that roof and potentially save lives and further property damage?

The other question I have not seen addressed is one of the issues raised with me subsequent to the Hobart floods. Who is responsible for swift water rescue? It seems that may be an area where we have not had the need, but who is responsible for swift water rescue and do we need to improve our capability in that area? I understand that in Hobart there were some issues with who was responsible for it. I am not sure if that is an area where we potentially need to do more training.

In terms of emergencies and floods, fires, et cetera, with the change in climate and hotter and drier summers, more intense rainfall events, the predictions are that there will be greater events. The simple physics is that a warmer atmosphere can hold more water so we get higher rainfall events, so we need better fire and flood arrangements because there are going to be other incidents.

Predominantly the emergencies in Tasmania are flood and fire. However, that does not preclude other emergencies - windstorms and so on.

I went into Dunalley immediately after the bushfires and that was eye-opening for me for a number of reasons. I was amazed at where that fire actually got to. We saw Ike Kelly and sons at their timber mill. Before the fire they had timber stacked up everywhere. There was not a stick of timber left, not even any ash. It was all gone. The property had been comprehensively destroyed. There was a truck inside a massive shed, probably five or six times the size of this room here, and all its tyres and plastics and everything was melted and it was completely destroyed. The Kellys barely escaped with their lives from this fire. One of the sons was further up where they had a shearing shed and saw the fire coming down the hill, got on his motorbike and basically had the fire licking at the rear of his motorbike. He gave the rest of them enough warning to get out, and they all got out except for one of their dogs, I think. They had three dogs. One of them never came back but the other two came back three or four days later. Their house was saved because the fire-bombing helicopter came over just at the right minute and dumped a load of water on it. They were reliving their story because we were only there a day or two after that fire and the damage caused by that fire was extraordinary.

Tasmania is lucky it did not turn into another 1967 bushfire with 62 casualties, and we can put that down to the close proximity to the ocean. If families had not been sheltering in the water it could have been an absolute disaster. We are lucky nobody died in that fire.

We also had a chat with the oyster farmers. Where they had been burnt out just outside Dunalley, the fire had crossed a kilometre of bare paddock to get to the forests that were along the waterfront. Then it burnt along the waterfront and burnt out one of the oyster growers there. The oyster grower next door was saved because they had a plastic water tank, the tank melted and the water flooding the premises was enough to save those premises. It made me reflect, especially that bit - I could not believe the fire could have crossed that kilometre. Driving into Dunalley there was black everywhere and everything burnt to a crisp and only sticks of trees left, but to see that fire had crossed a good kilometre of bare paddock to burn out the oyster farmers was unbelievable.

I reflected on that because when I got back to our house we are probably 500 metres from bush. I thought to myself that we seriously need, as a family, to consider evacuation plans. What would we do if there was a fire emergency? That really brought home to me in a personal sense the power of fire and how you may think you are safe, but when a big fire like that is coming toward you the best thing that you can do is get out of Dodge, just do not risk it. It is not worth your life or the lives of your family. Get out and get out early.

The Kellys never really got going again with their timber mill from what I gather and unfortunately Ike Kelly died a year later; very sad. The power of the Dunalley fires was extraordinary and, as I have said, we are extremely lucky we did not have a disaster equivalent to the 1967 bushfires.

One thing the 2013 report into the Tasmanian bushfires inquiry highlighted was all agencies and government support moving to an integrated communications technology for police and emergency services. That was a recommendation 10.

Recommendation 11 was that police and other emergency services examine options for achieving radio interoperability between them in the absence of an integrated radio system. From what I gather, that has not happened yet. Can the minister clarify if that is going out to tender? We

are five years down the track and that was one of the key issues in Dunalley, the ability to communicate.

When mobile towers get burnt out or if you lose your mobile phone tower in the areas where there is no police radio or you cannot communicate with each other that can have a significant impact. We need to have that happen as soon as possible. I would appreciate an update on where that communication is going, as would others in the community. That was from the list of recommendations in the Tasmanian bushfires inquiry.

Obviously we learned from the 1967 bushfires. From what I gather, that is when the fire service levy, et cetera, was enacted. Could give me a nod if that is correct?

Mr Ferguson - I do not know about that, maybe, but the fire act is 1979, I think.

Dr BROAD - We learn from these things.

To talk about floods, we saw in Hobart the power of flooding and how quickly it can happen. When we have a lot of rainfall dumped onto a big rock the water can only go in certain directions: down to Kingston, which flooded; out the other direction to Lachlan, not quite the Derwent Valley but it flooded down that end; and then we had the rainfall coming into Hobart. What that brought to light -

Mr Ferguson - Collinsvale.

Dr BROAD - Collinsvale. We do have an issue with flood-prone communities and we need to upgrade our warning systems. That is something that I would be pushing for. We have learned lessons, for example, from the 1929 floods, and after the 1929 floods, where 22 people died, we instituted measures such as putting in a flood levy in Launceston. We have had floods in Hobart which highlight that we need greater warning systems. One of the recommendations from the Blake report from the Independent Review into the Tasmanian Floods of June and July 2016 was that in flood-prone municipalities the respective municipal committee develops or reviews flood-related subplans within a Municipal Emergency Management Plan at least every two years. Hopefully that is well on the way to being instituted.

Recommendation 5:

That Government -

- undertakes a comprehensive assessment of flood mapping in Tasmania with a view to identifying data gaps, quality and currency, and works collaboratively with councils to identify funding to improve current statewide flood data; and
- explores the feasibility of undertaking a comprehensive flood mapping of Tasmania, using LiDAR or other contemporary technology, with the objective of identifying which parts of our State are, and are not, prone to riverine flooding.

Madam Speaker, that is quite important because as in the example I discussed previously, there were two floods in Forth within a period of five years that were both in excess of the one in 100 year

flood level. That indicates that we need to update our flood mapping, but also our risk ratings. We need to know what is going on.

That second flood in Forth demonstrated that the warning systems were inadequate. We had a situation where water was entering people's properties when they showed up with the sandbags and this was canvassed in this review. We know that the council had staff physically watching the Forth River rise and rise and they were sending information back to the emergency management people in the council saying, 'Look, the river is rising, there is going to be a major flood'. They were still communicating with Hydro and the Bureau of Meteorology saying that it was only going to be a minor flood and, suddenly it was escalated to major flood and it was already too late. There was water entering, including Sid Sidebottom's house in Forth. That got flooded out again. Water was entering the property before they showed up with sand bags.

We need better warnings. We need to have a strategy and this is canvassed in this report, that we need effective flood intelligence as integral to the Bureau of Meteorology providing accurate and timely warnings to emergency management agencies and communities. We need to ensure the foundations for such intelligence are reliable and that we have suitably located rainfall and river gauges. We need more gauges. Additional gauges would improve flood intelligence in Tasmania which should be considered in conjunction with the Bureau of Meteorology. It would be best coordinated through a flood warning consultative committee where additional gauges are sought. Clear responsibilities for funding, ownership and maintenance should be developed and agreed.

If we have more flood gauges, if we have more rainfall gauges, and if we have a model which is live, in effect, so that we can monitor rainfall as it comes, if we have a rainfall run-off map of the entire state, we can have greater predictability of where there is going to be a flood. As a scientist I developed rainfall run-off models. They are basically 'tipping bucket' models where it takes into account things like soil moisture, previous rainfall, et cetera. As the rain keeps coming down it gets to a point where the model shows that it is going to start to flood. In effect the buckets of the model start spilling and if you get increased rainfall then you will get floods.

We can already establish where floods will go if we have adequate mapping, especially using technologies like LiDAR which can provide digital elevation maps, or DEMs, of really good resolution. You can determine if there is a certain amount of water coming down a river where that water is going to go but more importantly it could be used as a live warning device to say this river is going to flood and that way people can be evacuated pre-emptively. In catchments like the South Esk you have an inbuilt warning system because the river is so long that you know when a flood is coming. You can see it building up high in the catchment and you get a lot of warnings. We know when there is a prediction that the Trevallyn Dam is going to spill farmers can start pumping to put extra water in their storage dams which can take the peak out of floods but obviously not out of a major flood. In areas like the South Esk and to a lesser extent the North Esk you can predict a flood because you can see it coming, the catchment is so big. Areas like Hobart, Hobart Rivulet, are much more difficult because of the nature of the catchment with it being a lot of rock. If there is a lot of rainfall on Mt Wellington that water has to go somewhere.

That is why we need better predictability and we need more rain gauges and more modelling. That is one of the key outcomes of this report and I would like to see some action on that. Also, getting LiDAR for the entire state would be very handy. I know that we already have LiDAR for areas in the north of the state. That was part of a climate change project to see what would happen if sea levels rose, what would get flooded and what areas were more vulnerable. We need a comprehensive project to make sure that we are ready for floods. Floods can kill people.

To get back to the severity of floods, I talked about the 1929 flood. That occurred in different circumstances. We know that back in 1929 bridges were built very differently and there was a lot of ringbarking of trees going on. Almost every bridge across the north of the state was wiped out in the 1929 flood because of the build-up of logs on bridges that were built out of timber.

Down the road from me is a bridge on the Gawler River that I cross every day going home or going to work. In the 1929 flood the abutment of that bridge was wiped out. It was very sad because a family of nine people drove across that bridge that night. The bridge was fine but the abutment at the end of the bridge had been washed out and all nine people ended up in the water. Unfortunately, only one survived. A child was clinging to timber and survived that flood.

I now live on part of the property where that family lived. It was a terrible tragedy. The farm where I grew up is just up the road from that bridge. An old timer down the road had shown my father where the 1929 flood got to. My father was down at the river at his bridge in 2011 after days of heavy rainfall. He saw a wave coming down that river and a huge flood built up. He saw a willow tree come along, hit the bridge and the bridge heeled over. Dad lost his bridge. Dad said the flood was higher than where the old timer had said the 1929 flood reached. I went down to that spot after that flood and it was a completely different place. It was like my childhood had been wiped out by that flood. All the spots, the swimming holes, where you used to catch fish, all that local knowledge had been wiped out by that flood. Not only that, the property had been cut in half because the bridge had gone.

That highlights the power of floods and fire, not to mention wind storms. Fire and floods are big issues in Tasmania. These reviews have highlighted issues with the way we manage fires and floods and emergencies. This bill makes good improvements to the previous Emergency Management Act 2006. It is a good piece of work. I hope to get some answers about the radio networks and the other questions I have asked the minister.

This is a good bill but the way we manage emergencies should not be set in stone. We need have flexibility, and this bill gives us some flexibility. We need to learn from future emergencies and keep updating it. Having better predictability, especially in floods and to some extent fires, is of great benefit. We have some fire modelling capability now so we can predict the severity of fires as they move, where they may go. We need to have that same capability with flooding because as the climate warms, as these events get more significant we are going to see floods in the future and we need to be ready for them. We need that mapping and warning capability.

I commend the work of the staff who have drafted this. I thank them for their briefing. It was very informative. Labor will be supporting this bill.

[12.29 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I support this bill and make a strong plea to the minister to address the key deficiency in this bill, which is the absence of any conversation about climate change. This is a climate emergency. We are all living in a global climate emergency. We are going to be addressing the global climate emergency for the rest of our lives. At the Youth Climate Leaders Conference, Christine Milne told students from across Tasmania who know this and who are gathering for their future that she was sorry that her generation had left their generation with the job of dealing with the impact of climate change.

I am so sorry that we have deluded ourselves, refused to take action, wilfully ignored the evidence in front of us to do what we need to do to make sure that we do not reach a tipping point,

which may make this planet uninhabitable for humans and the other plants and animals we share it with.

Last week, millions of people across the planet marched together in solidarity, coalescing in San Francisco for a massive global conference called Rise for Climate. Thousands of people gathered in San Francisco at the same time the UN Secretary Antonio Guterre made his maiden speech calling for all the countries in the world to lift our level of ambition on doing what we can to draw down emissions.

So many other leaders around the world are calling for this, yet we have a bill in the House today that does not mention climate change in the same words as emergency management.

More than 32 million people were displaced from their homes in Kerala, India because of the worst flooding they had ever seen. Crops gone and homes gone. Hurricane Florence forced 1 million people to be evacuated from Florida. Hurricane Florence came barrelling across those warmer waters which are warming all the time. The heat in the oceans will come out. None of us can deny physics. This is a global reality. We need to wake up from the delusion that it is happening everywhere except here. In Europe this summer, thousands of people died in a massive heatwave. Puerto Rico is still recovering from a massive drought.

Climate change is intensifying. Meteorologists are contemplating the need for an additional cyclone severity category. Until now there have only been five categories, 1 to 5, of cyclones and hurricanes. The physics of the planet did not enable them to be any stronger. Now they are contemplating category 6. It was not possible until now but we have 5 per cent to 8 per cent more water vapour circulating in the atmosphere than a generation ago. This, combined with warmer water temperatures, is creating the potential for super-storms.

These are being termed grey swan hurricanes or cyclones, which are distinguishing them from those black swan storms, which are totally unpredictable and unavoidable.

The point that meteorologists are making is that these are not unpredictable or unavoidable. These are perfect storms that we are creating. We humans are continuing to create the level of emissions on the planet which is causing warming, going into the oceans and being released as water vapour and warmer waters that create the conditions for these storms that are foreseen and can be systematically prepared for.

Let us look at the experience of eastern Australia. How wonderful that Tasmanians have made such a contribution to farmers in the eastern parts of Australia with the worst drought many of those farmers have had in their living memory. It has been devastating. Whole communities have been decimated. There have been terrible scenes and stories of people who have had to put down starving and dying animals. We have had fires across New South Wales all winter; not one aberrant fire but multiple fires. Now fire agencies have come out and said there is no such thing as a fire season. We can have fires now all across the year. This has huge implications for fire management, funding, volunteering and being able to conduct prevention burning activities.

Sometimes I hear the mistaken view that Tasmania will get off lightly with climate change. Maybe 10 years ago when there was an opportunity and the space was there for the world to take action on bringing down climate change emissions, there was the possibility that that might have been the case. There was the possibility that we might have been able to push down on emissions and cruise through with only 1.5 degrees of extra warming in the atmosphere - the absolute

maximum that science says we can possibly reach before we have some tipping point in the climate system - but we chose not to do that. As a global community we have had a decade of sitting on our hands, arguing about and even contemplating putting in the Adani coal mine. We have wasted 10 years of fighting that we could have had to develop a climate change emergency plan for Australia. We could have got on with doing our bit to do everything we can to make this climate less bad than it is going to be, because that is where we are up to. It seems that there is no possibility of preventing the worst of climate change but we can certainly do everything we can to make it less bad than it would otherwise be.

It is not going to be the case that we will have a little uptick in Tasmania because maybe we will have a nice variety of grapes we can grow that we did not used to be able to before, or perhaps there will be prawns on the east coast. That is not so bad; okay, we will lose the giant kelp but we will get the prawns. That is totally misunderstanding the way nature works. We have evolved our system. Every climate system has its background level and Tasmania's background level has adapted our trees and plants, the agriculture that we practice; all of this has been adapted to the system and the climate we have here in Tasmania. Regardless of the fact that India may have reached the highest temperature ever recorded of 51 degrees, we may not get 51 degrees in Tasmania. That is good but we do not need to have many more degrees before our animals and plants cannot survive or adapt and go anywhere else. The fish that are trying to survive on the east coast in the warmest waters on the planet will fall off the continental shelf because they have nowhere else to go. There is no other place for them to go. It is not like they can move around.

There were alpine fires that occurred in 2016 but I notice there has not been an updated review on those fires. That is how low a priority our wilderness is. It is a great place to stick commercial development into and try to flog it to get some more tourists, but as for looking after it with a plan and retaining the elements of wilderness we can, that is not on this Liberal Government's agenda. We know that if we keep as intact as it is we have the best possible chance of keeping those plants and animals and allowing them to be able to adapt because they have more space to go and their place has not been damaged.

Nothing is going to flourish on the east coast that is there now if we have sea urchin barrens. The terrible story coming out of IMAS and the research there is that sea urchin barrens are predicted across all of the eastern coast to wipe out the rocky reefs. I believe 30 per cent of the rocky reefs is the figure being discussed, with only three years to go. To the naïve person who does not know the science maybe 70 per cent is okay - 'If you lose three out of 10 bits of the rocky reef, that's okay'. Wrong. You only have to lose a few per cent because the problem with sea urchins is that once they are there they just keep multiplying. We have to be proactive in keeping our systems strong. The way we keep them strong is to make sure we do not overfish the rock lobsters which will be the only defence we have against sea urchins wiping out the whole of the east coast.

Again, it is not a case of maybe making an industry out of sea urchins. I guess we could take a bleak view of the world and say, 'Okay, let's wipe out the abalone, rock lobster, scallop, finfish and scale fish industries and we'll have sea urchins instead'. That is a possibility. We could think of the world like that but it is a pretty bleak way of thinking and not the way I choose to think. I choose to think that we need to be proactive about issues like protecting the environment so we have the best chance as Tasmanians of having resilience in the future.

We have a tipping point in the global climate system and it is coming way too fast. There are pictures of methane bubbling up out of the Arctic waters, a very bad sign. The oceans are the lungs of the planet and we need the oceans to circulate oxygen. We desperately need to get on to the

problem of waste in the oceans and industrial-scale fishing of fish, of whales, that circulate the oxygen and the plant matter from the bottom of the ocean and bring them up. The whales have operated as the lungs of the ocean. We have evolved our planet along with the whales. That is the job they provide us. That is the system we have evolved within. That is the service they provide us. Do we care about the Japanese killing whales? Yes, we do because we need those whales.

We are already in a climate emergency and that means everything we do as individuals counts, but most of all leadership counts and we have to have swift and decisive action to bring down global climate emissions. For Tasmania that means bringing emissions down across every single sector. We have to stop hiding behind the story that Tasmania's carbon emissions are low because the forestry industry has been hiding the growth of trees. After the global financial crisis crashed the market and the forestry industry slowed down, that growth of trees has been hiding the reality that emissions from other sectors such as transport, agriculture, infrastructure and other sectors in Tasmania are not going down. We have to address that reality because it is hard to bring down the emissions from those sectors and we have to do everything we can now to put that into place.

We have a big task to save the planet from becoming an uninhabitable place. I am up for it. That is why I am here and that is why I was elected to parliament. I represent people who voted Greens because they want us to focus on these issues for our children, for our future as a community and for all the other plants and animals we share this beautiful island with.

It was John Donne who said so beautifully, and I wonder why the minister is smiling at that -

Mr Ferguson - I am enjoying everything you are saying. It is just that it is not related to the legislation we are debating.

Dr WOODRUFF - Fascinating.

Mr Ferguson - Yes, it is.

Dr WOODRUFF - That is really interesting that you would do that; interesting that you would smile in this conversation. I will have a lot to say about how this bill directly relates to it.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Through the Chair please.

Dr WOODRUFF - John Donne made the very relevant and important point that no man, woman or child is an island entire of itself. Tasmania cannot be utterly unaffected by the changes in the climate system.

Coming to this bill, minister, since you asked, what the Premier must do is to put the Ministerial Committee for Emergency Management on a war footing. This is a climate emergency and that is exactly what emergency is defined to be in the principal act. The principal act says that:

an emergency is an event that endangers, destroys or threatens to endanger or destroy human life, property or the environment or causes or threatens to cause injury or distress to persons and requires a significant response from one or more of the statutory services.

Minister, you might like to quibble with whether you could call climate change an event itself. It causes events. Is it an event? Instead we could go to part (b) of the definition: emergency means -

- (b) a significant threat of the occurrence of an event of a kind referred to in paragraph (a) in respect of which it is appropriate to take measures -
 - (i) to prevent that possible resulting event; or
 - (ii) to mitigate the risks associated with that threat and that possible resulting event;

We cannot prevent the effects of climate change because we are living with climate change but we can mitigate the risks. That is what we have to do. It is not that we can do it; we have to do it. We have to mitigate the risks associated with that threat and that possible resulting event.

Emergency management in relation to the Ministerial Committee for Emergency Management, emergency management means:

- (a) the planning, organisation, coordination and implementation of measures that are necessary or desirable to prevent, mitigate, respond to, overcome and recover from an emergency ...

It is clear that as the first and most important task for the Ministerial Committee on Emergency Management, the Premier needs to focus on responding to climate change, focus on a whole of Tasmania system response to climate change, focus on the sectors of transport. What do we do if we are not able to get fuel onto this island? Liquid fuel travels across the oceans. We have to stop using liquid fuel. How are we going to do that in Tasmania? We cannot wait for the time when we might have electric cars in the far off future.

What do we do about food? What is our food supply plan? What engagement do we have with industries? Should it be regulatory or voluntary? I find it so interesting the member for Lyons, Mr Shelton, is sitting there smirking at these conversations as though they are something to be light-hearted about. I take the issue of food security for Tasmania very seriously and I take the issue seriously of what we would do if there was some global infectious disease pandemic, given that the national response to a global influenza pandemic would be to shut down the borders of each state. What do we do in Tasmania? What is the plan, Minister for Health? What is the plan for getting food and other necessary things to this island in that situation? How do we do that? What is the education and training that we must be providing to our children in primary and high schools, colleges and universities, to equip them for the future that they will inherit, to give them the skills to navigate that volatile and extreme climate.

The member for Braddon, Dr Broad, talked about the fact that we might have, we probably will have, floods and fires. We definitely will have floods and fires, there is no doubt that. They definitely will be happening more often than they do now and they will be more volatile than they are now. That is the nature of having more water vapour in a global climate system.

What we can do, we must do, what an emergency response to climate change must include is how we reduce our emissions.

Madam Speaker, the Premier has a huge task in front of him. I would like to say I have every confidence in his ability to carry it out, but given he has chosen not to be here this week, and has hitched his wagon to the Chinese Communist Party, I am deeply concerned that he does not understand the reality of the world that we live in, and that he has a very foolish and naïve idea

about how to ensure the health and wellbeing for all Tasmanians for the future. If he somehow thinks that signing away Tasmania's sovereignty to a foreign government in any way or another is going to be a good thing for Tasmania, if he thinks it is more important than ensuring that we have comprehensive statewide, war footing approach to dealing with the climate change emergency, he is not fit in the role that he has.

Minister, I hope you will respond to my comments about climate change, and I hope that you will take it very seriously because the constant absence of the words 'climate change' in every second reading speech since I have been in parliament is disturbing.

I am grateful that there are fantastic children across Tasmania who will shortly be coming into this place and taking control of the decisions here because they know what we need to act on to secure our future, and they are getting ahead and doing it.

[12.54 p.m.]

Mr BROOKS (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, I will talk about the bill which will be a stark contrast to whatever that was. It might be relevant but I do not think it is relevant to this bill. I am not surprised why their vote is at 4 per cent in the north-west because that is the contribution you get from a 'raving greenie' when the people in the north-west are more concerned about the economy, jobs, health and what we are doing as a government in delivering what we promised.

I support the Emergency Management Amendment Bill 2018 and our Tasmanian State Emergency Service. I have a lot of friends who do a lot of stuff there, a lot of stuff that I probably could not stomach. I am not one for needles or blood, so I would not make a very good doctor. The SES provides a volunteer response capability for severe storms and floods, road crash rescue, search and rescue, recovery, and a range of other general rescue and community support roles. When people are in their homes and they are scared and a tree has just come through their roof, the people looking after them are not only our professional emergency service workers such as the police, fire brigade and ambulance officers, but also the SES and the volunteers who provide that service.

I remember the picture taken in Latrobe during the floods where a police officer had parked his vehicle in the doorway of a home so the residents could escape without drowning. They are the sorts of things we sometimes do not pay tribute to. Not all the people out there are getting paid for it, it is not their profession and they may be doing it at a time that does not suit their personal circumstances, yet they make that sacrifice. We must recognise that. I did not hear Dr Woodruff talk much about that. She blamed everyone and everything, which is the usual Greens way, but what she did not talk about was the impact this has on people's lives when they put themselves in harm's way. I recognise and thank our State Emergency Service personnel, who act with diligence and bravery and who do an incredible job in the face of extreme and challenging circumstances.

I remember the flood in the north-west. It was my first term in parliament, just after 2010. I hosted a forum for the community in Latrobe because of the issues due to that flood. To the government of the day's credit - the Labor-Greens disaster - they did act on some of those changes to try to ensure it did not take place again. Mr O'Byrne, the minister for infrastructure at the time, listened to the community concerns that were raised and addressed some of the issues related to some of the worst flooding in the region around Latrobe. The State Emergency Service also takes the lead with much of the state's emergency management planning and emergency risk management work. The bill reflects a comprehensive approach to emergency management and incorporates lessons identified from various past emergencies in Tasmania.

Dr Broad spoke about learning from the past. It is important that we look back at what went well, what did not go well, and how we can be prepared for circumstances that may not be foreseeable or may not even be acts of nature, such as deliberately lit fires. We all saw the alarming destruction of the Dunalley fires and the impact that had on that community and those who put themselves in harm's way to protect the community.

Dr Broad not only supported the bill but talked about working collaboratively to reach better outcomes and to learn from what has happened previously. We are doing that with better technology and better tools. We have seen several bills through already to allow for that. It incorporates lessons identified from various past emergencies and time permitting I would like to talk about the Blake review progress report released today. It includes vital information that this Government is taking on board. The emergency management arrangements in Tasmania are in part influenced by our geography and location. Geographically Tasmania is the smallest state of Australia, located south of the Australian mainland.

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

MOTION

Compulsory Union Membership - Labor Party Rules

[2.30 p.m.]

Mr HIDDING (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Notes the Tasmanian Labor Party's rule 'appointments to electorate or ministerial offices of State and Federal members of the Parliamentary Labor Party must be members of the Party, and a financial member of the relevant Union'.
- (2) Further notes that to get a taxpayer-funded job with the Labor Party you need to have paid membership fees to the Labor Party and the Unions, maintain that membership for the period of their employment, and obey the rules of both organisations.
- (3) Further notes that the Labor Party rules effectively enforcing compulsory union and party membership are a potential breach of Federal and/or State legislation.
- (4) Calls on the Labor Party to act immediately to remove this discriminatory requirement from its Tasmanian Labor Party rules.

In the last few days we have become aware of a situation where one of the two major parties of the nation essentially, and certainly of Tasmania, has standing orders in place that in this day and age are out of step, out of order and, on all the evidence available to us, likely against the law.

Laws were enacted over recent decades to outlaw compulsory unionism. It was not always the case. It was back in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Even into the 1980s and 1990s there were forms

of compulsory unionism that caused quite some disharmony in the community and favoured one side of politics. The good thing is we are now in a whole different environment. I recall back in the 1960s and 1970s many migrants who came from Europe had pre-existing notions of compulsory unionism and had philosophical objections to being forced to withdraw their labour on the instructions of other workers and for that reason, sought conscientious objections. To the credit of unions, that was recognised as being a reasonable position to take and in a courteous way, allowed those conscientious objections to be registered and people could get on with their lives.

In this day and age it is clearly inappropriate and likely in most cases illegal, for a person to be compelled to join a union in order to get a job. It was not always that way and it was not that long ago when a state Labor government was in, they would change the rules so that any job that involved public money was declared a 'no ticket, no work' zone.

When there was a change of government and this happened federally as well, the Liberal government would change it back again so that was not so and straight after a change of government federally, it was back on all these work sites again.

These matters have been resolved in Australia and Australia is a better place for it. Credit must be given to the federal Labor government that set up Fair Work Australia.

Mr Bacon - At the hospital, they give this speech to the plasterers.

Mr HIDDING - It is an odd-ball thing.

Mr Bacon - Nothing to do with the government though.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please, Mr Bacon.

Mr HIDDING - I cannot imagine how it could be. You have a view.

The 'no ticket, no work' model has been discredited and unions need to fend for themselves and had been. By and large they do a good job. In some key industries, are very organised and do a very good job for the people, particularly in those lower paid industries. They have a place. In other areas within the union movement, such as in the building industry, there are clearly issues -

Mr Bacon - This is where you are going to talk about the hospital and the 130 people that did not get paid.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Bacon.

Mr HIDDING - with certain unions that have practices that attract the attention of the authorities from time to time.

We now know that Tasmania's Labor Party rules require that:

Appointments to electorate or ministerial offices of State and Federal members of the Parliamentary Labor Party must be members of the party

So there is a financial commitment and agreeing to the rules of the party,

and a financial member of the relevant union.

Again a financial commitment and agreeing to the rules of the relevant union.

Members of the Opposition in this House, Labor members in the other place and Labor members of both the House of Representatives and the Senate believe they are exceptions to the law because the law does not allow this. Yet the Tasmanian Labor Party rules require it. We are told that rule is not enforced. If it is not enforced it should not be on the books because anybody applying for those jobs would soon be given a nudge and a wink to say, 'Read the rules of the party, mate, and you will figure out what you need to do to get a job in this place'.

If the Labor Party has rules that are not enforced and deliberately mean nothing, what about the rules that contain other commitments that you have made as a Labor Party. There is a whole area of interest to be explored there. To get a taxpayer funded job with the State Opposition, with the Parliamentary Labor Party in Tasmania, you must have paid your dues to a union and be a financial member of the ALP.

All the evidence suggests this is a breach of the Fair Work Act 2009. This act provides protections in relation to a person's freedom of association and participation or non-participation, whichever the person decides, in industrial activities, including membership of an industrial association. The Fair Work Act 2009 was put in place by Labor and it reflects modern society's stance on these long-held divisions within the community.

Mr Bacon - What about someone working at a Catholic school?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Bacon.

Mr HIDDING - By and large, the Fair Work Act 2009 is in place to provide protections to a person's freedom of association. In 2018, in the sovereign state of Tasmania, in a first world country like Australia that is only appropriate. It is only appropriate that the Fair Work Act provides those protections.

Mr Bacon - Does that cover religion? Do we have freedom of religion?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Bacon. I am sure you do not want to go out again.

Mr HIDDING - All employees and independent contractors covered by the Fair Work Act are free to choose to join or not join a union. It is illegal for a person to pressure another person about their choice. It is also illegal for an employer to take or threaten to take adverse action against a person for not being a union member. One adverse action would be to not give a person a job. A perfectly good person -

Mr Bacon - If you were running a Catholic school.

Madam SPEAKER - Mr Bacon, one more outburst and you will have to go out.

Mr HIDDING - has applied for a job and has all the characteristics that the employer in the Labor Party is looking for. Then it is discovered that this person is not a member of the Labor Party, not a member of the union. While the party professes the rule is not enforced, that person does not get the job. That is fair dinkum 10 out of 10 discrimination that offends the

Anti-Discrimination Act in Tasmania. I cannot think of a clearer and more egregious rule that offends the anti-discrimination suite of legislation in this state.

Prospective employees would soon become very aware there are special barriers to going to work for a Labor member of parliament or for the Labor Leader of the Opposition in her office because of these pre-conditions that sit on the books of the Labor Party. They have known about them for years, they have chosen not to remove them and they sit there and they breach at least a number of laws that we are aware of.

The power to hire and fire in the offices of the state Opposition resides with the Leader. While I take the same kind of arrangement would take place as in our party, a member of parliament, a backbencher might have a vacancy, the job is advertised and there is an applicant for the position and you would introduce that person to the Premier or the Leader and the Leader's staff, interviews are undertaken and a decision is made to hire that person or not.

In this case, the member for Lyons, Rebecca White, the Leader of the Opposition, is responsible for the hiring and firing of staff in the state Opposition. By not moving on or seeking to change the Labor Party rules, therefore she owns the ramifications of those Labor Party rules. This is squarely on the shoulders of the Opposition Leader; she is accepting barriers, accepting a rule from a party she belongs to that binds her to act or not act in a certain way. There are laws against that, as Bryan Green found out. He found out about section 69 and section 70 of the Criminal Code which he did not believe for a minute that he could possibly have breached anything like that. There he was, leaned on for party reasons. We have a former member of parliament here, a brother and he wants to have a job and an income after he left this place. He set up a building regulation, registration of a builders company, which was a licence to print money and there was some threat that if there was a change of government that situation would not continue. I was at the heart of that matter because I publicly made the statement that it would not continue under a Liberal government. From that moment on, the Labor Party leaned on Mr Green to consider certain actions.

That is what happens when you have rules such as this, where a party can intervene on a minister or intervene on a member, in this case in the hiring and firing of staff. It is not safe, it is not sound and for that reason these long-standing provisions have been in the Criminal Code because it strikes at the heart of our democracy. A member in this place, a minister in this place should not be bound by commitments made by third parties.

In this case, the third party being the Labor Party that has rules on its books and Ms White, the former state president of the Labor Party, would be very aware of those rules and very aware they apply to her. She did not seek to change them and feeble protestations now that these laws are not enforced are rubbish because they exist on the books. Anybody seeking to get work with the Labor Party, the barest amount of investigations to prepare yourself for an interview would reveal to you that you have a couple of hurdles to jump before you can get an interview. You have to pay a union and become a member, you have to pay the Labor Party and become a member and then you could be considered for employment.

This is about hiring and firing and it could be that somebody is put on and found later that they are not a member of a union and therefore have breached and that could easily be a position the Leader of the Opposition takes to separate from that person. The ACCC calls it 'third line forcing' and it is part of a suite of laws and regulations that are about providing exclusivity to someone.

Third line forcing is a very poor practice, frowned upon by the ACCC in corporate life because it is essentially corrupt. It brings third parties into contracts and arrangements between parties one and two, and it is not safe. It is likely that Labor's rule, on the face of it, breaches two and possibly three laws of this state.

Mr Bacon - Which three?

Mr HIDDING - I have spoken about all three. Do you need me to go back over it?

Mr Bacon - I was thinking about something else.

Madam SPEAKER - Through the Chair, please.

Mr HIDDING - I have indicated that the Fair Work Act is a national law so it is not a law of the state. I cannot imagine how it does not breach the anti-discrimination laws of this state. The Criminal Code would also need to be passed over this activity.

Mr O'Byrne - Any United Nations laws, any other laws?

Mr Bacon - Are you going to The Hague as well?

Madam SPEAKER - Could we have it through the Chair, please?

Mr O'Byrne - Through the Chair, any other laws?

Mr HIDDING - The fact is that the Labor Party thinks this is funny.

Mr O'Byrne - We think you are a joke.

Mr HIDDING - The Labor Party thinks this is amusing; that this is a joke, but the party has -

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I feel we are being misrepresented. The minister is amusing and a bit of a joke, but I would not want anyone to be -

Mr O'Byrne - He is no longer minister.

Ms O'BYRNE - Former minister.

Madam SPEAKER - I do not think that is a point of order, thank you.

Mr HIDDING - Madam Speaker, the Labor Party is involved in third line forcing, which is inserting a third player into negotiations between players one and two on employment and continuing employment. It could be about sacking as well as hiring.

I call on the Labor Party today, in this debate, to come clean on the list of approved unions. Can it be any union? Is there a list that Labor has of approved unions that confer eligibility to be a taxpayer-funded staffer in Labor's office, or in the office of any state Labor member? Is there a list of unions or is it just any union in Tasmania? We must assume that the CFMEU is one such union, which is one I referred to. It is notorious in the building industry and it gets some attention and -

Mr Bacon interjecting.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I ask the member to withdraw that immediately. I have taken personal offence.

Madam SPEAKER - Could I please be informed on what you have been offended by? I did not hear it.

Ms O'CONNOR - By interjection, and he thought he was being funny but he was not, Mr Bacon said that I hate the Chinese. That is untrue; it is deeply offensive, not only to me personally but to members of the Tasmanian Chinese community. I ask him to withdraw it immediately.

Madam SPEAKER - Mr Bacon, I ask you to withdraw that unreservedly.

Mr Bacon - I withdraw that.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you. Please proceed.

Members interjecting.

Member suspended

Member for Denison - Mr Bacon

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Mr Bacon, you are going to have to go out for one hour. I am sorry, but you have been interjecting fairly loudly.

Mr Bacon withdrew.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Stop it, please, or I will ask both of you to leave.

Mr HIDDING - This is a very serious matter for the Labor Party and they are hoping to brush this off with some levity, that this clause in their party rules is meaningless, but it clearly is not meaningless at all. It is a very serious matter.

The Leader of the Opposition is accountable for the hiring practices and also the firing practices in her office and the offices of state Labor MPs. Under the Fair Work Act, the maximum penalties a court may impose for breaches of general protections are \$12 600 for an individual and \$63 000 for a body corporate, so it is clear that the law takes a very dim view in the Fair Work Act of illegal activity such as third-line forcing. We would welcome an investigation into potential breaches of the law by Tasmania's federal and Labor members and senators as well because they are just as bound by the Tasmanian branch of the ALP, and I believe this matter will also be referred to the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Commissioner for a ruling as to whether this is a fair and reasonable discrimination to make. On the face of it I cannot imagine that the antidiscrimination laws have not been broken by the presence of this law - this rule - in the Tasmanian branch of the Australian Labor Party.

This has now become a national issue, with federal Minister for Jobs and Industrial Relations Kelly O'Dwyer calling on Bill Shorten to intervene, and that is the right thing to do. Bill Shorten needs to ensure that his Labor senators and House of Representatives members for Tasmania have clean hands on this matter. I cannot possibly tell how they could demonstrate that because the rules of the membership of the Tasmanian branch says that they must be displaying and carrying out this discriminatory practice by preconditions, third-line forcing, on employment of people in Tasmania.

The Labor Party rules make it clear that all members are bound by their rules, so no member of the Opposition - state or federal - could claim to be ignorant of it. In spite of the fact that we have a handful of new members in this place, I cannot believe that any member would not be aware of their own Labor Party rules, particularly something that should have a red light flashing on it for anybody who subscribes to or understands the antidiscrimination laws and the fair work laws at the very least.

Labor Party rules make it clear that every single MP connected to this Tasmanian division or branch is bound by this rule. Claims by the Labor state secretary that the rule is not enforced are simply not believable. If it is not enforced, why has it been left in the rules? I take it it has been in the rules for years. Why has it been left there? Is it in the rules to continue to give anybody interested in a taxpayer-funded job in the Opposition the distinct impression, if not the hard rules, that you need to first pay membership fees - in cash, legal tender - to the Labor Party and then you have to pay a union before you can be considered for employment. I cannot imagine the circumstance where somebody says, 'Look, I'm not a member of the union or the Labor Party now, but if you employ me I will agree to do so'. That is the just the same as making them do it in the first place. Presumably if you have five applicants for one position then five people are going to pay five union memberships and five Labor Party memberships in order to be considered in the first place.

This has an element of escalation because it is about employment, an area that has very detailed law because it is a very strong human emotion to have a good well-paid job, to compete for that job, to put your CV together, to put your best foot forward, use all your experience gained over the years in various things and apply for that job. To learn that you have to pay money to two organisations separately and agree to a separate set of rules, separate from any rules you would be given and to do with your job by the Leader of the Opposition or Bill Shorten, as the employer in the case of the federal members is an unsustainable situation for the Labor members in this place and federally and completely unsustainable for the governance of the Labor Party's operations. If that is in the rules, goodness only knows what else is in them.

Ms O'Byrne - What?

Mr HIDDING - What else do you have tucked away? Do you have any unwritten laws? If you are as plain and brazen about this third-line forcing, as this appears to be, I do not know what else you are up to.

If this rule is not enforced, why has it been left in the rules to give anybody interested in a taxpayer-funded job with the Opposition the impression that paying membership to Labor and the unions is a condition of their employment? It is a very strong marker, it is clearly a threat and it is coercion. Any time you advertise a job there would be five or six qualified people you would be interviewing for it and I can only assume that all five or six of those people would get themselves into position that agrees with the rules and therefore the Labor Party has picked up five memberships and so have five unions - or one union.

These rules harken back to the 1950s, the days of the faceless men. Someone is running this Labor Party but we do not know who they are. Somebody is arranging things so money has to be paid and considerations have to be made before people can be considered to work for them. This is the faceless men of the 1950s. I do not remember who the journalist was back in the day -

Ms O'Byrne - I'm sorry, but are you are really going to talk about faceless men - seriously?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Mr HIDDING - I am picturing a front page of *The Age* newspaper -

Mr O'Byrne - Why do they make you do this?

Mr HIDDING - I am furious about this. This is a disgraceful thing the Labor Party is doing and you need to be held to account. Unelected, hard-line, faceless men in the Labor Party and in the unions are out there policing this rule. There is plenty for the unions in this and plenty for the Labor Party as well in terms of money and membership. Using the employment of people using taxpayer's money to bolster Labor and union membership is a disgraceful arrangement and it is no wonder you are as embarrassed as you are.

It appears the Labor Party has a policy to give a blank cheque to unions when it comes to public sector wages policy. We hear this. Rebecca White hits the radio and says, 'We would pay public servants a whole lot more than they're getting now.' She is not prepared to say what it is but she is a blank cheque for the unions out there by saying she would essentially give them what they want. It is no wonder the movement has the power to take Ms White's own staff to task and even call for them to be sacked over expressing a political opinion. We saw that in the news last week at their state conference when unions tried to have a staffer removed from Ms White's office because they believe he is right-wing, anti-worker and does not hold Labor values.

Mr O'Byrne - That is not true.

Mr HIDDING - That is what was reported and it appears to be the case. What a terrible thing it was that the Labor Party had a right-winger. Can you believe that in this day and age, a right-winger?

Ms O'Byrne - You're smiling as you say it because you know it's not true.

Madam SPEAKER - Through the Chair, please.

Mr O'Byrne - What about Greg Barns, when he came up against Eric?

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr HIDDING - It is an outrage that a worker was targeted -

Mr O'Byrne - What about Greg Barns when he was a candidate? What did Eric do? Kicked him out, disendorsed him.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr HIDDING - What we did not have was a motion at the Labor conference about a staff member of the Leader being discussed at the Labor conference.

Ms O'Byrne - It is not true.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Byrne, one more peep. I urge you to restrain yourself.

Mr HIDDING - It seems to us that in the ultimate humiliation of this staff member, he was forced to meet with unions and publicly apologise. This disturbing case demonstrates how far the Tasmanian Labor Party has been taken over by the union movement.

These rules show that unions tell Labor who to hire and who to fire. They control that. They did the same with an unaligned senator who has been made a hero by being dropped down to number 6 on the ticket because she is unaligned and does not belong to a faction and presumably does not have the union and party clout that others do. It is clear that they play hard in that party. They played very hard with Madeline Ogilvie and popped her out of this parliament by putting all the resources in Denison into other union-aligned candidates.

There is going to be more to unfold in this issue. There needs to be a holding to account of the Labor members. This is not a matter for the Labor Party itself, the organisation. From my point of view they can do what they please.

This is about the elected Labor members in this House, the elected members in the House of Representatives and the elected members in the Senate and also the elected Labor members in the upper House of this parliament. Four bodies, four sets of Tasmanian elected members, all of whom are bound by the rules of their party to third line forcing to anybody they employ have got to pay twice, in cash, to two different organisations before they can be considered for employment. That is a disgrace. It is the type of party rules that one would expect in a totalitarian state, not a modern state like Tasmania.

It is clear evidence that the faceless men of the union movement still call the shots in the Labor Party. The message was clear for that staff member at the Labor conference and all other elected members and staff: the unions are watching. If you do not toe the line, you will lose your job.

Clearly, members opposite are wholly-owned subsidiaries of the union movement if they are not prepared today to completely denounce this rule and submit that rule to proper scrutiny by proper processes.

[3.03 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I speak against the motion as put forward. You could not get a greater example of a government with no vision, no plan, that are an absolute rabble and under so much pressure publicly around their mishandling of the health system, their mishandling of child protection, their mishandling of housing, people sleeping in tents and sleeping rough and they devote an hour of the parliament's time of government business time, on this rubbish motion. A greater example of a rabble you would not see. This is a disgraceful waste of the Tasmanian Parliament's time.

Mr Gutwein - You might have broken the law.

Mr O'BYRNE - No we have not. The Government, instead of wanting to debate issues of substance, the major issues confronting the Tasmanian community, they choose, like Eric Abetz, like the 1950s old ideological warriors, to drag up a chestnut because you have a pathological hatred of trade unions.

Let us be clear about this. This is a rule of the party. The party secretary has made public comments which have been referred to by the member who resumed his seat and the Anti-Discrimination Act 1998, Division 9, exceptions relating to political belief, affiliation or activity. Employment:

A person may discriminate against another person on the ground of political belief or affiliation or political activity in the employment of a person -

- (a) as an adviser to a minister; or
- (b) as a member of a staff of a political party; or
- (c) as a member of the electorate staff of any person; or
- (d) in any other similar position.

You do not have anything to say to the community in response to your disgraceful handling of the Royal Hobart Hospital, putting people in cupboards with bells, ramping, nurses taking days of action and your minister not even fronting to talk to them and you parade this rubbish motion in as an attempt to divert from the real issues facing Tasmania. Hang your head in shame. What a waste of this parliament's time. No agenda on health. You have a minister who is incompetent, has lost the confidence of the community and the health system and instead of you devoting time in parliament to try to resolve those issues you drag up this old chestnut. Let us have a crack at the unions because that is all we have left. It is pathetic, you know it and you should hang your head in shame.

Of the two things about this motion which really underline what is happening on the other side of the House, one is their pathological hatred of trade unions. There is a pathological hatred of working class people joining together in their unions to build a better life, to have decent wages and conditions, to have protections, to make sure that when they go to work they can come home in the same condition in which they left so occupational health and safety. Every time a Liberal government - federal and state - has had the opportunity they have attacked the fundamental protections that workers have fought for for over a century in this country. Every opportunity, both state and federal. You attack occupational health and safety, you attack the minimum wage, you attack penalty rates, you attack the very things that build a decent life for members of our community because if it was not for the union movement working together with the Labor Party, the Labor movement, none of these things would occur.

People will ask, 'What have the unions ever done for us?'. Occupational health and safety; people not being sent down mines as kids and dying by their dozens and hundreds. Occupational health and safety has been something that the union movement and the Labor movement have fought for for over a century. Every time the Liberal Party gets into government they try to water it down and make it harder for workers to get home safely.

The minimum wage so people can provide food for their family, a roof over their head and if they are lucky they might be able to have some kind of enjoyment in their life. A decent living wage. Medicare - the Labor Party fought for Medicare. Are you against that? What about superannuation so workers can retire with some level of dignity? The Australian superannuation

industry is the envy of the world in terms of workers capital funds so that they can not only retire with dignity but it also deals with a significant amount of economic activity in this country. What about the weekend? What about the 38-hour week? What about penalty rates? What about annual leave, leave loading? What about long service leave? Are you against that? What about sick leave? The unions fought for these things. The Labor Party fought for these things. The Labor movement delivered on these things. Unfair dismissal laws. What about lunch breaks? What about meal breaks? What about ending child and slave labour not only in this country but across the world?

That is what the labour movement stands for. That is what unions stand for and we are also fighting on the cutting edge of paid domestic violence leave. That is what the Labor movement stands for. You have a pathological hatred so when you have no vision, when you have got no agenda for the state you choose to drag up this old chestnut of let us have a crack at the unions because they are a soft target.

The list goes on and on and the Labor movement does not only fight for these things in workplaces so that the working class can have a dignified life. We do not only fight for these things, public education, public health, access to university for working class kids. That is what unions have fought for. That is what the Labor Party has fought for. It is not just challenges in Australia but the labour movement is a global movement. It was the union movement that fought against apartheid. You have a crack at the CFMEU and the MUA and those unions that you see as militant. Well, what are they militant about? Decent jobs, decent conditions and guess what? It was the Waterside Workers Federation that led the charge for the bans in trade to South Africa under the apartheid regime. The history is clear on this. Guess who was against that? In the Fraser Government, John Howard. And what did we see with John Howard? The article-of-faith industrial relations reform led by the nut jobs in the H. R. Nicholls Society. They led attacks on working people and the result of that was WorkChoices, one of the most appalling pieces of federal industrial relations legislation this country has ever seen. It diminished people's lives, made them less secure and it damaged the economy. The Australian people gave their judgment on that kind of approach to working people and the conditions they work under in the 2007 election, where not only was the federal Liberal Government shown the door, but John Howard himself lost his seat because he attacked working people.

We have plasterers, Chinese labourers, not getting paid for weeks, basically having their livelihoods threatened just down the street in 2018, and you dare have a crack at us for having values that we believe in such as collective bargaining and collective organisations delivering for working people.

It is a disgrace that you waste this parliament's time on this kind of rubbish. Do not just take it from me. I am a life member of my union and I am proud. In fact, if it was not for the union movement I would not have the life I have today. My parents were both working-class people; Mum was a cleaner and Dad was a 'tradie' painter. If it was not for the union in their workplaces building a decent secure job, I would not have been able to get to a public school which unions have fought for for many years. I would not have been able to regularly get to school and have the life I do without the education that the union movement and the Labor movement fought for.

You dare parade this motion as if you are acting on the interests around discrimination. Give it a break, it is pathetic. But do not take it just from me. Here are a couple of quotes.

Our labour unions are not narrow, self-seeking groups. They have raised wages, shortened hours and provided supplemental benefits. Through collective

bargaining and grievance procedures, they have brought justice and democracy to the shop floor.

That was from John F Kennedy, former President of the United States.

The labour movement was the principal force to transform misery and despair into hope and progress.

Martin Luther King Junior.

Here is one for the Premier:

Unions have been the only powerful and effective voice working people have ever had in the history of this country.

Bruce Springsteen. I thought the Premier might like that one.

Here is another one:

Trade unions have been an essential force for social change, without which a semblance of a decent and humane society is impossible under capitalism.

Pope Francis. Not a radical voice, I would say, Madam Speaker.

When you come after us and attack unions, you are essentially -

Mr Hidding - I am not attacking unions.

Mr O'BYRNE - You are attacking unions. Every time you get into government you attack unions. This is what separates us from you. We are a values-based party. We are the party that represents working people. We are of the union movement, we were created by the union movement and we want people working for us who believe in our values. We will not take any old hired gun like you do; we actually believe that if you work for the labour movement, if you work for the Labor Party, if you work for the union movement, we want you to believe in our values and be a part of it. We want you to believe in what we believe in so that in government we can articulate a strong working-class vision for this state and ensure that we reduce discrimination and inequality and give people a decent life.

Madam Speaker, let us compare and contrast. On the Tasmanian Liberal Party website is a page headed 'Our Beliefs'. We believe in a lot of things here but here is one thing we should focus on:

We believe in the individual. We stand positively for the free man, his initiative, his individuality and acceptance and responsibility.

Note it is 'his', not 'his or her'. If that is an expression of your values -

Mr Hidding - It is generic.

Mr O'BYRNE - Oh, it's a generic reference, is it? When you look at what has been playing out in Canberra it is no surprise when you read that sort of rubbish. I will compare our values and our rules against yours any day of the week. When you read that, it is no surprise that the last female lower House member from this state to represent the Liberal Party was Dame Enid Lyons. It is no surprise that the last female senator representing this state was the late Jocelyn Newman. 'His', not 'his or hers'. You do not reflect the community.

Let us have a look at what has been going on in Canberra over the last weeks, the appalling state of affairs. Turnbull government minister Jane Prentice will lose her spot in parliament at the next federal election after losing a preselection battle against a former staff member, Brisbane City councillor Julian Simmonds, who previously worked for Prentice. He was chosen as the LNP's candidate for the Queensland seat of Ryan in a preselection ballot on Saturday. Bang, there you go, ta-ta down the road.

Former Foreign Affairs minister Julie Bishop has weighed into the debate about bullying in federal parliament, saying she has witnessed behaviour in Canberra that would not be tolerated in any other workplace across Australia. Julia Banks, the soon to be retiring member for Chisholm -

Mr Shelton - That was a general statement on Canberra. Julie Bishop was talking about Canberra.

Mr O'BYRNE - She was talking about the Liberal Party, mate. This is your party, cobber.

Mr Shelton - She was not, she was talking about Canberra.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Please resume, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr O'BYRNE - Julia Banks, the member for Chisholm, announced she would retire at the next election. She cited bullying and intimidation and the leadership spills as the last straw for her decision. Lucy Gichuhi threatened to name MPs who were bullied during the spill, furthermore stating that she was asked during her preselection in June 2008 if she thought Turnbull was the right person to lead the party. Asked again whether she would follow through on her threat to name and shame Liberal Party MPs, her spokesman said:

After talking with Prime Minister Morrison, the senator has decided not to speak at this time. She has indicated she will wait for his response and direction.

Kelly O'Dwyer validated the account and others like it during a separate interview on the ABC 7.30 program. O'Dwyer said she had a number of conversations with male and female MPs and it was clear that people were subject to threats, intimidation and bullying. When this is in the public domain it is outrageous. All you are doing is cherry-picking a rule of the Labor Party which talks about our values and commitment to representing collectivism and working people-

Mr Hidding - It is extortion.

Mr O'BYRNE - That is appalling. Tina McQueen, the new vice-president of the Liberal Party, has no time for the Liberal left women complaining of bullying and demanding quotas, saying, 'Women always want the spoils of victory without the fight'. Well, thanks for the solidarity to the sisterhood there. Liberal MP Anne Sudmalis will quit politics at the next election, blaming branch-

stacking, undermining and leaks, in a major blow to Prime Minister Scott Morrison's efforts to increase the number of women on his team. She said:

My decision has been made in the face of New South Wales Liberal Party bullying, intimidation, leaking and undermining at a local level.

Western Australian senator Linda Reynolds hit out at bullying and intimidation in a speech in the Senate during the leadership spill and she is standing by her comments. She says the Liberal Party must deal with it behind closed doors. 'Clearly there are issues we need to address and I am now dealing with them internally in the party in our processes that the Prime Minister and the whips have set up', she said.

This is a litany of the culture of the Liberal Party. You dare get up and preach to us about discrimination. You dare get up and cherry-pick a Labor Party rule in an attempt to cover up your mismanagement of the health system, of child protection, of the Housing portfolio and the list goes on. This is a disgraceful waste of the parliament's time. When in doubt, go the union bash. The union movement does more every day of the week than the whole frontbench and backbench on that side of the House could do in their entire careers. The union movement and the Labor movement stand up for building a better life for people. We want people working with us who believe in what we believe in. We are a values-based movement and we are not dancing to the tune of the highest bidder, which it seems the Liberal Party is. We do not bully and we do not intimidate women.

When looking at the numbers, a media report recently said after the next federal election on the basis of the polls, how many women will be left in the federal parliamentary Liberal Party in the lower House? Five out of around 60 or so.

Ms O'Byrne - An absolute shame.

Mr O'BYRNE - What a disgrace. You dare get up here and lecture us about matters such as discrimination and equity. This is a disgraceful waste of this parliament's time. This is a rubbish motion. The Labor Party stands strong with our union comrades to fight for better wages in the public sector in Tasmania. You should be more embarrassed about the fact that we have the lowest paid teachers, nurses and firefighters in the country.

Mr Hidding - This is enforced, this rule of yours.

Mr O'BYRNE - This is a disgrace and you should hang your head in shame that you are allowing that to occur. Then you have the Treasurer saying, 'Oh no, we will keep up with the CPI'. Your wage offer is below the CPI.

Mr Barnett - Is it being enforced? It is being enforced.

Mr O'BYRNE - On interjection, the party secretary has made his views known in terms of this view. We are not ashamed of our relationship with the union movement because of the things we stand for. We stand for people having a better life, better wages and conditions, a decent life as opposed to you, who want to de-unionise and drive wages down and make work places less safe.

[3.21 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, there was not much that I could disagree with in Mr O'Byrne's contribution. We are going to propose an amendment to the original motion because on its face value the original motion is worthy of support.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the following new paragraphs be added after paragraph (4) -

- (5) Acknowledges freedom of expression and freedom from discrimination are crucial to a healthy workplace culture;
- (6) Notes the Liberal Government's intention to refer the Labor Party to the Anti-Discrimination Commission; and
- (7) Reaffirms its support for the State's Anti-Discrimination Act 1998.

That is the Anti-Discrimination Act that the Liberals want to substantially weaken in order to provide religious belief as cover for vile discriminatory language.

That will disappoint some colleagues in the Labor Party. As a point of principle, to require people who believe in the Labor Party or a member of the Labor Party enough to want to work for them to join the Labor Party and a union is potentially discriminatory. I understand what you are saying about this not being necessarily enforced. In certain circumstances it is not enforced if an elected representative, for example, wants an employee of a certain skill set so much that they are not going to force them to join the party or a union. That said, everyone should be a member of a union in Australia.

Mr Hidding - And a union. Both a party and a union.

Ms O'CONNOR - That is right. I reflected earlier on my experience working for the former federal member for Denison, Duncan Kerr, when he was the justice minister. Duncan would dearly have loved me to join the Labor Party when I was working with him in Canberra. He respected the fact that I said, 'I do not believe in the Labor Party enough to join it. I believe in you, Duncan, and I will be loyal to you to the very end'. I will continue to be loyal to Duncan. I would not join the Labor Party and Duncan respected that and did not compel me to join. He did come back every couple of months and put a Labor Party membership form on my desk.

It is hard to escape the conclusion that this motion is only politics but we look at things at face value. At face value this is, on the basis of freedom of association, worthy of support.

It was quite galling listening to Mr Hidding give the House a lecture on discrimination when he comes from a party that has been systematically discriminating against women and minorities since its inception. A party that sought to substantially weaken the Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 in order to provide religious belief as an exemption for speaking vile, hurtful, discriminatory language to someone on the basis of a perceived difference. It is hypocritical in the extreme to have the Liberal Party lecturing the House about discrimination.

While in the Labor Party an alignment with Labor values and an understanding of the contribution of the union movement to the working lives of all Australians is an important prerequisite to getting a job, in the Liberal Party you do have to question what sort of values are required for people who want to work in the Liberal Party. For someone who wants to be preselected in the Liberal Party in Tasmania the only values they apparently need to have is a capacity to butter up to Senator Eric Abetz, who still wields enormous influence over the

preselection of candidates for the Liberal Party. This is why we have not had a female Liberal elected representative at the federal level from Tasmania since senator Jocelyn Newman. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the skill set that is required to work for the Liberals is a complete belief in yourself, a complete belief in the individual, a degree of self-interest and selfishness which rides above many other important matters of human rights.

Mr Shelton - Is that why Labor put Mr Short in because there were no males on the Labor ticket.

Ms O'CONNOR - What a ridiculous thing to say. Sorry, Mr Shelton, there are times when it would have been better if you had kept your mouth shut. We have just had the first female Prime Minister in Canberra in Julia Gillard who your federal colleague, Tony Abbott, spent the entire term in opposition vilifying because she was a woman. The deputy federal leader of the Labor Party, Tanya Plibersek, is a woman. The leader of opposition business in the Senate, Penny Wong, is a woman. So do not, just do not. You have talented women running a mile from your foul party.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Through the Chair, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - A mile because they are treated like dirt. Who can forget the first Abbott cabinet, one woman in the first Abbott cabinet, and who was the minister for women? Tony Abbott. So do not, just do not.

Ms O'Byrne - But he was very worried about women while they do their ironing.

Ms O'CONNOR - That is right.

Mr Shelton - Tell me why you dumped Lisa Singh for Mr Short.

Ms O'CONNOR - Spare us. Spare us. The one really talented member of Malcolm Turnbull's cabinet, Julie Bishop, the only woman of any real substance, although Marise Payne is apparently okay, ran a mile. You lost Julie Bishop because she was shafted. Did you read those WhatsApp messages between your federal Liberal colleagues shafting Julie Bishop because she is a woman?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Through the Chair, Ms O'Connor. I am not going to ask you again.

Ms O'CONNOR - Give us a break.

Anyway where was I? It is clear that there are overt efforts on the part of the Labor Party to make sure that people who want to work for the Labor Party are members of the Labor Party and members of a union. They are overt. They are upfront about it. We disagree that it should be a requirement of working for any political party, but at least they are upfront about it.

In the Liberal Party, it is covert. It is whatever is in Eric Abetz's folder in his office. We know he collects information on people. For those progressive small 'l' Liberals, and I can name a couple of them but I am not going to drop them in it in this place, who have displeased Eric, they will never get anywhere in the party because he discriminates against people with any shred of progressive values. It is covert in the Liberal Party. It is much more corrosive. To qualify for a job in the Liberal Party, particularly to be preselected as a candidate, you just need to support Eric Abetz and not be a woman.

It is ironic that the Liberals come in here and have a whack at Labor over their longstanding connection to the union movement when all that speaks to you people is money, corporate donations, donations from foreign governments. Only very recently you stopped taking dirty tobacco money. You took millions of dollars from a pokies lobby in the lead-up to the state election. It is money and that is the set of values people who run for you and work for you are required to have. It is a party that will always prioritise the private interest over the public interest.

It is with reluctance that we moved an amendment to the motion and hope the amendment will be supported because it would be good to have on the record the Liberals supporting the Anti-Discrimination Act 1998. We know they will be back for another bite just as they were in the federal parliament with the race discrimination laws and we will be here ready for them to stand up for the rights of all Tasmanians.

Time expired.

Question - That the amendment be agreed to -

The House divided -

AYES 13

NOES 9

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Ms Courtney
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Ms Hickey
Mr Hidding
Mr Jaensch
Ms O'Connor
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton (Teller)
Dr Woodruff

Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow (Teller)
Ms Haddad
Ms Houston
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Standen
Ms White

PAIR

Mr Hodgman

Mr Bacon

Amendment agreed to.

Question - That the motion, as amended, be agreed to -

The House divided -

AYES 13

NOES 9

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Ms Courtney

Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow (Teller)

Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Ms Hickey
Mr Hidding
Mr Jaensch
Ms O'Connor
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton(Teller)
Dr Woodruff

Ms Haddad
Ms Houston
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Standen
Ms White

PAIR

Mr Hodgman

Mr Bacon

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION

GST Distribution Model

[3.40 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition - Motion) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Notes state Treasurers will meet in October 2018 to decide whether to support changes to the distribution of the GST.
- (2) Recognises the current GST distribution model ensures that all jurisdictions can provide similar quality public services, such as health and education, which all citizens can enjoy regardless of where they live.
- (3) Agrees any move away from full horizontal fiscal equalisation would reduce the level of equity between the states and territories and disadvantage Tasmania.
- (4) Further agrees that all members of parliament should be fully informed about the implications of the proposed changes to the GST distribution model and the impact this will have on Tasmania.
- (5) Calls on the Treasurer, Hon Peter Gutwein MP, to facilitate a briefing for all members of state parliament from the state Department of Treasury on the federal government's GST policy before the state Treasurers' meeting in October 2018.

For 20 years now we have had a history of GST in this country that has seen the ongoing bipartisanship in Tasmania between the major parties and the minor parties, with all sides of politics

agreeing steadfastly that we are opposed to any change in the way GST is distributed across Australia. I quote one example of the Premier outlining that support from October 2014, where he said:

We will continue to vigorously oppose any changes to horizontal fiscal equalisation. It is a vital attribute and characteristic of our federal financial relations. It provides fairness and ensures that all Australians, no matter where they live, can access reasonable standards of essential public services.

The Labor Party has maintained our strong support for full horizontal fiscal equalisation, which is the current method of distribution of the GST, because we realise it supports the provision of essential public services and upholds the egalitarian values we share here in Australia. My expectation is that our Premier, who is not with us this week, and the Treasurer of this state, in continuing to have these negotiations around the GST would always have at the forefront of their minds the bipartisan view that has been long held, for 20 years in this state, that we commit to nothing less than full horizontal fiscal equalisation and continue to fight for this for Tasmania.

We expected that they would not sign Tasmania up to a deal that disadvantaged us as a state. However I have some serious concerns and that is why I wrote last year and again this year to the Premier offering my support in a bipartisan manner so Tasmania can present a united front in negotiations with Canberra, presenting very clearly that the Liberal and Labor parties in this state continue to have a bipartisan position on GST and its distribution. I have also sought a briefing from Treasury through the Treasurer's office so we can better understand the implications for Tasmania of the proposed model presented by the federal government.

When I wrote to the Premier on 2 July this year to offer my bipartisan support to ensure we have a consistent and strong message coming from Tasmania that we do not support any changes to the GST distribution model, I was saddened that his response was not forthcoming in a way I would have liked. I was hoping to be able to work alongside him, set aside political differences and make sure Tasmania and the provision of public services funded by taxpaying Tasmanians was not diminished because of proposed changes to the GST. Neither of these things I thought was unreasonable, but seeking a briefing through the Treasurer's office on 11 July this year, I was informed by the chief of staff to the Treasurer that the briefing had been denied. The email receipt in our office read:

Your request has been considered and it has been determined that this is a matter for Government to progress with the Federal Government in collaboration with other States and Territories.

A response to the letter from Ms White to the Premier dated 2 July 2018 will be provided shortly.

I was disappointed that our request for a briefing was denied because I did not think it was unreasonable, particularly given Tasmania has had for 20 years now a unity ticket across the Parliament when it comes to ensuring that our share of GST is not put at risk by policy changes that may occur at a federal level or from pushes from other states which, if we are honest, is the reason we are having this conversation. It is because of Western Australia that we are in a position where a review was commissioned by the Productivity Commission to assess the GST and its distribution by the federal Liberal Government.

We know about some of those things, not just because it has been stated in submissions made to the Productivity Commission but in fact from statements made by the now Prime Minister himself. One of the first acts he took when he became Prime Minister was to be pictured on the front page of *The West Australian* newspaper saying he was going to fix their GST problems. That concerns me deeply and I am sure concerns the Treasurer deeply as well. When I look at the commitments made by him publicly and the submissions made by him and his department to the Productivity Commission review, I can see very clearly where the Treasurer stood on this issue. I say 'stood' because I fear that the position of the state Government may have shifted.

The Treasurer has continued to say that on face value, the deal proposed by the federal Liberal Government looks like it could be a good deal for Tasmania. For three months we have been hearing that on face value it might be a good deal for Tasmania. My concern is that we have not drilled further into the detail here to understand whether or not it is good value. I am sure the Treasurer would like to be able to provide that reassurance to Tasmania if he confidently feels that it is in the best interests of our state. My concern is that we have had a divergence here from probably the most significant bipartisan financial policy in Tasmania for the last couple of decades and that is deeply regrettable if it is only done for political purposes.

I say that because it was in the context of the Braddon by-election that the Prime Minister of Australia at that time, Malcolm Turnbull, came to Tasmania. He stood alongside the Premier and they made a statement where apparently the Prime Minister gave a verbal guarantee that Tasmania would not be a dollar or a cent worse off. 'Not one dollar and not one cent less' - that was the guarantee from the Prime Minister at the time.

During that interview he also revealed that the then Treasurer Scott Morrison had spoken to Treasurer Peter Gutwein providing that same assurance. We know they have had a couple of conversations and there have been reports provided to the media subsequent to that time indicating that was a feisty conversation. If that was the case and the Treasurer in Tasmania was standing up to then Treasurer Scott Morrison on behalf of Tasmania, good on him. That is what we want from our Government.

My concern is that he was overridden by the Premier, who then stitched up a deal with then prime minister, Mr Turnbull, to sign Tasmania up to what appears to be on face value a good deal but we do not honestly know if it is. It could be a dud deal and my concern is that it is a dud deal. I do not have to look much further to find a media release issued on 3 August by the Board of Treasurers that the Treasurer of Tasmania is a signatory to. In it, it says:

The Board decided to jointly write to Commonwealth counterpart Scott Morrison seeking detail on the new formula and how it will work.

They are seeking a binding guarantee that no state or territory will be worse off under the proposed system compared to the current system. They are seeking a guarantee that the source of top-up funding to meet the GST guarantee will not diminish other sources of grant revenue.

I understand at that time the Board of Treasurers also wrote a letter to then Treasurer Scott Morrison and that to date, they have had no response. This is incredibly concerning if state Treasurers across the country are jointly expressing their concern about the details of this policy and the federal government has not even bothered to respond to a letter sent at the start of August. That demonstrates to us that those guarantees cannot be provided. That is why this motion calls for a briefing for members of this House so we can again have the unity ticket we have had for 20 years

in support of Tasmanians' public services and the funding that is determined by Canberra for the delivery of those services through the distribution of the GST.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the proposed GST changes presented by the federal government do not just propose to change the GST distribution, they change the whole methodology.

Recommendation 6.1, talks about the objective of HFE, which should be focus on providing states with the fiscal capacity to provide services and associated infrastructure of a reasonable standard rather than the same standard. That is significant because that is a significant shift away from what has been previously agreed. It has been the underlining principles that in an egalitarian society like ours every Australian, no matter where they live, is able to access the same quality of services. That is what our federation provides for. This proposed change to the GST methodology is significant because it is moving away from that. It is saying now that we should expect a 'reasonable' and not the 'same'. That is concerning for a small state like Tasmania.

I will talk about some of the statements made in the Productivity Commission hearing held in Hobart. Initially the Productivity Commission were not going to hold a hearing in Hobart. We wrote to them, I know the Government wrote to them, calling on them to hold a hearing here because Tasmania is one of the states that will be most significantly and negatively impacted if there is a shift away from full, horizontal, fiscal equalisation.

The Treasurer presented at that hearing. I was a witness, along with my colleague, Scott Bacon. We presented the same arguments and I commend the Treasurer on his presentation. It was very compelling. The Treasury submission that was made to the Productivity Commission was also compelling. I will quote sections from it because they are incredibly important -

Tasmania is strongly of the view that the current objective of HFE best meets community expectations that, as a nation, Australians believe that promoting equality between jurisdictions in terms of the level of services State and Territory governments are able to provide is the primary consideration and is what HFE should achieve. It ensures that all jurisdictions can provide similar quality public services, such as health and education, which all citizens can enjoy regardless of where they live. Any other objective would very likely result in less equalisation and a greater level of inequality between jurisdictions.

...

Full HFE gives States the fiscal capacity to provide comparable services to their residents. Anything less than full HFE is highly likely to result in Tasmania being unable to provide comparable services and infrastructure to the fiscally stronger States.

The case has not been made that the current HFE and the GST distribution system needs reform. The current GST distribution methodology is working as it was designed to, and should not be modified in reaction to short term circumstances being experienced by one or two States.

That is a direct extract from what our Treasury Department provided as a submission to the Productivity Commission review.

I stand by that. I hope the Treasurer stands by that too because that has been the position that the parliament has had now for 20 years. It has been a unity ticket on this issue.

The Treasurer in the submission he made to the Productivity Commission gave some terrific evidence. He said -

Any move away from full horizontal fiscal equalisation would reduce the level of equity between the states and the territories.

I agree, Mr Deputy Speaker. The Treasurer went on to say -

The Commonwealth Treasurer issued terms of reference to the Productivity Commission on 5 May. I note that he did that without any consultation with the states or territories. In our view, this was largely driven by lobbying from Western Australia, given the problems that Western Australia have with their budget position.

The whole reason why a review was commissioned by the Productivity Commission is because of the problems experienced by Western Australia. It is concerning to me that the then treasurer Scott Morrison did not consult with other states and territories when drafting up those terms of reference given that he is now the Prime Minister of this country. The architect behind the terms of reference for that Productivity Commission review is now the Prime Minister of this country and will ultimately be making decisions about which direction the government takes with respect to the distribution of GST.

I am concerned that he has not been consultative and continues to prioritise Western Australia's needs, evidenced by appearing on the front page on *The West Australian* the Sunday after he became Prime Minister saying he was going to fix their GST problem. He was not on the front page of the *Mercury* saying that he was going to fix Tasmania's GST problem. He was not on the front page of the *Examiner* saying Tasmania's GST was assured. He was not on the front page of the *Advocate* saying, 'Tasmania, you have nothing to worry from me being your Prime Minister and ripping millions out of your state because I am going to re-profile the way GST is distributed'. It was not Tasmania's papers that he graced his presence with; it was Western Australia's paper. That is something we should all be alarmed by. That is why we want to stand beside you, Treasurer, to make sure that we fight for Tasmania.

All this motion is seeking is a briefing so that we can better understand what Canberra's proposal means for Tasmania. Canberra has provided some details. They want to prioritise equalising to the second strongest state as their preferred model for the distribution of GST. We do not support that and the Treasurer did not support that when he gave his evidence to the hearing. I will get to that in a moment. In the Treasurer's evidence to the Productivity Commission hearing in Hobart he also said-

Tasmania is of the opinion that the Commission in its draft report has not proven that HFE has a negative national impact, has not sufficiently underpinned its major recommendations with evidence-heavy arguments and has placed too much emphasis on ameliorating the current budget position of WA.

...

To just move to the two main options that have been presented, I just want to point out that in respect of those two alternatives for less than full equalisation, equalising to the average of all states or equalising to the second strongest state, in both cases there's a large redistribution through to the strongest state.

...

Either alternative to the current system would leave Tasmania substantially worse off, ...

These are the Treasurer's own words in regard to the model that is now being proposed by Canberra to equalise to the second strongest state. The Treasurer also said the federal government equalising to either of those options will result -

... in the loss of millions of dollars of funding required for essential services. In these two example cases, \$640 million in round numbers in the first instance ...

equalising to the average -

and around \$170 million in the second over the period.

That is equalising to the second strongest state, which is the model before us right now that is recommended by the government for the states to adopt.

That is money that Tasmania will not receive if this model is adopted.

The Treasurer went on to say in relation to equalising to the second strongest state that -

Distribution based on equalising to the second strongest state, for a \$77 million loss in 2017-18 terms would result in approximately 800 nurses, 850 teachers and 700 police officers being unfunded.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this is serious. This is the proposal that is on the table right now. Had it been applied for the 2017-18 financial year it would be equivalent to 800 nurses, 850 teachers and 700 police officers being unfunded. These are the Treasurer's own words, provided in evidence to the Productivity Commission review hearings held in Hobart. This is modelling that has been done by Treasury. It is irrefutable evidence that equalising to the second strongest state is terrible news for Tasmania and will have terrible consequences. The Government cannot support it because there is a lack of certainty around the top-up payments that have been promised to offset this loss. That was evidenced again by the fact the Board of Treasurers issued their media release on 3 August this year, saying they still had no binding guarantee that no state or territory would be worse off under the proposed system compared to the current system and they still had no guarantee the source of top-up funding to meet the GST guarantee would not diminish other sources or grant revenue.

On face value, it does not look like a good deal to me. On face value, it does not look like a good deal for Tasmania. That is why we want a briefing on this because, to be honest, we are very concerned about what decisions the Government is going to make on behalf of Tasmanians that will sign us up to a dud deal that will leave us worse off, with a decrease in revenue over the forward Estimates that will see results of approximately 800 nurses, 850 teachers and 700 police officers being unfunded.

How can the state sign us up to this deal? Why did the Premier make that commitment to the Prime Minister on that day? Presumably in the context of the Braddon by-election they thought it would help them win the seat. It did not. What a terrible deal, signing Tasmania up to a dud deal in the hope they might win a federal seat and it all backfired spectacularly. The architect behind

the GST deal is now the Prime Minister of the country. The shambles we are currently in is stunning because of decisions that have been taken for political expediency.

Talking about the evidence presented by the Treasurer, he said in the Productivity Commission hearing:

My personal view - and I'll allow Treasury officials to make their points as well - I believe that the system is working very well at the moment.

One of the proposals in the Productivity Commission's initial review was for transition paths such as top-up payments, so we can move to equalising to the second strongest state, which is now what is on the table. In response to that proposal the Treasurer said:

But the conversation in regards to transitions paths, we won't look at any transition path because at the end of the day all that is is a transition to a point where Tasmania will receive less revenue than other states.

...

I'm sure the Productivity Commission has had this presented to it before. With the transition part what you're talking about is the boiling frog. That's what you're talking about. That's exactly what you're proposing is that with the transition path we won't lose all the money upfront, but we will get to a point at some stage where we will - and we will have that embedded moving forward.

The concern that I've got is that in a country that's got a strong egalitarian history, culture and ethos, that if you put in place a transition path to actually take this to a point where - that you believe we can manage our revenues down over that particular period of time and our expenditures and it's a longer period to allow us to get used to it - what you will simply do is entrench the relative disadvantage and the differences between ourselves and the larger states. That's simply not fair. That's simply not reasonable. That's why from the point of view of the state, we don't want to discuss and we will fight a transition path on any terms, because it simply entrenches that relative disadvantage. It just takes a lot longer to do it.

Hear, hear, Treasurer. I commend those words you gave as evidence to the Productivity Commission review, I endorse them and I hope you stand by them. My fear is that the Prime Minister at that time, Mr Turnbull, and the Premier signed Tasmania up to a dud deal despite the warnings from the Treasurer. He expressed those warnings in a phone conversation with the then federal treasurer Scott Morrison, and my fear is now we have been put in a position that will damage our ability to fund essential services into the future and undermine our ability to deliver the same quality services every Australian can expect to receive.

This proposal on the table before us from the federal government has been questioned by economists such as Saul Eslake who said, 'If I were a state or territory treasurer I would be seeking some explicit guarantees to that effect before signing up.' He was referencing things such as specific purpose payments not being cut because the statement has been made that no state will be worse off.

That is why I presume the Board of Treasurers issued that letter to then Treasurer Scott Morrison seeking such a guarantee. I am interested to hear if the Treasurer has had a response to that. I believe that is not the case. Nonetheless it is one of the reasons we are seeking a briefing

not just for the Labor Party but for any member of this parliament who is interested in getting a briefing from Treasury, because this issue is significant. It goes to our ability to service our citizens and provide the fundamental public services they all rely on such as healthcare in our hospitals, schooling in our education system, infrastructure that supports the connectivity of our communities and the policing we depend on to keep us safe.

This motion has not been designed to be political. I have tried to go through the appropriate channels. I have written to the Treasurer seeking a briefing. I have written to the Premier asking to work with him on this issue. I have done what I can do in my capacity as a member of this place on behalf of my party to make sure we can be as informed about this issue as possible. Unfortunately on each of those occasions our interests in this issue and our desire for more information has been denied.

I come now to this parliament with the motion before us calling on the Government to offer a briefing for members of this place who are interested in this issue - and I am sure everybody is - to be able to access detailed information from Treasury so we can better understand what the implications of this proposed model by Canberra mean for us as a state, how we can work together and on a unity ticket and I hope advocate for the best interests of all Tasmanians. Parliament can be its best when we all work together for the interests of our citizens.

On an issue such as GST where we have had a bipartisan position and a unity ticket for more than two decades, it is my sincere hope that we can continue to maintain that position and by providing a briefing to members of this House - and the other House if they are interested - we can back the Treasurer and Premier in, back Tasmanians in, and make sure we are not put in a position where a dud deal is foisted upon us that has implications for generations of Tasmanians, not just the next political cycle. This is about future generations of Tasmanians being able to access the same level of services as every other Australian, consistent with our egalitarian ethos and not just a reasonable level because we all know that means a diminishing quality of services, as articulated by the Treasurer in the evidence he gave to the commission at that time.

[4.08 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the Greens will support this motion because we are here for Tasmania and its people and for the fair and equitable distribution of the nation's GST amongst the states and making sure the smaller states are not disadvantaged. It is ironic that the Treasurer wants to hear what I have to say and is offering to respond to any of the points I raise. It is unusual for the Treasurer to be civil in response to points we Greens raise on matters of state significance, so I do not expect to hear any meaningful response from him on any of the points I raise, particularly today when he has been so offensive in this place.

There is a question hanging over GST distribution to Tasmania. There is no question that there is huge uncertainty over what a Morrison government means for Tasmania's future GST. I do not think any person in Tasmania would have been comforted by the story that was obviously leaked to the *Mercury*, probably by someone in the Treasurer's office, the other day where we were told about the tussle between Scott Morrison and Peter Gutwein. Apparently somebody swore and it was undoubtedly leaked to the *Mercury* quite deliberately from inside government in order to make the next Premier of Tasmania look good and look like he is standing up for Tasmania. We hear that Mr Morrison apparently told the Tasmanian Treasurer that he is an 'effing mendicant', which is another term for a beggar.

Mr O'Byrne - Remarkable, is it not?

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, quite remarkable language.

Mr O'Byrne - The boy from the shire. That is right.

Ms O'CONNOR - That is right, for someone who is -

Mr O'Byrne - Eminently plausible.

Ms O'CONNOR - What is that?

Mr O'Byrne - Eminently plausible.

Ms O'CONNOR - Definitely plausible. I cannot miss this opportunity to raise in the House that horror show that came out of question time last week, where we see this clip of Liberal members raising their hands to privilege and to having money. It was the most tone deaf, arrogant, disgusting display to come out of federal parliament in a while - and that is really saying something. So out of touch is Scott Morrison and his office, and indeed I would argue the entire federal Liberal/National party, that they actually thought that would go down well. If people do not remember anything else about Scott Morrison as Prime Minister - we are a visual animal and we remember symbols - people will remember that clip when they go into the ballot box. I certainly hope they do because it spoke volumes about the contempt that the conservatives who currently occupy the government benches in Canberra hold for people who do not have vast wealth.

None of us will forget Joe Hockey's 'lifters and leaners'. No person who has ever struggled to have enough money to feed their family or pay their rent or pay the electricity bill, no person who has worked hard, got an apprenticeship, is in a trade; nobody who has done it tough in this country will forget that we had a federal Liberal Treasurer who reduced people to units of production. That is what we are dealing with in Canberra.

State Treasurers will meet in October 2018 to support changes to the distribution of the GST. That is the big problem that we have here - we have no idea what is being proposed in real terms for a change and any change to the GST in this climate will be driven by brute politics, a looming federal election, the fact that Western Australia has more federal seats of more concern to the federal Liberal Party, the fact that Tasmanians overwhelmingly at the last federal election rejected what the federal conservatives stand for. They rejected their hollow jobs and growth slogan which contained no human aspect whatsoever and overwhelmingly rejected the Liberals from the House of Representatives in Tasmania.

Fortunately, in their wisdom, the Tasmanian people got rid of Brett Whiteley from Braddon, Andrew Nikolic from Bass and what's his name from Lyons. What was his name?

Mr O'Byrne - Hutchinson.

Ms O'CONNOR - Eric Hutchinson from Lyons. There is not a strong voice in the federal cabinet now arguing for Tasmania and Tasmania's share of GST. If Senator Richard Colbeck is that voice he is on his own, as we know, because he does not fall in Senator Eric Abetz's camp. That is true, as you are aware.

This entire House should be alarmed at the circumstances that we find ourselves in with a new Prime Minister, who has made it clear that he regards Tasmania as of lesser concern, expendable, mendicant. Is it not ironic that the real mendicant state now when you have a look at the national stage is in fact Western Australia?

We agree that the current GST distribution model ensures that all jurisdictions can provide similar quality public services such as health and education. We should put housing in there because it will not always be the case that you have a federal government that callously walks away from its responsibility to invest in the supply of social and affordable housing in the states. The GST distribution model ensures that all citizens can enjoy being treated equally regardless of where they live or which state they choose to live in.

The Greens agree that any move away from full horizontal fiscal equalisation would reduce the level of equity between the states and territories and disadvantage Tasmania.

We would like a briefing from the Department of Treasury and Finance who I always appreciate the opportunity to hear from. That should be a matter that the Treasurer is comfortable to facilitate.

All members of both Houses should be invited to hear what Treasury's assessment of the risk is. We should have a clear understanding of the position that Tasmania is taking to the ministerial council, and we should be able to all stand together, as Ms White says, in a tripartisan way in order to defend what is, at this point, a relatively fair and equitable distribution of GST.

We will be supporting the motion. I thank Ms White for bringing it on and probably would not be telling the truth if I said I was looking forward to the Treasurer's contribution.

[4.16 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Treasurer) - Mr Deputy Speaker, first let me put a couple of matters on the record. Regarding the last contribution and comments made of no idea of what is being proposed. That is on the public record. That is the Australian Government's response to the PC report and outlines exactly what is being proposed -

Ms O'Connor - Have you articulated that to the people of Tasmania?

Mr GUTWEIN - That has been released.

Ms O'Connor - That is the Australian Government's, yes. I have read that.

Mr GUTWEIN - That has been articulated. It explains exactly what -

Ms O'Connor - No. We have never had a commitment from the new Prime Minister on the GST. Not yet, no.

Mr GUTWEIN - He has not been prime minister for that long. That is the proposal that is on the table.

Ms O'Connor - I have looked at that. I have been in politics for a long time. That does not mean that is what will happen.

Mr GUTWEIN - As long as you are aware that is there.

Ms O'Connor - Yes. I have referred to it in previous debates.

Mr GUTWEIN - That explains a number of matters. Ms White, you went on about horizontal fiscal equalisation to the average of all the states. That document rules that out.

Ms White - I know that. I was talking about your evidence you gave to the committee. I was directly quoting you.

Ms O'Connor - You are taking Scott Morrison on faith.

Mr GUTWEIN - What is proposed is that we would be equalised to either Victoria or New South Wales.

Ms White - I know that.

Mr GUTWEIN - One of the things that has to be understood, and I admit and do not mind saying in this place, my position is that we should not change the system. I am long on the record in that regard.

Mr Bacon - So why did you agree to it?

Mr GUTWEIN - We have not agreed to it. We have not signed up to anything yet. That needs to be made perfectly clear. Again, licence was made today in the contributions about what we have signed up to and what we have not signed up to. We signed up to no deal. We are working through a process -

Mr Bacon - Are you going to say all this when the Premier gets back or are you going to change it again?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Both the Premier and I have said quite clearly that we will not sign up to anything that is not in Tasmania's best interests. We have made that perfectly clear. We have said on face value that what is proposed provides more funding for Tasmania. On face value, it does: more than \$112 million over coming years, with a commitment from the federal government to ensure that the size of the pool continues to grow in perpetuity. Therefore the larger pool provides us with a larger distribution of GST funds.

It is important to contrast the two options available at a national level at the moment. On one hand there is a change to the GST being proposed by Mr Morrison's Government that allows for additional funding into the GST pool every year into perpetuity to ensure that the size of the pool provides for the states and territories as a result of the implementation of a floor for the states and territories to all be better off. That is what is proposed and that is what we will have the first opportunity in October to discuss with the new federal Treasurer. On the other hand what is being proposed is simply a floor being legislated that will ensure that in Western Australia's case they receive at least 70 cents and I believe the floor is proposed to move to 75 cents but Western Australia will not fall below that floor.

I hope you can understand this, Ms White. In the absence of additional money to the states as being proposed under the Coalition's model, we are highly at risk under Bill Shorten's model because the pool with a floor in it simply means that more of the pool needs to be used to hold up the share that Western Australia receives. We are highly at risk under that model. I must admit in

recent days I have been going back and looking at some of the statements that have been made to try to understand what Mr Shorten's model is. Apparently there will be some initial funds to support Western Australia in coming years, then the floor will be legislated and they will not fall below the floor, but unless additional funds are made available, as the Coalition is proposing, ultimately should Western Australia's share fall below 70 cents we are all at risk.

The Commonwealth Government is proposing that they will grow the size of the pool ongoing. I will continue to use the words 'on face value'. Based on the projections that have been provided we are \$112 million better off over that period and then in perpetuity. They have modelled out, I think it is eight years, and post that period the commitment is that it is ongoing. You cannot model realistically 10, 15, 20 years down the track, but the commitment is there to grow the pool to ensure that no state is worse off.

Mr O'Byrne - With the model you can. The model is the protection.

Mr GUTWEIN - The two models are on one hand a guaranteed floor with no additional funding being promised and no support for other states and territories, versus a model -

Mr Bacon - Tell us how much we can get in 2021.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Bacon, it is modelled in here. You obviously have not bothered to look at it. One of the things that is evident is that the information available has not been picked up and read because a number of the matters that have been raised today are contained in the Government's response which was published back in July.

I want to be perfectly clear again that we have not signed up to anything and we will not sign up to something that is not in the state's best interests. One of the issues is that we are going into a negotiation and we want the best possible outcome for the state. We want there to be guarantees that we will not receive less than under the current model. We want to ensure that the state's future is protected.

In terms of the motion before us, there are parts of it I can agree with and others I intend to amend. Point 1 says that state Treasurers will meet next month. That is the beginning of a process. In fact, even in Mr Morrison's first press release - and you are all aware that COAG, which was meant to be held, has now been pushed off -

Mr Bacon - Good governance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - What was announced, and I have received no indication that anything has changed, is that we begin the conversation in October and that will continue over the course of the rest of the year and a final decision will be made by the Prime Minister and premiers later this year. There is a way to go on this yet. In terms of COAG meetings, it is a matter for the Prime Minister to set the dates on those meetings. Very clearly that is the process that has been outlined. We will begin the negotiation at the first Treasurers' meeting in October and I look forward to that.

In terms of the second point, we have no issue with that. It recognises the current GST distribution model and ensures that all jurisdictions can provide similar quality public services, such as health and education, which all citizens can enjoy regardless of where they live.

I have a concern about the third point. It agrees that any move away from full horizontal fiscal equalisation would reduce the level of equity between the states and territories and disadvantage Tasmania. Regarding what is on the table at the moment in respect of the additional payments we will receive, we are actually better off. I will be seeking to amend point 3 to insert after the word 'equalisation', the words 'without appropriate ongoing compensation', because the model that is on the table provides more cash for Tasmania, and that is a good thing. Even you would agree with that.

Ms White - You have no guarantee of that, Treasurer, as evidenced by the press release you signed.

Mr GUTWEIN - In terms of the motion before us, I think it is reasonable that point 3 reads -

Agrees that any move away from full horizontal fiscal equalisation without appropriate ongoing compensation would reduce the level of equity between the states and territories and disadvantage Tasmania.

That is one amendment I will be moving.

Ms O'Connor - Do you have another one you haven't shared?

Mr GUTWEIN - I am about to. I am just working through it.

Ms O'Connor - Are you going to pass them around beforehand?

Mr GUTWEIN - I am reading them out and then I will pass them around and we can move the amendment.

Ms White - It is the practice of the House that they be circulated first.

Mr GUTWEIN - I will circulate it in a moment.

Point 4 of the motion agrees that all members of parliament should be fully informed about the implications of the proposed changes to the GST distribution model and the impact this will have on Tasmania. I do not have an issue with that.

I have an issue with point 5, which calls on the Treasurer to facilitate a briefing for all members of state parliament from the state Department of Treasury on the federal government's GST policy before the state treasurers' meeting in October. That is when we go into bat for the state and I am not prepared to provide all of the detail we will be taking into that discussion prior to going into that. However, I am prepared to amend clause 5 by removing the words 'facilitate a briefing for all members of', and replace them with the words, 'provide an update to'. I will further amend clause 5 to remove the words, 'On the federal government's GST policy before' and replace the word 'following'. Once we have had that initial discussion I am prepared to provide an update to the parliament from Treasury. That is the beginning of the process and I want to go into that process fully armed with our arguments. We will negotiate in that meeting. Once that first stage of the process has been completed I am happy to provide an update to parliament.

Ms White - An update to parliament?

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Deputy Speaker, I will circulate the words because I think the Leader of the Opposition has misunderstood what I am offering the parliament. It would read -

Clause 5 calls on the Treasurer, the honourable Peter Gutwein MP, to provide an update to state Parliament from the state Department of Treasury following the state Treasurers meeting in October.

Ms O'Connor - That is not a briefing.

Mr GUTWEIN - That will provide you with an update on where matters are at following the Treasurers' meeting.

Ms O'Connor - Treasurer, you are denying the parliament a preparatory briefing or any understanding of what will be discussed. Why are you doing this? Is it because you do not want to support a Labor motion?

Mr GUTWEIN - I have explained my reasons. We are going into negotiations. We have a publicly stated position that we will not accept anything that is not in Tasmania's best interests. We will receive advice of what is proposed and then we will argue our position at the Treasurers' meeting.

Mr Bacon - Are you going to brief us on what your position is, or what you will roll over and accept? You are going to roll over and tell us about that, not what your actual position is. Your arrogance is out of control.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Deputy Speaker, I have just explained that the Prime Minister and Premiers will make any decision on this later this year. I find it extraordinary that I am offering you an opportunity to receive a briefing -

Mr Bacon - It does not say that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - in terms of the discussions that we have at the Treasurers' meeting in October, to bring back a report and provide that detail to the parliament and you want to reject it. I find that extraordinary. The simple fact is you are not interested in this. What you are interested in is the politics of it.

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr O'Byrne - We are the next government, mate. What you sign up to we have to cop.

Mr GUTWEIN - You are so arrogant.

Mr O'Byrne - We are arrogant?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - That is extraordinary. The former minister who shrank the economy and cost the state 10 000 jobs sits there and says they are the next government. The Tasmanian people are not going to buy you, mate.

Mr O'Byrne - And they cannot return you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Labor has scant regard for what its national party is proposing. On one hand we have a GST model that provides more money to the state of Tasmania, as proposed. On the other hand we have a GST model that will provide for a floor similar to the model that is being proposed by the Coalition. Bill Shorten said that he will legislate, but he is not providing any additional funding for the states and territories. Western Australia falls below the floor.

Mr Bacon - Do you have a West Coast Eagles jumper on under that shirt? You are a double agent.

Mr GUTWEIN - They will go very well on Saturday, do not worry about that. I did digress, Mr Bacon, thank you. You are not a Melbourne supporter, are you? It will be a very important day in Western Australia on Saturday.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Treasurer, I need you to read the amendments into *Hansard*.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move in Motion 93 -

- (1) Amend paragraph (3) to insert words 'without appropriate ongoing compensation' after the word 'equalisation'.
- (2) Amend paragraph (5) to remove the words 'facilitate a briefing for all Members of' and replace with the words 'provide an update to'.
- (3) Further amend paragraph (5) by removing the words, 'on the Federal Government's GST policy before', and replace with the word 'following'.

The motion will then read -

- (1) Notes State Treasurers will meet in October 2018 to decide whether to support changes to the distribution of the GST.
- (2) Recognises the current GST distribution model ensures that all jurisdictions can provide similar quality public services, such as health and education, which all citizens can enjoy regardless of where they live.
- (3) Agrees any move away from full horizontal fiscal equalisation without appropriate ongoing compensation would reduce the level of equity between the states and territories and disadvantage Tasmania.
- (4) Further agrees that all Members of Parliament should be fully informed about the implications of the proposed changes to the GST distribution model and the impact this will have on Tasmania.

- (5) Calls on the Treasurer, Hon Peter Gutwein MP, to provide an update to State Parliament from the State Department of Treasury following the State Treasurers meeting in October 2018.

The minor amendments I have made capture the intent of what is proposed, that is to ensure that members in this House have a good understanding of what is on the table and what our response is to what is on the table.

Mr Bacon - It is not about your response. It is about what you get in the end; crumbs.

Mr GUTWEIN - No one has signed up to anything.

Mr Bacon - It has taken you all this time to admit that.

Mr GUTWEIN - He tries to be helpful but he is not really. We will not sign up to anything that is not in the state's best interests. What has been proposed, on face value, appears to provide, not just Tasmania, but all states and territories, with increased funding. I have little sympathy for Western Australia's circumstances. What Mr Morrison has proposed will go some way towards fixing what they believe is an issue. My view and the view of the other states and territories is that it is a problem largely of their own making. That is a matter for the federal government.

The proposed model is vastly superior to the one proposed by Mr Shorten, which would simply see a legislative floor with no additional funding into the pool. That would mean that when Western Australia's share fell below 70 cents, more funds would come out of the pool, which has not been increased as the Coalition's model is planning to do. That would simply mean that we would get less.

I will wind up. I urge members to support the motion. It is a reasonable way forward.

[4.40 p.m.]

Mr BACON (Denison) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the Labor Party will not be supporting these amendments. What is clear is that when Mr Gutwein goes to Canberra, he needs to take his flak jacket and needs to borrow Mr Ferguson's firefighter's helmet. We know what the Prime Minister thinks of Mr Gutwein. We do not know the full detail of exactly what went on with that phone call. The hallmark of Peter Gutwein as Treasurer of Tasmania has been a constant denial of the Tasmanian people's right to information that is held by the Government.

We see it again today. We have an amendment and we have had the Leader of the Opposition asking for a briefing from the Treasury department on the federal government's proposal to change the distribution of GST. We had the Premier, Mr Hodgman say over again that on face value it is a good deal. They are not willing to say it is a good deal without that qualifier. We have had Mr Gutwein again saying it today. All we want to know is the detail around that deal and what the Government's proposed response is. After 20-odd years of bipartisanship on this issue, why would Mr Gutwein and Mr Hodgman walk away from that now when they do not have a friend in Canberra?

Mr Morrison is not a friend of Tasmania. You can see that in what has been reported about his conversations with Mr Gutwein. Mr Gutwein had a chance to deny that argument took place. He did not and was very careful with his language. The specific language that was reported apparently was not used according to Mr Gutwein but we do not have any detail around that conversation. We tried to get detail from Mr Gutwein through the Estimates process. A total waste of time.

What he had done at that point was form a view based on comments made to him about someone who was Prime Minister at the time, the king of New York City now, Mr Turnbull. Mr Gutwein would not tell us at the time what the former prime minister gave in terms of a guarantee. He did not tell us today what the new prime minister has said. Maybe he is not talking to Mr Gutwein any more after that phone call earlier this year. If I were the prime minister, he would be last person I would want to talk to as well.

We need to know what guarantees have been provided by Mr Morrison. We need to know what Mr Morrison said, not only to Mr Gutwein but also to the Premier of Tasmania who is going to be the person that finally signs off on this deal, if he is still in the top job by the time we get to that meeting between premiers and the prime minister.

We have a revolving door in terms of the prime minister. We have a Premier now in Tasmania who does not look too interested in doing his job. He does not turn up for a week of parliament, he has no interest in running a state and no interest in a health system in crisis, and we have a Health minister who wants people to ring bells when they are in the cupboard to get a bit of help.

Why on earth would Mr Gutwein deny a very sensible request from the Leader of the Opposition for a briefing on exactly the proposal that has been put forward by the federal government? What does he have to hide? He knows he is going to roll over in October when he goes to that meeting. There is a new treasurer in town but he is going to have the same opinion of Mr Gutwein.

Mr Gutwein does not want to tell the members of the Tasmanian Parliament the position that he is taking to Canberra. This is the strongest he has been today on the fact they have not agreed yet. He knows he is going to get rolled when he goes to Canberra. Why is he desperate to hide this detail? He says it is all in the Productivity Commission Report and we should read the report which came out earlier this year on 5 July. He says all the detail was released on 5 July. You would have to question then why the Board of Treasurers put out a media release on 3 August saying that the Board decided to jointly write to Commonwealth counterpart Scott Morrison seeking details on the new formula and how it will work.

All the detail is not in that document, as Mr Gutwein claims, and the treasurers from around the country knew that. Tasmanian Treasurer Peter Gutwein was in that meeting. They decided to write to the federal Treasurer at the time to ask for that detail because they wanted to be able to form a view on the best way forward for this very important mechanism for protecting the public services provider to everyday Tasmanians through our health, education and other public services. The information is not in the document as Mr Gutwein claimed. What he should do today is withdraw his amendment to deny the members of the Tasmanian Parliament a briefing from the Treasury department on exactly what is in the federal government's deal. It is not about the face value. It goes much deeper than that.

We definitely have a premier in this state who is very keen to sign up. I do not think Mr Gutwein was keen to sign up. That is why he got a bollocking from the now Prime Minister on the telephone. He knows this is a dud deal for Tasmania but the Premier will do anything to help his mates in Canberra. He probably still has a few mates left in Canberra, unlike the Treasurer. He is willing to sign up, no matter if it is in Tasmania's best interests or not. There is no way that these amendments should be supported. There is no reason to deny the facilitation of a briefing for all members of parliament. This is about having a non-partisan approach to this issue that is so

important for Tasmania, making sure that all Tasmanian parliamentarians are aware of the detail behind the federal government's proposal and exactly what proposal Mr Gutwein is going to take to Canberra in October.

We know that he is going to get rolled over there. He is going to come back and then tell us all everything is fine, but he will not tell us what he is taking to Canberra. He will not say what deal he wants to see because he knows he is not going to win this argument. This is the man who famously told everyone he has never backed down from a fight. It only took one phone call. The guy was only the Treasurer of the nation at the time, but he backed right down after that. We had the Premier making very positive noises about this deal. This man is now the Prime Minister of Australia, probably the worst we have seen in a long time.

Mr O'Byrne - We got Abbott.

Mr BACON - I think he is even worse than Abbott but the people of Australia will make that decision.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. You are talking about previous prime ministers. I ask that you use their appropriate titles.

Mr BACON - There is no doubt that this Prime Minister, Mr Morrison, may be even worse than the member for Warringah. He is only going to be the candidate for Warringah again because he managed to beat an empty chair in the pre-selection. Well done to him. Congratulations on that.

This amendment is a disgrace. This is about the Treasurer continuing to try to deny the Tasmanian people and the Tasmanian parliament information that is vital in the decision-making on a huge issue: 40 per cent of the revenue of the state budget is at stake here and we have a Treasurer who knows he is going to get rolled so that is why he wants to deny the Tasmanian parliamentarians their opportunity to form a view based on all the detail. We know the detail is not available. The treasurers of the country put that in writing on 3 August.

This amendment should be voted down and the Treasurer should facilitate a briefing immediately for all members of the Tasmanian Parliament, as soon as the Treasury department can provide that briefing. They could be down here in the parliament tomorrow, no doubt. There are very able staff in the Treasury department. They could be down here briefing members of parliament about exactly what has been proposed by the federal government and exactly what approach the state Government is going to take to that. They will not do it because they are gutless.

The Treasurer knows he is going to get rolled. When the Premier gets back from China he will pull the Treasurer into line again and make sure he signs up to this deal. The Treasurer knows it is a dud. He does not want the members of parliament to know it is a dud. Why are you trying to hide this information, Treasurer? You are a disgrace. You should withdraw your amendment and inform the Tasmanian people about what is going on here.

This is going to affect Tasmanian public services for years to come. You should not be going in with your eyes closed and it is incumbent on you to withdraw this amendment and make sure that everyone is fully informed about exactly what deal is on the table.

[4.49 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to make a contribution on the amendments that have been moved by the Treasurer. I am disappointed, to be perfectly honest, because the motion was not controversial. It was simply calling on the Treasurer to provide a briefing to members of parliament who were interested in this issue so that we can understand what the proposal presented by Canberra means in practice for Tasmania. We are talking about the biggest single source of revenue for the state, GST, and the way it is distributed to Tasmania as part of the Federation.

The amendment moved by the Treasurer to replace all words relating to providing a briefing means that we will not know. It does say 'facilitated briefing' and you have removed those words. He just looked at me quizzically then. Instead what you are doing is providing an update. You are removing all words about providing a briefing, which is what we requested and which is uncontroversial. Governments give briefings to opposition members on topics every day of the week and usually there is not a big deal made about it.

The Treasurer and his department could decide what information they wish to share. Treasurer, the motion was not explicit. It did not mandate particular information being provided. It simply asked that a briefing be offered and provided before the meeting in October. The Treasury department and you can make a decision about what information is shared. I respect that going into that meeting in October you want to be able to present the best case on behalf of Tasmanians and present your arguments and I suppose you are hoping you might catch them off guard and we might leak something from the briefing that could undermine your opportunities to do such a thing. I hoped you would have more confidence in us to uphold the state's interests here. Even if you have those concerns, the briefing can be provided in such a way that it is just a matter of the facts being put on the table without compromising your ability to negotiate on behalf of the state.

I am disappointed that the Treasurer is going to withdraw the opportunity to have a briefing. He indicated in putting these amendments that he would instead provide an update, and went so far as to say it would be an update to the parliament. Presumably that might be something like a DD in question time where there really is no opportunity for us to engage and talk about the details and the merit or otherwise of the proposal and what it means for Tasmania. An update is a one-sided conversation. An update does not allow for questions to be asked. An update will not enable us to gain a deeper understanding of what the proposal on the table from Canberra means in effect for Tasmania. An update is not good enough.

I hoped the motion calling for a briefing would have been received in good faith by the Government and could have been facilitated to provide a briefing to members who were interested in this issue before the meeting in October. Indeed, the parliament still has the opportunity to make that decision.

I urge members in this place to not support the amendment moved by the Treasurer. I can indicate that the amendment to point 3 is something we would be happy to support if it satisfied the Treasurer, because the main point of this motion is to seek a briefing. The other points were providing context as a preamble to why a briefing is necessary. We could not support the amendments to point 5 simply because that would undermine the entire point of the motion, which is for the parliament to be provided a briefing by Treasury.

I am hopeful the parliament will facilitate the opportunity of a briefing to be provided to members of this place who have an interest in this. I ask that the Treasurer consider withdrawing

the amendment to point 5 and offer a briefing in good faith to members of this place so that we can have a better understanding of what the proposed model from Canberra means for our state.

The Treasurer and his department can make a decision about what information is provided in that briefing so it does not compromise his ability to negotiate when he goes to that Treasurers' meeting. However, if he proceeds with this amendment to point 5 it will again be a demonstration of his inability to engage across the parliament on this issue, walking away from the unity ticket that has been long held in this place, 20 years, on the GST and its distribution that provides equitable access and the same quality services to Tasmanians had they have been anywhere else as citizens of a federation.

If the Treasurer proceeds with the amendments and does not withdraw them, particularly point 5, it will be a further indication of the fact that they are looking to walk away from the unity ticket that for two decades now has been the position of the Liberal and Labor parties and the minor parties in this place when it comes to GST, ensuring there is fair and equitable distribution of GST, given that it is 40 per cent of the state's revenue, ensuring that as part of the federation we are not left worse off.

We will accept the amendment to point 3, Treasurer, to satisfy your concerns regarding that element, and it gives you the cover you need. All we are asking is for a briefing. It is up to you to decide whether or not you withdraw your amendment, of course, but I hope you consider that, otherwise the parliament will be put in a position where it will have to vote it down.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - I will put the amendment and if it is amended we will continue the debate, being aware of the time.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. For clarification, was the amendment moved as a whole?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Yes, it was. If there are no other speakers I will put the amendment.

The House divided -

AYES 11

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Ms Courtney
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Ms Hickey
Mr Hidding
Mr Jaensch
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton (Teller)

NOES 11

Mr Bacon
Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow (Teller)
Ms Haddad
Ms Houston
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Connor
Ms Standen
Ms White
Dr Woodruff

PAIR

Mr Hodgman

Ms O'Byrne

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - The result of the division is 11 Ayes and 11 Noes. I therefore have to use a casting vote. In accordance with standing order 167 I cast my vote with the Ayes.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION

Memoranda of Understanding - Tasmanian and Chinese Governments

[5.03 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens - Motion) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House orders the Premier to lay upon the Table of the House a copy of each Memorandum of Understanding between the Chinese Government or Chinese Government controlled entities and the state of Tasmania or Tasmanian state entities, since March 2014 on or before 27 September 2018.

We have the implacable view that the House and therefore the people of Tasmania should be able to see the detail and the content of any memorandum of understanding signed between the State of Tasmania or its entities and the Chinese Government and its entities. I understand the Acting Premier will be putting forward some amendments which would weaken our motion.

This is a simple matter of transparency. If the Premier of Tasmania or any other minister or the chair of a government business enterprise signs an agreement with any government, that agreement should be made public. In the context of the current debate, there is a heightened level of awareness in the community about the foreign influence operations being undertaken by the Chinese Communist Party and its propaganda arm, the United Front Work Group. If people think this sounds like something out of a fantasy film, they need to look at the evidence that has been presented to the parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, which details comprehensively the influence campaigns and propaganda work of the Chinese Communist Party in Australia. It lays out the member organisations of the United Front Working Group, which is the primary entity in China and around the world that spreads the message of the benign intentions of Xi Jinping's Chinese government.

For anyone interested in educating themselves on these issues, those submissions are available on the Parliament of Australia website. They should be read by members in this place because you would have to have your head deep in the sand not to acknowledge that the Chinese government has taken a very acute interest in this island, its resources and its geographical proximity to the Southern Ocean and Antarctica.

We believe it is time that the people of Tasmania were given access to the memoranda of understanding and that they be tabled in the parliament. The reason we felt we had to bring this on as a motion is that in the last term of parliament no memoranda of understanding that was signed on any one of the numerous delegations that were sent to China by the Liberals in government was made public. Indeed I recall that we requested them and in relation to the MOU between Hydro

Tasmania and Entura: I lodged a right to information request on behalf of the Greens. The head of Hydro, rather than provide that information in hard copy form to us to retain, brought a delegation down to brief us on the content of the MOU with Entura, which gave majority control to a Chinese state-owned energy entity.

This should not have to be like pulling teeth. These are agreements that are signed for and on behalf of the people of Tasmania by the Premier of Tasmania. It is a legitimate question and a matter of public interest that we should know what the Premier of Tasmania or the head of Hydro, or indeed the Vice-Chancellor of UTAS as the case may be, is signing up for and on behalf of the people of Tasmania.

There are many positives that can come out of a shared agreement or memorandum of understanding between two parties who have mutually beneficial goals and who are working in the public interest. It can increase cooperation and collaboration in areas of science. It can deepen dialogue and understanding between nations and between institutions. We acknowledge that they can be very important and positive documents. We are not saying that every MOU that has been signed is something to be concerned about. All we are saying is let us see them.

We have a heightened awareness of how secretive this Government is. We still do not have information on the developers who want to exploit the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and indeed, as was revealed in the *Mercury* late last week, proponents who want to get into the World Heritage Area or other protected areas or public lands are legally required not to talk about their proposals without the approval of a government minister. We are talking about public assets here, public places - the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, the Tasman National Park and Crown lands all around this island - and a private developer-driven expressions of interest process which is being conducted entirely behind closed doors, entirely without scrutiny, transparency or any measure of accountability.

The issue with the MOUs sits alongside those concerns we have about how secretive and arrogant the Liberals became once they got their hands on the levers. We see it through the abuse of the Right to Information Act 2009, where ministers knowingly delegate decisions in a manner that they are certain will obstruct internal review mechanisms and therefore referral to the Ombudsman and review by the Ombudsman.

We have another example of it in budget Estimates this year when it became clear that the Minister for State Growth had delegated to the secretary of State Growth, a decision about whether or not to release information on one of the expressions of interest for developments inside the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, despite the fact the Greens raised this loophole in the act. It was only revealed as a loophole because it was being so mercilessly exploited by Liberal Government ministers.

Three years ago we started asking these questions about abuse of the Right to Information Act. Three years ago across the Estimates table the Premier said they would not be doing that anymore. That is certainly the strong indication he gave. Then in Estimates this year, we see that they have done it again to hide from scrutiny and to deny the people of Tasmania, who put us all here, who pay our wages, an understanding of what of their public assets and treasured places are being hawked by the Liberals in government. There is a flavour to this whole Government which raises alarm with us because they are secretive by nature.

I do not know if anyone saw *Foreign Correspondent* last night. If you did, you will be as horrified as my children and I were, and if you did not see it, I recommend you watch it on ABC iView. Phillip Williams, who is one of the ABC's most outstanding correspondents, put together an extraordinarily powerful documentary piece for *Foreign Correspondent* which examined the surveillance state that is modern China. He spoke to Chinese people who are now being rated through a social credit system that is gradually being rolled out. It determines their rating, whether or not they will be allowed to travel, and what kind of jobs they will be able to apply for. One of the gentlemen Phillip Williams interviewed last night was very brave. I have thought about him a lot today. This courageous Chinese journalist spoke to the ABC about what has happened to his life. Because he is a good journalist and he investigated corruption within the CCP, his entire life is restricted; he is essentially under house arrest. He cannot access social media; he is blacklisted by the CPP; he is watched and he is subject to facial recognition technology. His life is broken, Madam Speaker.

Phillip Williams then went into Jinjiang province which, according to Human Rights Watch and the new Secretary-General of the United Nations, has become a mass concentration camp for more than 1 million Uyghur and Kazakh Muslims in a region of northern China known formerly as East Turkestan, until the CPP came to power in 1949. There are some 13 million souls suffering there under a surveillance state. The images of cameras arrayed across every available surface, of people who are having their phones searched; of a broken people. That is the reason we are raising concerns in this place about the activities of the Chinese government.

Liberal ministers, particularly the Treasurer who this morning was quite vile in his language, can bandy around words like xenophobia and racism. It is like water off a duck's back because they are the talking points of the Chinese Communist Party, the United Front Work Department.

It is clear that it shuts down legitimate criticism of the influence operations of the Chinese Communist Government, of the way it is conducting itself in the South China Sea, in the South Pacific region, in Africa. When legitimate criticisms are raised about this ham-fisted debt diplomacy, the word 'xenophobia' comes out first. Racism is an easy word to throw around and it has worked to shut down debate in part.

No-one who cares about people and believes in the diversity of the human species wants to be called a racist or a xenophobe, but these are matters of national security and the way the Chinese Government is conducting itself in the world at the moment is raising hackles right around the planet.

In Sri Lanka there are protests because the Chinese Government lent so much money to the Sri Lankan Government they cannot pay it back. There is a question over who will own the port in the end.

All through the Pacific region, countries like Tonga, Samoa, poor nations, vast sums of money have been lent to build important infrastructure creating debts they cannot repay. The Chinese Government is getting these small countries into debt traps and is throwing its weight around in the region. It is bullying small countries.

It is not only bullying small countries though. It is bullying in universities. It is trying to shutdown academic discourse, to some effect. It is bullying in the markets where it is saying to airline companies, for example, if you refer to Taiwan as Taiwan and not as Chinese Taipei, we will tell Chinese citizens not to visit your country.

Qantas buckled on this one. Certainly Google has buckled. In China, when you go into the Google search engine, the special Chinese Google search engine, it is on the map as Chinese Taipei but we all know in this place that Taiwan is an independent and sovereign democracy.

We are concerned about the increasingly close, unhealthy and opaque relationship between the Tasmanian Government and the Chinese Communist Government. It is a matter of concern that the Tasmanian Government has not sent a trade delegation, for example, to Taiwan, our second biggest trading partner in living memory. What is that about? It is about fear.

This is not a relationship of equals between the Tasmanian Government and the Chinese Government. It is not a relationship of mutual respect. It could not possibly be, when we are such toadies to the CCP. We send trade delegations, publicly funded, elected representatives to China like on a conveyor belt, every year. One, two or three delegations head over, yet we ignore Taiwan.

When you read, for example, deep strategic thinkers like Dr Rory Medcalf from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, he reinforces the importance of having a mutually respectful relationship with the Chinese Government. Not being toadies, not going over there and hawking our public assets, not for example taking over an esky full of Antarctic ice, which is what I understand the Premier did on this trip.

Mr Rockliff - What?

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes. China has four-and-a-half bases in Antarctica circling the continent in the areas of highest mineral prospectivity and our Premier on this trip took over an esky full of Antarctic ice. Tragic. They do laugh at us. They would be laughing at us because we have rolled over so comprehensively and the Treasurer, and I have heard the Deputy Premier and the Premier say it too, they run the CCP's talking points. You do. Mr Rockliff you can faux laugh.

Mr Rockliff - I do not have access to the talking points.

Ms O'CONNOR - You can, but any even superficial assessment of the advice of strategic analysts will tell you that is true, Mr Rockliff.

It is clear there is enough, in fact there have been researchers working on the operations of the United Front work group for more than a decade and of course some of those researchers will be members of Chinese/Australian community, many of whom are terrified of the increasing aggression of the CCP under President Xi. But there are researchers who have been able to access key documents and translate them from the United Front work group and its various arms.

That body of evidence which is incontrovertible tells us that it is a clear rebuttal to criticism of the human rights abuses and the authoritarianism and the racism of the CCP to use the words 'racist' and 'xenophobia' towards critics of the regime. That is the talking point of the United Front work group. That is what they are doing to shut down legitimate criticism.

What profoundly struck me from all that I have investigated on this issue and after reading Clive Hamilton's book and obtaining information from strategic experts and academics is there seems to be a world of difference between the Australian Government's position on foreign influence and interference coming out of the CCP and the Tasmanian Government's position. Again, if you listen to the strategic analysts they will tell you this is exactly what the CCP does. It

picks off small island nations; it picks off weak, fragile or emerging economies. It uses the charm offensive and it creates vassal states. That is the risk here. That is because there is such an enthusiasm without question for growing the relationship with the Chinese Government that we are blind to how we are being played.

To be honest this debate is no fun for Dr Woodruff and me. We are not having a good time. It would be much easier to get up in here and talk about the environment, parks, and forests. It is very difficult. I am not saying that for sympathy. I am explaining this is not a choice to raise these issues that we have made lightly but we regard it as our responsibility to the people of Tasmania. It is our imperative to defend this island from threat - domestic and foreign - and we do our research. We speak to the experts. We listen to people who are within the Chinese Tasmanian community and the Chinese Australian community who are as confronted by the contemporary reality of China under President Xi as we are. That is a very important constituency that is ignored by people like the Treasurer when he accuses us of xenophobia for raising concerns about the activities of the Chinese government in Tasmania and in Australia. He is completely forgetting Chinese Tasmanians and Chinese Australians who know exactly what the threat is, people who came to this country to escape the oppressiveness of the CCP and who still live in fear, particularly if they have family back in China.

This glib, dismissive and dangerous response we get from the Liberal Government on this issue is doing Tasmania a disservice and it is doing Chinese Tasmanians a disservice. It is doing our Chinese Tasmanian community a terrible disservice pretending every person in the Chinese Tasmanian community wholeheartedly backs the CCP. They do not because it is in human DNA to strive for freedom and social justice. That is why thinking people and good people, informed people around the world in Australia and in Tasmania will speak truth to power. We will name up this authoritarian, racist, surveillance state. We will name up the United Front work group which, I remind the House, organised the launch of the Council for the Promotion of the Peaceful Reunification of China in our Parliament House last year. That is brazen. The Council for the Promotion of the Peaceful Reunification of China is an identified arm of the United Front work group which is identified by itself as the propaganda arm of the CCP.

How foolish are we? We are sleepwalking into a very unbalanced relationship. As a parliament, we allowed the United Front work group to launch the Council for the Promotion of the Peaceful Reunification of China in our Parliament House even though Taiwan is our second biggest trading partner and, like us, is a sovereign island democracy. That entity which launched here, down in the reception room last year, does not respect Taiwan's independence. Yet we let them launch their chapter here. There is a connection between the Council for the Promotion of the Peaceful Unification of China and the Liberal Party. The national chair of the council is Liberal Party donor, Mr Huang Xiangmo, an Australian citizen of Chinese birth who is identified by ASIO as being very closely connected to the Chinese Communist Party. When ASIO made that statement, it was in a briefing to the federal Liberal and Labor parties about the danger of accepting money from Mr Xiangmo and his Yuhu group of companies. Yet, not more than six months later the Tasmanian Liberal Party accepted \$30 000 from the Yuhu group of companies and Jade Fisheries, owned by Mr Huang Xiangmo.

We should not be surprised that permission was granted for a propaganda unit of the United Front to launch itself in our parliament but we should be appalled. This is a sovereign democracy we live in. This parliament is the great symbol of our democratic freedoms, for all its dysfunction. We are here because we were voted into this place to represent communities on the basis of the values and the policies we hold. We are democratically elected into this parliament and our greatest

responsibility always is to the people of this island, and it is selling out the people of this island to suck up to an authoritarian, racist surveillance state.

When I was watching *Foreign Correspondent* last night with Jasper and Stella I was just horrified by what is happening to those people. I thought, 'Our Premier's over there pretending everything is fine in China', because what matters more is money. It apparently matters more than the human rights of the Han Chinese who are being surveilled and the Uyghur and the Kazakhs who are being oppressed and subjected to cultural genocide. They cannot speak their own language or practice their faith. There are reports coming out of Human Rights Watch of Uyghur women being forcibly married to Han men. Children are disappearing. Our Premier is over there. Our Premier took a whole extra week off parliament - the first time in 30 years - and he is over there being feted by a government that has no respect for the international rule of law, none at all, and has no respect for human rights but in fact regards human rights as Western values.

This is a little parliament, I understand that. I understand that this motion will not in the great scheme of things reset the relationship with the Chinese government, but it is intended to make sure that there is an understanding on the part of those who would sign these agreements that the people of Tasmania have a right to know what is in them. I simply say this to the Chinese government - and its agents will be watching today, I know that. I read the China Antarctic white paper and I recognise there is an enormous amount of good work scientists from China are undertaking in Antarctica. There is clearly a deep appreciation of the Antarctic continent and all the right words are said about respecting Antarctica as a natural place of peace and science.

I believe it was Martin Luther King who said, 'The arc of the moral universe is long, but it always bends towards justice'. The message this parliament should be giving the Chinese government is not, 'We will take your money, come here and buy the place'. It is that we are a sovereign democracy which upholds human rights and believes in human freedoms. The renewable energy generation that is happening in China now is breathtaking and inspiring, but if China is to reach its destiny as one of the world's great powers and have the majority of the world's nations come along with it, it is going to have to have a deeper understanding of human nature, because human beings will not be oppressed indefinitely. History tells us that they will rise up.

I hope that this period of intense aggression and global bullying that is happening as a result of the direction President Xi Jinping has taken China in recent years will end and that China will set itself out there as a member of the global community on a planet of equals, respecting human rights and freedoms, harnessing the best capacity of humanity and respecting diversity. As Adam Ni of the Australian Defence Studies Institute at ANU wrote recently, 'For the CCP diversity is a disease', and that is why the Uyghur and the Kazakhs are being locked up.

It is the current government's view of Chinese exceptionalism in the world. I think China can do better under President Xi. They have a huge amount to give to the world and the future of the planet, but they will continue to meet resistance in little places like this. In Zambia there are threats to repossess the airport because Zambia cannot pay its debts. In Tonga and Sri Lanka and Cambodia, people are rising up and will continue to do so because the spirit of human freedom is irrepressible.

[5.36 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Deputy Premier) - Madam Speaker, I recognise the time so I will not take my full allocated time to allow the Opposition to contribute.

Exports generally are a very important part of our Tasmanian economy -

Ms O'Connor - Doesn't it make you feel a bit hollow to start like that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, it does not.

Ms O'Connor - It should.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are talking about government and trade. Over 90 per cent of what we produce we export. We have to be very good marketers and very conscious the importance of maintaining the very strong Tasmanian brand we have developed over a long period of time for quality, premium and reliability. Our exports have risen significantly over the course of the last four years. It has increased, as I understand it, by some 33 per cent up to around \$3.68 billion from \$2.6 billion four years ago.

Ms O'Connor - What about Taiwan? Can you call it Taiwan?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Whether it is China or Taiwan - which I have been to and had a wonderful hospitable time, and we have welcomed Taiwanese into our home on regular occasions - whether it is the United States, the United Kingdom or Asia more broadly, we are an exporting state. It is important to recognise that in the context of why the Premier is visiting China last week and parts of this week as well.

Our efforts to increase trade and exports to Asia are through our engagement with China and President Xi Jinping's visit in November of 2014, which at the time the Greens welcomed. The Leader of the Greens released a statement saying he welcomed President Xi Jinping to Tasmania, and it was a successful visit. Previous trade missions to East Asia in 2017 and South Asia in 2016 are paying dividends for Tasmanians and Tasmanian jobs.

Trade with greater China, our largest exporter, grew by some \$430 million or 58 per cent in the year to March. Our markets, particularly those to our north, are encapsulated by clean and natural Tasmanian produce and this is something we and our producers can be very proud of.

The Premier is leading a trade and investment mission focused on key areas where we have very strong competitive advantage in Asian markets, including our high-value produce, primary industries, energy, Antarctic operations, which we have discussed considerably over the last day or so, and tourism. Tasmania's world-class fresh produce, seafood, wine and whisky are increasingly sought after in these markets. This trade mission is expected to bolster exports, creating more new direct jobs right here in Tasmania and support Tasmania brand enhancement.

Overall, 22 industry delegates from Tasmania are part of a delegation between 5 and 17 September covering three sectors: food and beverage, business investment and tourism. The first leg of the mission included Asia's most important trade show, Asia Fruit Logistica, in Hong Kong bringing our clean, fresh, high quality produce to 1300 top buyers and decision makers from more than 76 countries over a three-day period.

We were in key markets, where we need to be. We make no apologies for taking Tasmania to the world. I have never criticised - as far as I can tell - any member of parliament or any government of any colour for supporting local industry into markets and building relationships overseas. It is vital for our state.

The second leg of the mission includes key business meetings in Beijing, Shanghai and Hangzhou, as well as engagement with key buyers and importers of Tasmanian products and online trade giant Alibaba.

The third leg of the mission is being led by Tourism Tasmania taking in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur to continue the growth of our reputation across Asia as a must-see tourist destination.

The list of delegates on the China trade and investment mission of 2018 are well known businesses that have established, over a lot of blood, sweat and tears, their brands in the marketplace: Fruit Growers Tasmania, Horticultural Export Group Tasmania, Hansen Orchards, Fruitday, Entura, Platinum Ridge Cherries, Rowella Cherry Farm, Perfect Produce, Coal Valley Orchard, Glenburn Orchard, Styx River Cherries, Newtile Farm, Premium Fresh, Harvest Moon, Reid Fruits, Houston's Farm, McHenry Distillery, Australian Whisky Holdings Limited, Juicy Isle, Hazell Brothers, the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Woodbridge Smokehouse. I recognise some of these businesses because they travelled with me to South Korea in February 2016 and Japan. The Government has supported our industries, establishing key relationships, building on key relationships overseas.

We have signed an MOU with China's largest fresh produce platform to support trade and pathways to market for Tasmanian exporters. This is an important step forward for our exporters with the potential to increase pathways into Chinese markets, particularly for our fresh fruit.

The second MOU was signed between the Tasmanian College of English and the Jong Ying Education Technology and Research Institute, establishing a commitment to a strategic partnership to increase opportunities for academic and education exchange.

On Thursday I am advised that an MOU was struck between the Department of State Growth and the Putuo District Education to encourage visits and exchange trips between Tasmania and Putuo that supports the Government's global education and growth strategy. We will continue to release our MOUs signed by the Government as appropriate to do so, as was the practice under the previous government.

When the Premier returns from the trade mission, he will release a detailed agenda, together with MOUs signed. There is no secrecy that we are taking Tasmania to these key markets and helping our industries to build relationships in these key markets. We have put out media statements to that effect and been very open and transparent. There is no secrecy in what we are trying to achieve in driving home in those key sectors Tasmania's increasing reputation for producing high quality, premium product.

The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement broke down tariff barriers for a number of important Tasmanian industries. I commend the former Abbott government for the work they did, particularly the trade minister Andrew Robb. He helped establish free trade agreements which made it more competitive for our producers to access and sell into key markets, to expand their businesses and expand Tasmania's increasing reputation for quality.

I have an amendment to the motion which strengthens the motion. I disagree with the member for Denison Ms O'Connor. I have circulated the amendment to the Greens and Opposition.

Madam Speaker, I move -

That the following amendments be made to the motion:

- (1) By leaving out the word 'orders' and replace with 'calls on'.
- (2) By leaving out the words 'lay upon the Table of the House a copy of' and replace with the words 'make available'.

Laying on the Table of the House is one way to release a Memorandum of Understanding but there are other ways to make it available for the public.

- (3) By leaving out the words 'since March 2014 on or before 27 September 2018'.

The motion restricts the time frame of this Government; however, MOUs have been signed by other governments. It is only natural that we would be open and transparent about other memoranda of understandings signed as well.

Dr Woodruff - You do not want to say what you have signed Tasmania up to. You know it would not go down if you did.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The amended motion, if successful, would read -

That the House calls on the Premier to make available each Memorandum of Understanding between the Chinese Government or Chinese Government controlled entities and the State of Tasmania or Tasmanian State entities.

It is a very transparent, well worded motion. I commend that amendment to the House. I have not left much time for the Opposition to say a few words. We are a state with a growing population and a growing economy. Our exports are up 33 per cent over the past four years, as I am advised.

Ms White - This year they are, last year they were down.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Our exports are up over the four years from around \$2.6 billion to now \$3.7 billion. I think I have those figures correct. We need to not only maintain our high-quality reputation but also enhance our reputation and support our businesses that have worked extremely hard, many in rural and regional Tasmania, with innovative product that consumers are demanding across the world. That is something we can be very proud of. We will never grow our businesses in Tasmania if we have a fortress approach that appears to be the way the Greens would like us to approach our export markets internationally, and particularly with China, which I understand is worth over \$1 billion in exports.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will leave my comments at that. I have moved my amendments to the motion which I believe fully reflect the very strong transparency of this Hodgman Liberal Government.

[5.51 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Given the time, do you wish to speak to the amendment, Ms O'Connor, given this is your motion?

Ms O'Connor - I am happy to but I realise you have been slightly ripped off time-wise.

Ms WHITE - I thought I would check, given it was a motion moved by the Greens and you might want to respond to the Acting Premier.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I can indicate that we have no issue with the original motion proposed by the Greens. We support their transparency that the motion calls for the Government to provide around the MOUs struck by the Government and the Premier on his recent trade mission. However the amendments moved by the Government keep the intent of the original motion intact, so I am comfortable with those amendments. Ultimately the outcome the parliament needs is for those MOUs to be published and whatever way we get there and whatever wording is agreed by the parliament, I think we will have that outcome achieved.

I firmly believe there should be much greater transparency around MOUs that are struck by any government of Tasmania with any trading partner. The Department of State Growth website lists some of the trade activities of the Government and the delegations that have occurred. The only one listed which is upcoming is the current one the Premier is on at the moment, but there is not very much detail there. A place the Government could start is providing more transparency for the people of Tasmania about what their trade missions are intended to achieve as outcomes for Tasmania. It could be the place where the memoranda of understanding are published so that any Tasmanian could access them, if that is deemed appropriate, as results and outcomes from those trade missions.

Anyone looking at the website can see that the South-East Asia trade mission, which was the most recent one to have occurred before the current one, details very little information about what was achieved as outcomes from that trade mission. I am not saying there were not outcomes, but anybody reading the website would not be aware of the details of those. That would be a good place for the Government to start to improve the transparency and understanding for the people of Tasmania about the importance of trade. We are an export-orientated economy and we need to be able to trade and access markets outside Tasmania to grow our prosperity and provide opportunities for improving the prosperity of all of us, improving the opportunities for people to get work in our state.

I am a very strong believer that we need to continue to trade, whether that be with mainland states or internationally, which is why I hosted the Victorian Minister for Trade and Investment, the Hon. Phillip Dalidakis, last week in Tasmania at events in the north and south of the state, so that traders in our state can learn about the opportunities to expand into markets in Victoria and what programs are offered by the Victorian government that could be replicated in Tasmania to provide support to businesses here who are seeking new markets elsewhere.

However, when governments on behalf of its citizens strike up MOUs with other sovereign nations or other entities, they should be provided on the public record, which is why we are supporting the motion moved by the member for Denison. I agree these documents should be made available and highlight that the 2013 delegation led by the then premier Lara Giddings to China resulted in an MOU which is publicly available in the Parliamentary Library. I urge the Government to provide copies of the MOUs they have struck with the entities they have entered into on behalf of Tasmania to the Parliamentary Library, following the example set by the then premier Lara Giddings.

I am not sure how the Government intends to make each of these MOUs available. It is not specified in the motion or the amendments provided by the Government. I am not sure if there is an opportunity for clarification as to whether or not it will be through the Parliamentary Library or on the Department of State Growth's website in the trade section and the time frame for that. My concern with all these motions and debates we have in this place is that commitments are made but no time frames are set and therefore it is very difficult for us to measure whether or not outcomes have been achieved. This is a very good example given there is no time frame at all by which the Government needs to meet the obligations this motion requires of them to make that information available.

I will not speak for much longer to allow the mover of the motion the opportunity to speak to the amendment but indicate that whichever outcome is arrived at here it will result in greater transparency and that is a good thing for all of us.

[5.57 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, on the amendment it was disappointing to listen to both the previous speakers not once mention the human rights issues that were raised in detail. There was not a word for the Uyghur, a million people in concentration camps in the north of China, no mention of Tibet, no mention of the surveillance state that has been set up in China today.

Ms White - The motion didn't talk about those things.

Ms O'CONNOR - I understand that, Ms White, but very rarely are we constrained by the wording of a motion in terms of our contributions. I am noting that it is disappointing because when good people stay silent, bad things happen to people.

We are not going to vote against the amendment. We do not believe it strengthens the motion because the most straightforward, open and transparent way to make these MOUs public is to lay them on the Table of the parliament. If we can put up with the silly garbage we had being tabled by the Liberals yesterday, which was their self-corrected report card being tabled in the parliament, we should be able to accept whatever MOUs have been signed between the state of Tasmania and the Chinese Government or its entities. The minister made no clear reference to what 'make available' means. We do not support them just being made available on the Liberal Party website or a condensed version of them like we have had previously.

Before I wind up, I seek leave to table the paper I flagged tabling in the adjournment last night, which is 'China's Expanding Antarctic Interests: Implications for New Zealand' by Professor Anne-Marie Brady from the University of Canterbury. When you read the paper - and I urge members to read it - the echoes and resonances for Tasmania and Australia are very strong. We should inform ourselves of these matters of state and national interest and security. I commend the work of Professor Anne-Marie Brady; she has been very brave and in fact has suffered personally as a result of her courage as a professor of China studies at the University of Canterbury. Her home was broken into relatively recently. What was taken? Electronic devices, laptop computers and mobile phones. Money in a jar was left on the living room floor. I seek the leave of the house to table Professor Brady's paper.

Leave granted.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Regional Arts in Tasmania - Funding

[6.01 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Denison - Attorney-General) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on the adjournment as a result of last night's contribution from the opposition spokesperson for the arts, the Leader of the Opposition Ms White, who asked for an update on regional arts in Tasmania and the dispersal of funds from regional arts Australia so I will do so now. To be clear, the matter of selecting a new regional program administrator is not a matter for the state government. These are Commonwealth funds provided to Regional Arts Australia, which is based in Alice Springs, and then devolved to the regional program administrator in each jurisdiction. Importantly there has been no interruption to the Regional Arts Fund in Tasmania.

Arts Tasmania has stepped in to facilitate the delivery of these funds in line with the Regional Arts Australia guidelines. Expressions of interest have closed for Tasmanian arts organisations to self-nominate to deliver the Regional Arts Fund and the selection of that organisation is a matter for Regional Arts Australia and the Commonwealth department of Culture and the Arts; not Arts Tasmania and not the Tasmanian Government.

The Hodgman Liberal Government recognises the importance of regional arts practice as contributors to the identity of Tasmanians, also to the broader creative economy and the social health and wellbeing of our state.

I take this opportunity to also clarify some of the background regarding the reasons behind the closure of what was known as Tasmanian Regional Arts, or TRA for short. TRA had been unsuccessful through the competitive funding regime of arts Tasmania each year since 2014. In recognition of TRA's importance to regional arts activity in the state, Arts Tasmania and the Tasmanian Arts Advisory Board as it was then, found special initiative funds to support the organisation. Continuing to do so outside of the recognised peer process is not sustainable in the long term and nor would it be fair to the many worthy organisations across the state who are funded through the peer process and go through that process.

TRA was advised that no more special funding would be available to them if their 2017 application was not successful. I will stress again that it is a peer process - it is not selected by me. When it became clear that the TRA was not successful through the recognised peer process, the former arts minister, through Arts Tasmania provided TRA with three options to continue, all of which involved a close working relationship with Arts Tasmania. These options provided TRA the space in which to consult with members, identify the core aspects of business for the organisation and to reposition and reboot the organisation in 18 to 24 months. It was disappointing that the TRA did not accept these offers and instead elected to close. Ultimately that was their decision to make.

Tasmanian Regional Arts had received \$323 076 in special funding since 2014 to support the organisation due to the failure of its funding applications. Arts Tasmania also contributed money in partnership with the Australia Council for the Arts for a strategic review of the organisation.

The Regional Arts Fund had been managed by Tasmanian Regional Arts on behalf of Regional Arts Australia and the federal ministry of the arts. Since assuming responsibility for administering the Tasmanian allocation of the Regional Arts Fund, Arts Tasmania has distributed and managed over \$190 906 of Regional Arts Australia funds to the arts sector through a competitive grants process.

Regional Arts Australia's EOI process for a new administrator closed at the end of August this year with a view to the new administrator of the Regional Arts Fund commencing on 1 January 2019. This process is a matter for them and I encourage the member to engage with them should she have concerns.

Recent conversations with the regional arts sector indicate that new organisations are looking to play a leadership role in regional Tasmania and I look forward to those discussions continuing. That can only be a good thing.

Ms White - I am sorry to interject, but are you aware if they have made an announcement yet about that?

Ms ARCHER - No, because the process only closed at the end of August, so I would not expect that they have had time to look at that thoroughly and make a decision.

Additionally, it is very pleasing to note that the new Chair of Regional Arts Australia, the national organisation, is based in Tasmania and that is Simon Spain, a noted leader in the arts sector. He has accepted the position of chair, helping to place regional arts in Tasmania in the spotlight at the national level. That is a great achievement.

I advise all members of the House, including the member who raised this on the adjournment last night, that there seems to be some misapprehension that there is no funding to regional arts or very little funding to regional arts in Tasmania. Since July 2014 over 44 per cent of Arts Tasmania competitive funding has gone to regional Tasmania. I would like to see it much higher, so we are always encouraging organisations around the state to be part of that competitive process.

In addition, our Government has recently announced funding of \$100 000 per annum for three years for the Northern Tasmania Arts Organisation initiative.

Time expired.

Frederick Henry Bay - Access to the Beach and Boating

[6.08 p.m.]

Ms STANDEN (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, this evening I support of the residents of Lauderdale and the ratepayers of Clarence City Council who are currently facing a second summer without boating on Frederick Henry Bay. This is due to council removing access from Roches Beach to Frederick Henry Bay nearly 18 months ago by ripping up the former boat ramp in the name of flood risk mitigation and coastal erosion.

The Clarence City Council's project to restore the boat ramp access from the beach to the bay has been a debacle from beginning to end. Several residents doubt that the flood risk justifies the project, let alone the negligible impact on coastal erosion.

In mid-2017 the Clarence City Council removed the boat ramp without adequate notice and consultation, although it was based on a survey that had been conducted some three years previously. A letter went out to residents and the very next day the bulldozer moved in. Council has since conceded that the consultation process was not ideal and it has conceded that the engineering of the disability compliant access structure that replaced the ramp has been a disaster. Neither the disabled or able-bodied people can safely access the beach via the ramp due to erosion exposing the footings and the end of the ramp, leaving it around half a metre above the beach. It is a particular risk for elderly people, let alone people with disability.

I have been supporting the Lauderdale community now since late July 2017 to lobby and advocate to rebuild or replace the boat launching facilities to restore access from the beach to Frederick Henry Bay. More than 12 months ago on 16 August 2017 I worked with the Lauderdale community to gather a petition with 524 signatures asking the Tasmanian Government to immediately work with council to rebuild or replace boat-launching facilities to restore access to Frederick Henry Bay. I am not aware that there has been any formal response to that petition. At the time, the community's hope was that access would be restored in time for the 2017 summer, not just for recreational amenity but also for safety reasons. Several locals can recall when small recreational craft have been launched to come to the aid of people who get into trouble in the bay more quickly than authorities could otherwise respond. The Lauderdale community is now facing a second summer without boating on the bay.

After delays in getting the preliminary design completed, followed by consultation with Crown Land, a development application has eventually been lodged and planning notice advertised on 8 September inviting written representations by 24 September that will see the timber access ramp demolished and replaced with a new boat ramp, as I understand it, up and over the replenished dune. Understandably, Lauderdale residents and Clarence ratepayers are concerned about the cost of the works undertaken to date, and while it is clear there are still some steps to go to complete the statutory process, the community is seeking assurances from Clarence City Council that access will be reinstated prior to the start of summer, nearly 18 months after the start of this fiasco.

The current situation is dangerous and urgent action must be taken to rectify the situation due to the risk to public safety. I urge the Government to work with Clarence City Council to ensure that there are no further unnecessary delays and this access is reinstated prior to the upcoming summer season.

A Paw Up - Caring for Pets

[6.12 p.m.]

Mr HIDDING (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak briefly on a matter about a constituent of mine, a constituent I share with all other members of Lyons, a lady called Deb Conley from Sorell. She is a person who loves human beings first and dogs second, but a close second. Some time ago she came across a person in poor circumstances who had a dog and who could not look after the dog. She helped not just look after the person but the dog as well by feeding and getting the dog right, and that person's life was greatly enhanced by having a healthy dog.

I get this stuff because we are a dog family. We do not have a dog at the moment but all through our lives we had a dog in our household. There is nothing like a dog for giving complete unconditional love to its owner, regardless of the owner's circumstances. It could be somebody

who is completely homeless and has all sorts of issues going on, but they have this dog alongside them that is part of their life.

Deb Conley has identified that there is a need to provide in two ways for these dogs. Her own organisation is called A Paw Up and is now a registered charity helping to feed and care for pets owned by Tasmanians experiencing or facing homelessness. They distribute good-quality pet food, treats, collars, leads, toys and blankets to service providers who pass them on to clients who need help feeding and caring for their pets. Deb has asked if I could pass around her information to other members of parliament and I will certainly do so. I will write to all members of both Houses to let them know about this. Obviously any donations would be wonderful, but she is mostly concerned that her charity gets the recognition and knowledge that it is out there and that these service-providing agencies are aware of it.

Deb has also become involved with a national body called Pets in the Park which is helping the homeless care for their pets, but not what she specialises in herself, which is the feeding and immediate care of the pet.

Pets in the Park is a charity dedicated to caring for pets of the homeless and is recognised as the only national organisation focused completely on making a difference to both animals and people who are experiencing homelessness. This is a program that involves trained practising veterinarians and they have surgeries that are regularly set up for people with dogs who need veterinary care. By surgery, I do not mean knife surgery, I mean a consultation for people with pets they are having trouble looking after.

I congratulate Deb Conley for her strong leadership in the community in working in a space that is a very positive albeit somewhat unusual, and for that reason I am delighted to be able to stand up and speak about her. A Paw Up is her own registered charity doing a cracker job and her relationship with the sister charity Pets in the Park involves vets in Hobart. I thank those vets who are involved in it, whoever they are. What wonderful people they are that they would put aside their professional time to do that for homeless people with dogs. It is a lovely thing to be able to do.

I commend to all members of this House and all members of the parliament Deb Conley and her great work in the community.

Service Tasmania - Staff Access to Recreation Leave

[6.16 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to convey concerns around the way leave is being managed in Service Tasmania. I received an anonymous letter which I will read into the *Hansard* and ask that the Premier or the Acting Premier investigate the way leave is being managed currently in Service Tasmania.

Mr Hidding - Leave for staff?

Ms WHITE - I will read the letter and then you can understand what I am speaking about. It says:

I currently work for DPAC at Service Tasmania, I have been in this position for a long number of years as a permanent employee. In recent years I have been shocked at the treatment of the CSO staff who are the face of Government. We are all employed as customer service staff who have a large amount of responsibility which none of us take lightly and we all try and work to the best of our abilities at all times. Over the last couple of years there have been lots of changes to the way we are managed with PMRs changing and now one-on-one 'chats' every three weeks. DPAC advertises itself as a 'family friendly workplace' who encourages staff members to have a good 'work/life balance'. In my experience, working at Service Tasmania is far from supportive of those statements.

I have watched many times staff begging to change their work plans for family reasons and being told no. I have witnessed staff asking to be able to be moved to a shop closer to their home residence and being denied, but most recently and what has prompted me to write to you is the absolute inability to take recreation leave. I am shocked that this is happening in a Government department. I am at a loss to understand how staff are constantly being denied access to their leave entitlements, they are having leave requests denied regularly and are then having to approach team leaders and 'beg' for their leave entitlements. I am exceedingly upset by this personally after having my application for Xmas leave denied when I have well over and above the amount of leave available. Staff are then being put on 'excessive leave management plans' due to their excessive leave balances, which is unfair as their leave keeps being denied. Recreational leave is a legal part of our employment at Service Tas and we are unable to take this leave in line with our family commitments. This is the opposite of what DPAC says they view as their type of workplace.

How is the government allowing this treatment of employees? We need your help to raise the alarm on our working conditions and the lack of support of our leave entitlements. I have never been treated in any workplace like I have been treated while at Service Tas. If this was private enterprise it would not be allowed! ... Please call the current Government out on their mismanagement and ill treatment of humans who are employed by them and are unable to access their legal entitlements as part of their jobs, who are unable to have a 'work/life balance' and who are not working in a family-friendly workplace but instead have endured years of bullying and unfairness within the workplace.

That is an anonymous letter I received from an employee at Service Tasmania. I ask that the Premier or the Acting Premier review the way leave is being managed in Service Tasmania. I understand from speaking with the Community and Public Sector Union that there is currently a proposal to restrict the number of staff who can take leave over Christmas and New Year. When concerns were raised by the unions about that, the only solution proposed by management was to employ contractors to fill in.

That is not acceptable either and they have been speaking about managing part-time staff to cover some of those obligations to keep Service Tasmania operational. Hopefully that will be more successful. Given the concerns raised, I felt an obligation to raise it here and ask that the Premier review the way that leave is being managed in Service Tasmania.

Youth Speaking Out on Issues

[6.20 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, there has been so much in the news over the past couple of weeks over the federal Liberal Party bullying attitude towards women in politics. They show contempt for the need to have women equally represented in parliament. They seem, despite everything that has happened, determined to stick to a system that has failed. There are not enough women represented in the Liberal Party in Tasmania or at the federal level. It seems that the men are determined to keep it that way.

What this raises is where we need to be heading. The Greens are always looking ahead. We have achieved peak parity for women in the federal parliament. In the Tasmanian Parliament we would welcome the inclusion of some men in our ranks. We are open to all people.

What all parties must do better is have more voices of young people in parliament. It is the youth who are sometimes the only people in society prepared to speak the truth to power. They are looking with open eyes at the reality of the world.

I salute the bravery of nine-year-old Harper Neilson, who sat down for the Australian anthem because she wanted to make a statement about the fact it does not represent the Australian reality. It does not represent the reality of 50 000 years of indigenous culture, the lived experience of people who have fundamentally changed the landscape. People who have arrived in the last blink of an eye colonised this place with violence and have never established a treaty with the indigenous people. She made the point that we cannot all 'rejoice for we are young and free' because it is not true. She also made the point that it is not about 'advancing Australia fair' when indigenous people in this country have such a low life expectancy and such poor living conditions.

The responses she received were fascinating and frightening on some levels, including threats of violence from a federal senator. Senator Pauline Hanson threatened to 'kick her up the backside'. Ms Hanson accused her of being 'brainwashed by her parents' and 'heading down the wrong path'. The path that nine-year-old Harper headed down was the path of speaking the truth.

Children across the world are increasingly facing up to the reality of extreme climate change. In the United States this year, children in Florida are suing their state governor to force him to take action on climate change. Eight children aged between 10 and 20 years are named as plaintiffs in a case that will seek to force Florida to take action on a climate recovery plan. This case follows the same arguments mounted in cases around the United States at state and federal level courts, including Juliana versus the United States, filed in 2015 against the federal government. The argument for bringing that case was sound enough that it has been listed for a trial date in October this year.

Florida is vulnerable to climate change. It is a low lying state, as is Tasmania. It is low lying and on the east coast of our state we have the warmest waters on the planet. I salute the young people in Tasmania who are speaking up about climate change. The Greens will do everything we can to preselect young people, so we have more young voices with an opportunity to speak about their future.

It is clear that the old fuddy-duddies in the Government are not listening so they need to be replaced by young people who know the world they are likely to move in to. Every day, students and children in the Australian Youth Climate Coalition and many other organisations are speaking

about climate change and making sure we start, as soon as possible, to mitigate the most damaging impacts of climate change, so the future will be more habitable than it otherwise would be.

Australian National Anthem
Wild Mersey Mountain Bike Trail
Battle of Britain Day

[6.26 p.m.]

Mr BROOKS (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, there are a few things I will briefly cover on the adjournment debate. Without creating controversy, because I do not want to, I agree with something Dr Woodruff said. I believe our national anthem needs updating. That is my personal opinion; it is not a Government position. A song like *I Am Australian* is probably a truer reflection of us as a country. I will always respect our national flag and our national anthem but that does not mean I do not have an opinion that it should be looked at.

That is not what I stood up to talk about. I stood up to talk about mountain bikes and the Wild Mersey Mountain Bike Trail.

Ms White - You like them now?

Mr BROOKS - I have always liked mountain bikes, except when I fall off them because it hurts. I stack them all the time. Not as often these days as I do not ride them as often as I used to. Mr Deputy Speaker, you were there; the member for Lyons, Mr Hidding, was there; the member for Montgomery, Leonie Hiscutt, was there; Senator Richard Colbeck, was there and the member for Lyons, Ms Butler, was there, as were mayor Don Thwaites and mayor Peter Freshney from the respective councils that are involved in it.

It is a project where governments of all levels worked together. More than 100 kilometres of mountain bike trails from Sheffield to Latrobe through Railton is a good thing. We have all seen what Blue Derby has done for mountain biking in the state. When I was the chair of the West Coast Economic Working Group there was significant work done on some exciting trails. We know people who come to Tasmania on the *Spirit* stay here longer. If we can get them to bring their mountain bikes and do more things, that helps regional dispersal, which is getting people into the regional areas, such as Sheffield and the west coast and the east coast.

It was a really exciting opportunity to see the Wild Mersey Mountain Bike Trial have its first sod-turning event and launch. The Hodgman majority Liberal Government has committed \$1.2 million to that project in two stages and it is going to be an exciting thing. Mr Deputy Speaker, you were there and it was tremendous to see the support of members from Lyons and Braddon but also our federal colleagues and state and local government. That is what can be achieved when you work towards a project. It took a long time to get off the ground but I think it is a really exciting opportunity for the community and the state.

I would like to finish up by recognising the Battle of Britain Day. I am a close and dear friend of the RAAF Association in the north-west. They certainly have a great time and I am in charge of doling out the port for everyone there and topping them up if they accidentally drink it before the toast. These are people who have served our nation and served bravely in the Defence Force. I have had the privilege of wearing a Defence Force uniform for eight years.

There was recognition on Sunday in Ulverstone at the Oz Rock Café who did an awesome function to commemorate the Battle of Britain. The Battle of Britain Day is the name given to the day of the large-scale aerial battle that took place on 15 September 1940 during the Battle of Britain. On that day the Luftwaffe embarked on an all-out attack against London and 1500 aircraft took part in that battle. The air battles lasted until dusk and the action was effectively the climax of the Battle of Britain. In the aftermath of the raid Hitler postponed Operation Sea Lion, having been defeated in daylight in the air, and turned his attention to what they call the Blitz night campaign which lasted until May 1941.

People's homes were being bombed from the air day and night, and there were brave pilots from not only Britain but its allies, including Australian pilots. I know the Minister for Veterans Affairs tabled a motion this week about it. It is very important to remind ourselves of what fear they all would have felt, but they still went. I have heard Diggers talk about when they served in the trenches and I have read about it, and they knew when they went out of that trench they were more than likely going to get gunned down, especially with the tactics that were utilised in World War I, where Australian men and some women were cannon fodder for the allied forces. They knew they were going to pretty much a certain death but they still went and it is important that we recognise that.

Royal Hobart Hospital - Patient Accommodation

[6.34 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Health) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to clean up some of Labor's mess from this morning on the adjournment tonight. There have been things said by the Labor Party. Their arrows and bullets intended for me have gone straight past and they have been in fact inflicting harm and reputational damage to our doctors at the Royal Hobart Hospital. It is despicable what the Leader of the Opposition attempted to do this morning.

I want to say from the outset that the attack by the Leader of the Opposition, Rebecca White, on our clinical staff who have circulated a proposal for feedback as an attempt to support patient care during the Royal Hobart Hospital Redevelopment rebuild process as downright dangerous is an utter disgrace. What has occurred is beneath contempt. Unfortunately it is also the case that there are other words from the Leader of the Opposition, who walked away from Health after the election telling Tasmanians it was her first priority but immediately after the election ran off.

On 17 September, just two days ago, the Leader of the Opposition demanded that the Government should be looking at what other spaces are available than can be utilised so we can support patients to access the care they need. She said all options should be on the table.

Ms White - Never on any planet did I think you meant a cupboard. Honestly!

Mr FERGUSON - There - I hope *Hansard* picked it up. The Leader of the Opposition is now claiming that that proposal would see patients put in cupboards.

Ms White - Never on any planet did I imagine that was something that would be on the table.

Mr FERGUSON - That is an absolute disgrace. It is sad, because the clinical director of the Royal Hobart Hospital has felt the need to defend what the document says. The Leader of the

Opposition's landing point for her arrows are our clinical staff at the Royal. I am going to defend them against Labor's medi-scare tactics and attacks.

I am going to quote now from Dr Craig Quarmby, who says, 'The Over-Capacity Protocol is a consultation document developed by Royal Hobart Hospital clinicians and circulated among THS health professionals for discussion'. Here is the protection racket.

Mr Bacon - Do you support it?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Mr Bacon, order. You are warned.

Mr FERGUSON - I support our doctors. Here comes Ms White's protection racket.

Ms White - I have already spoken and can't defend myself.

Mr Bacon - Here's the thing, mate, you haven't got a protection racket. That's your problem.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Mr Bacon.

Mr FERGUSON - Very, very thin-skinned.

Mr Bacon - You are on the record. Do you support the policy?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Mr Bacon, you have been warned. If you interject again I will ask you to leave the Chamber.

Mr FERGUSON - The proposed Royal Hobart Hospital protocol draws on the experience and protocols of other hospitals around Australia and overseas. The measures under discussion are for strictly identified patients who are ready for discharge or transfer from the Royal. Instead of these patients waiting in beds for completion of their discharge process these well patients are moved out of the beds, ensuring the beds become available for sick patients in the emergency department. I wish to have these words on record without this planned interruption.

Mr Bacon - What do you say?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Mr Bacon, you are on thin ice.

Mr O'Byrne - You continue to wash your hands of this. Take responsibility. You've had four and a half years.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr FERGUSON - Dr Quarmby continues:

The Royal Hobart Hospital delivers patient safety and wellbeing as our priority.

Mr Bacon asks me repeatedly about my position. I support our doctors being able to support our patients, and I am not the only one.

The Australasian College of Emergency Medicine today had this to say, and again it is in response to the false claims of the Leader of the Opposition:

The peak body for Emergency Medicine in Australian and New Zealand has welcomed the Tasmanian State Government's announcement of the implementation of a new 'Over Capacity Protocol', saying it supports efforts to improve patient flow at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

... Dr Simon Judkins said that it was promising to see progress to address over crowding and patient flow issues.

'We support efforts to move stable patients out of acute beds and out of the Emergency Department and this use of the Over Capacity Protocol is a step in the right direction to addressing some of the chronic issues prevalent at the Royal Hobart Hospital.'

Dr Brian Doyle is the chair of the Tasmanian faculty of the college and he says that recent investment into the hospital system in Tasmania and ongoing reform is critical to ensuring the highest standards of care. I quote him:

ACEM is committed to working with the Tasmanian Government on mitigating and addressing existing demand pressures and any modern hospital should look at ways to improve patient access and flow.

There is further clinical support from the AMA today:

AMA believes that 'Overcapacity Protocols' adequately designed and endorsed by local hospital leadership can play a crucial role in improving patient safety during periods of extreme hospital demand and ED overcrowding.

Further, AMA is aware that the RHH Executive is in the process of working appropriately with clinical staff at all levels to design an effective 'Overcapacity Protocol' that will allow stranded patients to move from ED to the wards during times of extreme ED demand.

The list goes on. During an interview this morning Dr Quarmby spoke with the media and had this to say:

We wouldn't dare put a patient who isn't well enough ... in a chair, or is not well enough to be in another area.

He said:

We are not prepared to risk the safety of patients by putting them in areas, little nooks and crannies around the place.

And he said this:

We are not putting patients in storerooms. There is a room in one of the wards that was a consulting room with an ensuite bathroom.

He said:

That room wasn't used when the ward was redeveloped and staff started putting things in to store. This room isn't a storeroom.

We have seen all of the dirty tricks from the Labor Party, but this is probably the lowest we have yet seen. This from the party that wants to put sick people into motels around Hobart is the dangerous policy proposal. They would actually attempt to attack our doctors who we have empowered, this house has empowered, to offer these solutions.

Royal Hobart Hospital - Patient Accommodation

[6.41 p.m.]

Mr BACON (Denison) - Mr Deputy Speaker, what we have just seen is a Health minister in crisis mode. This Health minister is a disgrace, an absolute disgrace, and you do not have to take it from the Tasmanian Labor Party, you can take it from the Prime Minister. We have seen the Royal Hobart Hospital's unfolding woes, 'Not okay,' Scott Morrison says. Heard of him? Put your hands up over there if you have heard of him. Anyone heard of him, put your hands up. No hands up over there, which is unusual for the Liberal Party.

Mr O'Byrne - Well, they did not vote for him. None of the Tasmanians voted for him.

Mr BACON - No. The federal health minister has written to the Tasmanian Government seeking a please explain. A please explain over a plan to move Royal Hobart Hospital patients from beds to chairs to help relieve bed block pressures. Now we have the federal government wanting to know what this guy is up to.

We know the Premier went to China to get away from this disaster. He fled to China. He could not take Mr Brooks this time after his behaviour last time, probably never allowed in the country again. What we have here is a Health minister who will not take responsibility. He wants to read out quotes from other people, but will not tell the House what he thinks of the policy.

Mr Ferguson - I support them circulating the policy -

Mr BACON - But do you support the policy? Here is the point: do you support the policy, Health minister?

Mr Ferguson - Of course I support our doctors and they should be allowed to -

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BACON - We all know Mr Brooks has plenty to say most of the time. I would not mind if he got up and said what he thinks of this policy. We can hear that as well. What we really need to know is does the minister support the policy?

Mr Ferguson - Of course I do.

Mr BACON - You support the policy?

Mr Ferguson - Of course I do. It is backed by clinicians. You would not have a clue.

Mr BACON - Right, here we go. Could not say that in his own contribution.

Mr Ferguson - Let them do their job. You want to put them into hotels.

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BACON - What I will say is that it is the minister's own policy that calls it a storeroom. It is the minister who in question time this morning called it a cupboard. It is the minister distributing bells to patients so they can call for attention.

Ms White - That is right.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. Your fellow members are interjecting on you, so please stop.

Ms White - We are supporting him, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Stop interjecting.

Mr BACON - We know the minister has a helmet in a box in his office and we know he is going to have to put it on, because he is in big, big trouble. This is a minister who will not listen.

Mr Ferguson - I saw your video trying to suck up to them.

Mr BACON - Suck up to who?

Mr Ferguson - I saw the Leader of the Opposition's video attempting to make good with the staff that she attacked this morning. I saw it.

Mr BACON - When the Leader of the Opposition says things she says them directly to the Tasmanian people. She has nothing to hide. What we have here is a minister who is so bad the Premier flees to China to take the week off parliament. That is how bad this bloke is. He is a disgrace. He has been in charge of the health system in Tasmania for coming up to five years and he still wants to blame other people. He wants to blame anyone but himself. He will not take responsibility. He is weak, he is a disgrace and he will not take responsibility.

We have people in the ED laying on the floor. Now he wants to put them, in his own words, in the cupboard. His own document says it is the storeroom. This minister is an absolute disgrace. He has let the Tasmanian people down time and time again. The Premier is too weak to sack him. The bell tolls and it tolls for thee, Michael Ferguson, because you will not take responsibility. This is a bloke who got up, happy to quote other people, would not say he supported his own policy and took him until 6.45 p.m. to support this policy. It has been on the front page of the *Mercury* since midnight and it has taken him until 6.45 p.m. before he finally said he supports the policy.

Mr Ferguson - I do not support putting them in motels.

Mr BACON - Put them in motels, put them in a cupboard. Let them ring the bell. This guy wants to get the helmet on because his behaviour -

Mr Ferguson - Who supports your policy?

Mr BACON - Which one?

Mr Ferguson - Your medi-hotel.

Mr BACON - You reckon they would rather be in a cupboard? That is the question for you.

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BACON - I want you to tell him how his grandmother is going to end up in a cupboard. That is what you should be doing. Ringing a bell in a cupboard.

Mr Ferguson - You are verballing the doctors again.

Mr BACON - Is that right?

Mr Ferguson - Yes, you are.

Mr BACON - It is the minister's own document that called it a storeroom. It is the minister in question time who called it a cupboard. No one else.

Mr Ferguson - The Leader of the Opposition said 'cupboard' during my contribution.

Mr BACON - Did she really?

Mr Ferguson - Yes, she really did.

Mr BACON - You introduced it in question time between 10 and 11 this morning.

Mr Ferguson - You know it is a consulting room.

Mr BACON - You said it is not a storeroom.

Mr Ferguson - Dr Quamby has explained it is a consulting room that is currently being used as a storeroom.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr O'Byrne - Why is he going out when you should be going out?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Mr O'Byrne, order. Mr Bacon has the call. Interjections should cease.

Mr BACON - We have a gutless Premier who has fled to China to avoid scrutiny on these issues. We have a gutless minister who will not take responsibility for what is going on in his own

system. This guy was the happiest health minister in Australia 12 months ago. You have people on the floor, people in cupboards, in his own words.

Mr Ferguson - We have reversed all the Labor-Greens cuts now.

Mr BACON - You have done that and how are you going?

Mr Ferguson - Opened all the wards that Michelle closed.

Mr BACON - You are not going to fund a health system by ripping off wages from Chinese workers. You are not going to fund the health system by ripping off Tasmanian workers. There are plasterers who have not been paid. Does he take responsibility for those workers not being paid? No he does not because he is too gutless.

Mr Ferguson - What are you talking about?

Mr BACON - Everyone else's fault. There are 130 plasterers who were not paid.

Mr Ferguson - We have made sure they have been paid.

Mr BACON - You have made sure? You are a joke and a disgrace.

Time expired.

The House adjourned at 6.47 p.m.