

Wednesday 4 July 2018

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

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, I introduce the honourable Rob Molhoek MP and the honourable Mark Boothman MP from the Queensland Parliament who will be visiting our parliament for our question time - obviously interested in how well disciplined we are - and they are seated in the Speaker's Reserve.

Members - Hear, hear.

QUESTIONS

Reproductive Health Services for Women

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.03 a.m.]

Yesterday you tabled the report on termination of pregnancies in your response to the fact that safe, accessible and affordable terminations in Tasmania have been unavailable since January. It confirms the submissions received included one from Pregnancy Counselling and Support Tasmania, a group which has now also received an increase in its annual funding from government. Pregnancy Counselling and Support Tasmania is a pro-life organisation which does not offer counselling or information about termination for women looking for advice. In 2013 a senior counsellor with this organisation told the parliamentary committee on the access to terminations bill, and I quote -

Should the current bill under inquiry become law we would have to close our counselling service because we are a life pregnancy counselling agency and as such our counsellors hold a conscientious objection to referring directly to an abortion provider or indirectly to another counsellor who will do so.

In responding to the need to increase and provide access to termination, why would you as Health minister increase funding to an organisation which does not support this legal procedure and does not have anything to offer in relation to providing greater access?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. It is very disappointing that the member is rubbishing an organisation that does provide valuable support to Tasmanians. It is a shame that a question of that nature would be asked that deliberately tends to damage the organisation. It may surprise the member who has asked this question that this organisation has been funded by the Tasmanian government for many years. I am advised that this organisation has been in place since 1975 and has had a continuing relationship with the Tasmanian government for all those years.

Ms O'Byrne - Why do they need more money to increase access, when they do not need the access?

Mr FERGUSON - It may surprise the member who asked the question that the member sitting next to her who was the health minister funded the organisation as well when she was the health minister.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - I can advise that Pregnancy Counselling and Support Tasmania is an organisation that this Government supports. It is a worthy organisation. It is a longstanding, non-government organisation that offers wonderful support to women throughout pregnancy, also to families who are unable to conceive. It provides support to women who are considering abortion and provides full options counselling, and also provides counselling to women who have had an abortion and want that support. That is to be supported. It should be encouraged.

Rather than judging and being so harsh to these people who provide wonderful care -

Ms White - Not about increasing access, though, is it?

Mr FERGUSON - and concern for people. It is the case if this is to be the political attack -

Ms O'Byrne - This is how you skewed the report.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - then unfortunately it falls to me to also tell members opposite that it was funded under Ms Giddings as health minister, and by Ms O'Byrne as health minister.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I understand this is a contentious issue, but I ask that you show decorum in this parliament.

Mr FERGUSON - Thank you Madam Speaker. I expected this question may come along. I asked for some advice and I can advise this House, and particularly the member who has asked this question, that as health minister Ms O'Byrne provided this organisation with more than \$25 000 each year and since 2006 just going back two terms only, under Labor, \$200 000 overall. This is in addition to the more than \$2 million of funding Ms O'Byrne had provided annually to the three non-government organisations that are prescribed health providers, being Women's Health Tasmania, Family Planning Tasmania and The Link Youth Health Service.

We all understand the member's interest in this issue -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - I do not want to see this kind of rank hypocrisy in this House. It is hypocrisy from members opposite who are choosing to conveniently forget their own history on this, and ignore facts. I wonder if Ms O'Byrne funded this organisation because she shares my view that they do provide valuable support to women and families in Tasmania.

Recognition of Visitors

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, I advise that we have students from the Legal Studies Course at Rosny College. Welcome to parliament.

Reproductive Health Services for Women

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.08 a.m.]

You claim to be in negotiations with a private terminations provider to begin operation in Tasmania by October. You know that Tasmanian women, particularly women from regional areas, will be no better off if these negotiations are successful. In fact, they will be hampered by the requirement to travel to access services. Why have you proven yet again that you are hell-bent on prohibiting women's reproductive services in this state by not delivering terminations in the public health system?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I will attempt to be fair-minded in my response to this question. We are seeing rank hypocrisy from the Leader of the Opposition on this issue. I again say that I completely recognise that this is a very deeply difficult decision for women considering whether or not to continue with a pregnancy. This Government also recognises that we needed to offer more support and we have been doing that in the most responsible, sensitive and professional way we can. No-one has been helped by the political attacks that we are seeing on this issue from members opposite.

I have been asked a question about the in-principle agreement that has been reached between the department of Health and a private provider. I would have thought, now wrongly, that Ms White would welcome that. She has not welcomed it. Yesterday, the department of Health announced that it had reached an in-principle five-year agreement for a new private provider to deliver exactly what Ms White has been calling for - locally provided, low-cost surgical termination of pregnancy services in Tasmania.

The moment an update has been provided from the department of Health that an in-principle agreement around that has been reached, we are seeing more politicking from the Labor Party in the House today.

My advice is that the service would commence by October. It has more matters that are being followed through now that the in-principle agreement has been reached. They include finalising terms of the agreement, as well as licensing and accreditation requirements, which are important and necessary.

One thing the Leader of the Opposition again failed to include in her question was what her shadow health minister had to say about this an hour or so ago on statewide radio. It may shock the Leader of the Opposition to know that the shadow minister for health, Sarah Lovell, agreed today on ABC radio that this is exactly the service Labor had in place when they were in government. I believe the words that were used were, 'That is absolutely right', or, 'That's correct'. What we are seeing is rank political hypocrisy and an attempt to score points on what everybody in this House should recognise is a deeply sensitive issue.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - There are no interjections coming from over here. All the noise is coming from over there. We recognise this is a sensitive issue but trying to play divisive politics on this helps no-one. Zero people are being helped by Labor's politicking.

One thing Labor did not have in place was PTAS for intrastate travel to the service. We are saying that should be provided. As well as that, as the first question briefly hinted at, there is funding going to Pregnancy Counselling and Support Tasmania but the Leader of the Opposition failed to reference the additional funding also being provided to the prescribed health services. That includes Women's Health Tasmania, Family Planning Tasmania - she did not mention that. It includes The Link - she did not mention that.

Ms White - You are dishonest. I mentioned the pro-life organisation you funded. It does not increase access one bit.

Mr FERGUSON - The Government has been handling this to be sensitive, professional -

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I am very conscious that this is a sensitive issue. I am, with great indulgence, allowing interjection here, but it has to calm down. Minister, if you could wind up, that would be good.

Ms White - Sit down.

Mr FERGUSON - I will sit down when I am ready. I have effectively concluded my answer but it is important that we be allowed to exchange respectful points of view on this. I conclude by inviting the Opposition to be more respectful of everybody in this space. Let us not rubbish certain organisations and let us instead take some of the politics out of this, because the number of people being helped by your policy is zero -

Time expired.

Animal Welfare Act - Tranche 2

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Ms COURTNEY

[10.14 a.m.]

During budget Estimates last week we asked you about the number of greyhounds that have been killed and those that appear to have simply disappeared. Your answer indicated that you are more concerned about the industry than the dogs. We put to you the damning testimony of former

Animal Welfare Advisory Committee member Malcolm Caulfield, who resigned in disgust over what he describes as deep-seated problems with your Government's approach to animal welfare. You batted that off as if the word of the principal solicitor of Animals Australia means nothing. Perhaps most disturbingly, you appeared to crab walk away from your party's commitment to bring in tranche 2 of changes to the Animal Welfare Act, based on the advice of the now hobbled Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. Do you intend to break that promise made by your predecessor to all the animals abused over this island and to the many Tasmanians who care for them?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, once again we have the Greens coming into this place and misrepresenting the conversations and questions that came across the table last week at budget Estimates.

Let me be quite clear. This Liberal Government takes animal welfare and compliance with the state's animal welfare legislation very seriously, whether across farm and production animals, pets or the racing industry. We are committed to ensuring animal welfare standards are upheld, no matter what jurisdiction they are under. We have increased funding for animal welfare. We have strengthened Biosecurity Tasmania and we have increased the funding to the RSPCA to assist with their services.

Ms O'Connor - Answer the question. Are you walking away from further improvements to the act?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Ms COURTNEY - In 2015 we strengthened and modernised the Animal Welfare Act.

Ms O'Connor - Twelve of the 60 recommendations.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Please proceed, minister.

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have modernised the Animal Welfare Act, we have cracked down on offenders, we have increased penalties for aggravated cruelty to up five years, and we have strengthened penalties across the board -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Could I have a bit of calm on this side too, please?

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under standing order 45 going to relevance. The question was whether the minister intends to bring in tranche 2 of the changes to the Animal Welfare Act or has she walked away from the commitment of her predecessor?

Madam SPEAKER - As I have said before, you understand my frustration with this standing order. I have no idea what she is going to come out with next but hopefully it will be an answer.

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you, Madam Speaker. It was a question relating to animal welfare and specifically regarding future plans. I am outlining what the Government has done, what it is currently doing and what we will continue to do.

This Government is committed to animal welfare in this state and we have demonstrated that through my predecessor and the strengthening of the Animal Welfare Act. We have seen it through increased funding for Biosecurity Tasmania and strengthening the RSPCA, and we continue our commitment to support ORI in its role of supporting the racing industry as well as increasing funding for GAP for Tasracing to ensure greyhounds have a future post-racing. I reject the assertion from the Greens that somehow this side of the Chamber is not focused on animal welfare because we are. We have cracked down on offenders, we have increased penalties, and we have sent a strong message that animal cruelty will not be tolerated in Tasmania.

I do not have the *Hansard* in front of me at the moment, but my recollection of last week was that I said we will continue to focus on animal cruelty in Tasmania and continue to ensure -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, on relevance. The minister has form in question time of not answering questions. Are you going to deliver on the commitment to bring in tranche 2 of improvements to the act?

Mr FERGUSON - On the point of order, Madam Speaker, the member who has just resumed her seat has form in being disruptive. I invite the member, through you, Madam Speaker, to allow the minister to answer.

Madam SPEAKER - This is my ruling. If we keep using standing order 45 for interrupting debate it is going to prolong everything and we are going to have a distracted parliament. Please, that was not a point of order. You know my limitations and frustrations. It is the custom of the House that great latitude is allowed in debate. I do not like it but I have to put up with it and I suggest you all do too.

Ms O'CONNOR - On your ruling, Madam Speaker, perhaps you could direct ministers to answers questions truthfully and go to the substance of the question.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, as you have just pointed out, I have no power, as is the practice of this House, to make a minister answer anything. If you ask long questions you get long answers. The best I can do is encourage the ministers, all of them, to stay on track.

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Hodgman Liberal Government takes animal welfare very seriously. It was under my predecessor, it is under me and it will continue to be into the future.

Ms O'Connor - You are a disgrace. How hard can it be to answer a simple question?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Reproductive Health Services for Women

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.20 a.m.]

You have announced you are in negotiations with a fly-in fly-out private provider for termination services in Tasmania. The report you released yesterday concludes that services should be equitable, accessible and timely. Can you guarantee that this fly-in fly-out service will be able

to meet those principles, particularly the frequency of availability? If those negotiations are successful, how frequently will those services be available? Will this provider provide fly-in fly-out weekly, fortnightly or monthly services?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the answer to the question needs to be couched on the basis that in-principle agreement has been achieved between the department of Health and the private provider. The update was provided in good faith because of the public interest in this issue. The Leader of the Opposition should anticipate that the same agency that produced the advice is conducting those discussions.

Defence Industry Support - Job Creation

Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for ADVANCED MANUFACTURING and DEFENCE INDUSTRIES, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.21 a.m.]

Can the minister update the House on some of the exciting job-creating defence industry opportunities that Tasmanian companies have secured with the support of the majority Hodgman Liberal Government?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his interest in this matter. Increasingly around the world our state is being recognised for our niche manufacturing capability and specialist expertise, particularly in the maritime area. This is resulting in growth and job opportunities for Tasmanians. That is truly exciting, as the member said.

Today I visited local company Liferaft Systems Australia which has secured an important deal to supply Australia's newest Hunter class global combat ships with marine evacuation systems through their supply arrangement with BAE Systems. Liferaft Systems is the first local company to benefit from the Australian Navy's recently announced \$35 billion SEA 5000 Future Frigate program. The deal is worth more than \$10 million over a 10-year period. It is expected to support up to 10 to 12 new jobs.

This positive outcome reinforces that our strategy to proactively chase more defence force contracts is working. This announcement follows on from Liferaft Systems' success in securing orders to supply to the two new Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers and the first batch of Type 26 global combat ships for the British Royal Navy, as well as 14 fast transport ships for the United States Navy. Tasmanian Defence Advocate Rear Admiral (Rtd) Steve Gilmore continues to work tirelessly to open doors for Tasmanian businesses with large-scale defence suppliers like BAE Systems and continues to build awareness and confidence in our advanced manufacturing capability.

This is great news for other Tasmanian businesses already in line for opportunities out of the Future Frigate program. We look forward to more announcements in the near future and across the life of the program. This announcement follows on from our recent successful defence trade mission to the United States in April, where seven Tasmanian businesses demonstrated their

capability to the international market at the Sea-Air-Space Expo. Already one of the businesses on that mission, Pivot Maritime International, has stated it is likely to result in millions of dollars worth of additional sales and could not have been achieved without industry and government working together.

These are just some of the recent examples of the successful niche that Tasmania is creating in the defence industries, with the strong support of our Government. In stark contrast, we have Labor, with no plan for our advanced manufacturing and defence industries and real short-sightedness in questioning the value of even having a defence advocate. This is particularly disappointing in Braddon, where advanced-

Mr O'Byrne - Oh, Braddon. What has Brett done? We are sending Brett a life raft. You have a contract for Braddon.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is particularly sporting in that manner of speaking.

Advanced manufacturing and defence industries are vital contributors to the strong economic growth in Braddon under federal and Liberal state governments. Yesterday's announcement of a welding centre for excellence is more evidence of this. I applaud Brett Whiteley on delivering this important deal for Braddon. Congratulations, Mr Whiteley.

Businesses in the north-west are excited about the future under state and federal Liberal governments who are helping them to do better with better tax arrangements. Not a strong point for the federal Leader of the Opposition. In contrast, Bill Shorten could not even land a lunch in Devonport. He has been left high and dry and the business people of Devonport obviously know better than put their faith in Bill.

Reproductive Health Services for Women

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.25 a.m.]

The private provider for terminations you say you are in negotiations with might not begin operating in Hobart until October. It could be later. Can you advise Tasmanian women what they are supposed to do if they require a termination today and what they are supposed to do over the next four months while access to affordable and safe services is still not available in their own state?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. It is hoped that following our in-principle agreement reached with a new private provider, low-cost surgical terminations will commence by October. As we have outlined it requires finalisation of the terms of the agreement, licensing and accreditation requirements, which are not insignificant. In the meantime, as we have outlined, there is an opportunity for Tasmanian women needing to access services to do so. We encourage them to do so in consultation with their GPs.

We are endeavouring to rectify a circumstance that was the result of a private provider leaving our state. We have undertaken significant effort to ensure the return of a service to Tasmania to

provide greater access at lower cost for Tasmanian women. This is something that existed under a former Labor government and something that they should be supporting.

Animal Welfare Act - Tranche 2

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Ms COURTNEY

[10.28 a.m.]

In 2016 budget Estimates your predecessor gave a firm commitment to Ms Dawkins, our animal welfare spokesperson, that a second tranche of improvements to the Animal Welfare Act would be delivered. Is the Government still committed to tranche 2 of changes to the Animal Welfare Act given that only 12 of the 60 Animal Welfare Advisory Committee recommendations were adopted in the first set of changes?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, seeing as we are quoting *Hansard* I will reflect on my comments from last week where, in response to questions from Ms O'Connor about further amendments, I said I will carefully consider that advice in due course noting that I am yet to receive it. A number of positions in AWAC are up for renewal. Once that process has gone through its course then, if and when appropriate, AWAC will continue to provide advice. I then went on with regard to your question about commitment to further strengthening the welfare act. I said I have committed and I will commit. As I said I have sought advice from the department on whether further amendments are required to improve animal welfare in Tasmania. I will assess recommendations that come before me.

To somehow pre-empt something that I have not seen is simply playing politics. We have a clear commitment to animal welfare. As I was outlining earlier my predecessor, Jeremy Rockliff, strengthened animal welfare; we increased accountability and professional standards for welfare officers; we took swift and appropriate action to include further amendments following investigation into the greyhound racing industry; we improved the powers of animal welfare officers to enter and search premises, collect evidence of an offence and better define aggravated cruelty. The regulations setting out standards for animal welfare for dogs took effect in January 2007 addressing concerns around puppy farms.

As I said last week during Estimates, I have made a commitment to seek advice from the department, and I am waiting on advice -

Ms O'Connor - About whether any new changes are needed.

Ms COURTNEY - How I can stand here and commit to making a change that I have not even seen is farcical.

This side of the House has clearly committed that we will continue, as we have done historically, to maintain community expectations of animal welfare across Tasmania, whether that be in the racing industry, the livestock industry, or pets and family animals. Only this side of the Chamber has strengthened the act and we will continue to do anything necessary to make sure that Tasmanian animals have animal welfare standards that are reflective of the community.

North-West Tasmania - Economy

Mr BROOKS question to TREASURER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.31 a.m.]

Can the Treasurer please update the House on the strength of the north-west economy?

Members interjecting.

Mr BROOKS - I know you do not like the north-west, but when you can control yourself, it is a very important question.

Can the Treasurer also update the House on the state and federal governments' plan to take the north-west to the next level? Are there any alternative plans for the region?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Braddon, Mr Brooks, for his question and strong interest in this matter. It is true that under the Hodgman and Turnbull governments Braddon is going from strength to strength. Under Labor-Greens governments in Tasmania and Canberra only a couple of years ago, Braddon's unemployment rate peaked at well over 9 per cent. Now it is around 6 per cent and at times it has been significantly lower than the state average. In recent years we have seen the number of jobs on the north-west coast hit all-time highs as well, but we know that is not as good as it gets. That is why we are working side by side with the federal government to take Braddon to the next level.

Everyone remembers when the member was the economic development minister - 10 000 jobs were lost and the economy was in recession, and what were they doing in Braddon? They were climbing onto the ship to get away. That is your legacy.

I was in Braddon on the weekend working side by side with the federal government and my soon-to-be Liberal colleague, Mr Whiteley. The north-west will benefit from our payroll tax cuts, our incentives for new businesses to establish in regional Tasmania, our support for Hermal, the Devonport Living City project, UTAS in Burnie, and the two new *Spirit of Tasmania* vessels, just to name a few.

The Advocate recently reported that there is well over \$2 billion-worth of projects about to get underway in the north and north-west of the state, ensuring that the economic boom that is driving Tasmania's economy at the fastest rate in the nation spreads far and wide.

The federal government is doing its bit by investing in road upgrades in the north-west, major developments like Living City, the UTAS rebuild, and supporting the Cradle Mountain project as well as flood mitigation at Latrobe. The best thing they can do to help businesses grow and employ more people is by cutting business taxes. Make our businesses more competitive - that is what I heard when I was on the north-west coast. They want to see those tax cuts and they see them as being vital.

I was asked what alternatives there are, and you can never be quite sure when it comes to Labor and Bill Shorten. He is not a fan of tax cuts, as we know, and he is not a fan of business. He had

to be dragged kicking and screaming last week to support the Coalition's tax cuts after his embarrassing captain's call, and don't businesses know it.

The Deputy Premier made the point in terms of the lunch. When you look at the story in *The Australian* - and I will put my glasses on because I do not want to misquote - it says:

Organisers managed to sell just 15 of a possible 80 tickets ... to the event at Devonport's Quality Gateway Hotel.

Which, by the way, hosted a sellout lunch for Malcolm Turnbull not that long ago. One of the organisers said that the numbers were 'a little lower than expected'. What were they hoping for, 20? Mr Shorten even promoted his speech in parliament last week. He is so out of touch, if he was on the north-west coast in the pub he would order Cascade.

It is obvious that Ms White has been told to stay away from Braddon in no uncertain terms, and it is not hard to see why. At the state election, nearly six out of 10 Tasmanians voted for this side of the House. Labor failed to win Prosser, a campaign Ms White was out on every day. Ms White, to be frank, is the kiss of death to any campaign. I urge Ms White to go to Braddon because she will help my friend and former colleague, Brett Whiteley, make history by being the first government candidate to win a by-election in around 100 years. If Brett Whiteley wins that seat, it will not just be Mr Shorten's leadership in the spotlight, it will be Ms White's as well. Her appalling leadership has undermined the standing of her party on the north-west coast

We are coming up to the winter break but I do not think we will be seeing Ms White in Braddon as she tries to save her leadership, although I bet Mr O'Byrne is trying to push her up there.

GST - Report of the Productivity Commission

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.36 a.m.]

Your Government is today due to receive the final report of the Productivity Commission's review of GST. Can you confirm you have now received this report and, as the leader of this state, have you now received a briefing from the federal government on the commission's recommendations? If not, on what basis has your Government formed the view that the outcome of the GST review would be 'business as usual' for Tasmania, particularly in light of your own Treasury Estimates that equalising the distribution of GST as the average fiscal capacity of all states would cost the state hundreds of millions of dollars?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader for the question. No, we have not received a copy of the Productivity Commission's report. We will in due course and we will be briefed on it. It will then be for the federal government to determine what it does with the report. Our position has been very clear and the Commonwealth knows that we will not accept anything that disadvantages our state. We will again fight strongly to defend our state's share of the GST. We will not accept what has been previously considered by the Productivity Commission but we will accept the Prime Minister's guarantee that Tasmania will not be worse off. That is something we have been able to secure

through fighting hard for Tasmania, talking to our federal colleagues and ensuring Tasmanians' interests are best protected by the federal and state governments working together to deliver results.

It is a far cry from what federal Opposition leader, Bill Shorten, is proposing, which would damage Tasmania's interests, and it is a far cry from members opposite who, as we heard yesterday, have not even bothered to argue with their leader on behalf of our state.

We believe Tasmania is deserving of its fair share, that we will not be worse off as a result of any decisions made with the Productivity Commission, and we have received a guarantee from the Prime Minister of Australia no less, who is certainly a lot more believable than Bill Shorten.

Tourism Industry

Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for TOURISM, HOSPITALITY and EVENTS, Mr HODGMAN

[10.39 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on what is being done to make it easier for people to travel to and from Tasmania?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question and am delighted to be talking, with the greatest respect to our guests, about Tasmania's tourism industry as the best performing in the country. It is fuelling the growth in our economy which is also one of the best performing in the country. Confidence in our state has soared and that is driving investment which is also up.

Today, I am delighted that Virgin Australia is announcing an additional investment with a new direct air service between Hobart and Perth commencing in September of this year. We welcome this investment, the confidence in our state and the growth market from one of our major airlines.

Our five-year strategy Access 2020 includes a strong commitment to secure more frequent flights, more direct flights to drive visitation of high-yield visitors and into high-yield holiday markets to grow our business community and our social connectivity. This is a direct result of us delivering on that strategy. I acknowledge the efforts of Tourism Tasmania and particularly the director of Aviation and Access Development whose work with Virgin Australia has secured this new service. I also welcome and recognise the commitment by Virgin Australia to provide the only direct service between the two cities. The flights will provide more travel options for Tasmanians and will reduce travel time by up to three hours.

The service will operate three days per week on a year-round basis and in time for the spring school holidays. It will bring 54 000 direct seats into Tasmania's travel market. It will open up an important domestic market, which has previously been found difficult for those wanting to access our island home from the west. This new direct service and increased investment in marketing from Tourism Tasmania provides an opportunity to increase visitation and expenditure from the Western Australian market. The latest Visitor's Survey for the year indicated that we welcomed 51 800 visitors from Western Australia and we want to increase that over the coming years. This new service will certainly do that. It also presents a great opportunity for our primary producers and

exporters with time-sensitive and perishable products. They will now have faster connections into Western Australian markets.

Tourism Tasmania will provide marketing support and a cooperative marketing campaign with Virgin Australia to promote the launch of the service and encourage bookings from Perth residents. The new flights add to the extensive work that has already been done to improve air and sea access to our state. We have brought forward what would be a \$700 million investment into two new *Spirits* to increase passenger and freight capacity across Bass Strait. In just over two years 443 000 additional seats have flown into Hobart and Launceston airports. Key routes are operating at much higher loads meaning flights are often near full on peak days.

Tourism Tasmania is remaining ever vigilant to sustainably grow our airline services to the state and secure new direct routes. Through Tiger Air, we introduced direct seasonal services between Hobart and the Gold Coast last summer. We are expecting they will resume in October. Tourism Tasmania is working with Tiger Air to secure these flights into that very important market as well on a year-round basis.

In conclusion, Tasmania's visitor economy is certainly thriving. It is very strongly supported by this Government and we welcome Virgin Australia's commitment to help us take tourism to the next level.

Hobart Airport Roundabout - Upgrade

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.43 a.m.]

In early 2016, the Hobart Airport roundabout received support for a significant upgrade. In press release after press release, both the state and federal Liberal governments indicated that work would commence by the end of this year. In federal Estimates hearings recently, it was indicated that work may not commence until 2020 with a completion date in 2022, some six years after being announced.

At an Estimates hearing in Hobart last week, your Infrastructure minister, Mr Rockliff, indicated the work would not commence until mid-2019 at the earliest. Following that, last Friday, you made a commitment at a press conference that work would commence on this important infrastructure project by the end of this year.

Traffic congestion in the south-east is getting worse by the week and your Government is flip-flopping all over the place about when you will begin work to address the problem. When will work commence on the airport roundabout? This year, next year or the year after? Do you even have a clue?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, what we do have is a \$2.6 billion investment into our infrastructure in this Budget. It is a far cry from the standard of road networks when they were under the responsibility of a former minister for infrastructure, the very one who asks the question.

I am sure it was not a problem for the member who asked the question. When would the building programs that were committed to under that former government be delivered? There were not many of them. The very few that there were, including in his own electorate, were abandoned. Not the least our road networks and the now Health minister is grappling to deliver the biggest investment into important infrastructure in our hospital network. This had been promised by the former government - of which the member who asked the question was a member - and that had not even started either.

We expect this project will commence as soon as possible. Yes, work is underway. Yes, it is another one of the major upgrades that are occurring in our state as a result of a significant investment by this Government. It is a lot more than you ever delivered.

Mr O'BYRNE - Point of order. He has completed but we asked him a date and he does not know.

Mr HODGMAN - As soon as possible.

Bruny Island Ferry Services

Mr O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.46 a.m.]

Last week you signed a new contract with mainland firm SeaLink to operate the Bruny Island ferry for the next decade. The ferry provides the only link to mainland Tasmania for residents. It is one of the jewels in the crown for our tourism industry and it relies very heavily on this ferry service. The current service is under significant demand at peak times which is now virtually six months of the year.

The current vessel, the *Mirambeena*, is a publicly-owned asset and you have decided to sell this and therefore privatise the ferry. In the contract you have failed to mandate the vessels be built in Tasmania. You have decided to replace the *Mirambeena* which has a capacity of approximately 70 vehicles and the *Bowen* which has a capacity of 32 vehicles, a total of 100, with two smaller 36-vehicle ferries in the mistaken understanding that at peak time there are 30-minute sailings when in fact they run continuously at around 20-minute sailings. The new contract you have signed reduces overall capacity by a third.

You have also decided to implement a booking system expressly against the wishes of the local community. A recent meeting of the Bruny Island Advisory Committee passed a resolution advising you of this.

Why have you betrayed the residents of Bruny Island, sold out Tasmanian workers and short-changed the tourism industry?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question. When it comes to boats Labor has no credibility. Remember a police boat? Remember that?

I looked forward, in fact I welcomed participating in the announcement last week with SeaLink. It is an exciting opportunity for Bruny Island and Tasmania. One of the questions within your four-minute ramble was about local shipbuilding. Of course, SeaLink has built seven of their boats in Tasmania. Tasmania has a great opportunity to build and supply the new ferries for the Bruny Island service. I encourage the local member and the shadow minister for infrastructure to contact SeaLink. Have you contacted them? No, no, you have not, okay.

Madam SPEAKER - Through the Chair, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You have not contacted them. I encourage you to contact them and get a briefing from them as well so you can be better informed.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I thought this was 'be nice to Mr Rockliff week', but obviously I am mistaken. Please, discipline in the House. I do not think the Deputy Premier is finished.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I encourage you to be more informed, Mr O'Byrne, and not create politics with Bruny Island residents. I spent a very enjoyable day on Bruny Island about six or eight weeks ago. I got a good understanding of what Bruny Island residents want.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. What part of discipline in the House do you not get? Please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As a government, we understand the importance of the ferry service for Bruny Island residents, as well as the growing number of visitors and holiday-makers, carrying passengers, vehicles and freight. As the popularity of Bruny Island has grown so has the demand on the ferry and that is why the Government's focus has been to provide a ferry service that will best meet the future demands of all users.

Ms O'Byrne - But you are cutting capacity.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This service will enhance the capacity. SeaLink will build two new ferries worth more than \$10 million. The first will be delivered in the second half of next year. The second is due in the first half of 2021, after which the government-owned MV *Mirambeena* will be withdrawn from the service.

Tasmanian businesses will have excellent opportunity to be in the running to build the new ferries. Further, ferry maintenance will continue to be done locally, providing valuable work for local contractors. Until the new ferries arrive SeaLink will continue operating the MV *Mirambeena*. From September it will redeploy its own vessel the MV *Moongalba* from Queensland. That will provide better weather protection for vehicles than the existing second vessel. It will operate as required to support the service until the first new vessel is built and operational.

SeaLink is a highly experienced and proven operator in the field of vehicle and passenger ferries, serving a number of island communities around Australia. It will begin operating the service on Sunday, 23 September 2018. For the duration of the new contract Bruny Island will have two vessels dedicated to the service. Importantly, there will be no fare increase for Bruny Island

residents when SeaLink starts operations in September. Residents' fares will be maintained at or below annual CPI increases for the duration of the contract.

A new online booking system will be gradually introduced to provide travel certainty for all ferry users. SeaLink will ensure that the use of ferries is guaranteed for emergency services, school buses and regular service providers. A stand-by system will be available for all travel not pre-booked. From early July SeaLink will be engaging directly with the Bruny Island community, including local businesses and community groups, to discuss services it will be offering. SeaLink will work with the Government to ensure a seamless transition from the current service to the new operation and offer employment opportunities for existing staff. SeaLink will engage with the local community to get an understanding of any concerns they may have.

I am excited about the opportunity that these two new ferries will be built in Tasmania. SeaLink has built seven ferries in Tasmania. There will be some changes for the residents, with two new ferries and a different operator. The capacity will be increased.

North-West Tasmania - Health Services

Mr BROOKS question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.53 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on the work the Hodgman majority Liberal Government is doing in boosting health services in the north west to achieve a strong partnership with the Turnbull Coalition Government?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Mr Brooks for his excellent and important question. We work very closely with the Turnbull Government. We have great results for the whole of the state. None better than in the north-west, where we have rescued the Mersey with a record-breaking deal of \$730 million. This provides a return for the Mersey to the health system where it has always belonged.

We have a six-year \$757 million plan for Health. That is \$200 million more than Labor's six-year plan for Health, if you can generously call it that. It is all about providing more resources to build a better health system. Over the next six years we will open more beds, we will recruit more staff - more than the 630 we have already put on. We will build the facilities our system needs to expand capacity.

With growing demand we need to grow capacity. The majority Hodgman Liberal Government already has significant runs on the board - more than 600 more frontline staff than when we came to government. We have re-employed staff sacked by Labor. We have opened 120 new beds and treatment recliners across our health and hospital system. There is more to do and under our plan the north-west is a big winner.

We have a new ambulance station for Burnie, and for Latrobe. The tender for Latrobe ambulance station has recently been awarded, shock horror, to a private sector organisation. The Labor Party will not like that, but it has been awarded to a reputable Tasmanian builder, Fairbrother Pty Ltd, a proud Tasmanian company employing Tasmanian workers. This is a \$1.2 million project.

It will deliver an expansion and refurbishment for the station by the end of this year. Once finished it will enable garaging for a minimum of four ambulances - the current one is too small - as well as improving vehicle access and upgrading the training areas, lunch rooms and storage areas.

This Government increased paramedic resources in the Mersey area with an extra crew. This will all happen, I am pleased to tell you, on the existing Mersey site, which we now own. The hospital was secured by our deal with the Turnbull Government. Our governments worked very closely to deliver more funding and better outcomes for our system. I hope this relationship will be further boosted at the end of this month, where there is an important opportunity.

In the upcoming by-election, Braddon has a unique opportunity to back a candidate who can get results in a government. Brett Whiteley is the only one who can deliver. He is the only candidate who would have a seat in the government party room and can deliver on commitments. We are aware of some promises being made, but they are fake promises because they cannot be delivered on July 28. That is the difference with our candidate, Mr Whiteley. Just this morning *The Advocate* confirmed \$4.8 million of new funding to boost mental health services in the north-west. This funding is important, it is welcome, and it is more money for mental health nurses. It is what we need, more community-based support and more opportunities for Tasmanians living with mental health issues to access care and avoid hospitalisation.

That is a big contrast. We are sorry that the people of Braddon have to go through this process. It should not have happened. It should not have been dragged out like this. We all know that Justine Keay falsified her nomination to the Australian Electoral Commission. Everybody knows that and everybody knows that with the question mark she hung on way longer than she ought to have done. She chose not to be up-front with the electorate and instead strung it out much longer -

Time expired.

Medical Cannabis - Access

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.58 a.m.]

A survey of Australian doctors, reported in the *BMJ*, shows that two-thirds of patients have asked about accessing medicinal cannabis in the past three months, yet fewer than one in 10 GPs knew how to navigate the bureaucracy. More than 10 months after the so-called controlled access scheme started here, just six people have managed to be approved for the drug and another six to nine have applied but are still suffering on a waiting list.

The process of medicinal cannabis prescribing in Tasmania is a basket case. A person has to go to a GP, then a specialist, go on a list and attend the Royal Hobart Hospital's pharmacy. Doctors say they are overwhelmed with bureaucracy. People can only access medicinal cannabis for chronic epilepsy or end-of-life palliation, even though more doctors want it be available for types of pain relief. Bizarrely, it is easier to be prescribed an opiate derivative, despite all the known risks with that class of drugs. The Deputy Chief Pharmacist has said he thinks the Government is striking the right balance. Does not the name of the controlled access scheme tell us everything - that you are controlling access so tightly that it is not available to the hundreds of desperate and needy people who should be able to access this drug today?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am happy to receive the question, even though it comes from a member whose party has recently declared it wants to legalise cannabis for everyone, which is a recipe for absolute social disaster, destruction of families, the decline of mental health, and the ruination of lives. We will not be having a bar of it. I will also lump in the Labor Party on this because at last year's Labor Party state conference, the Labor Party adopted the Greens' platform on drug decriminalisation, which is a recipe for wrecking lives. That is where this question emanates from.

On the issue, this Government has helped six people, six families, who would have received nothing before the Government introduced our scheme. On behalf of those six families, I say to Dr Woodruff that is six lives that have been helped under a model -

Dr Woodruff - Listen to the doctors.

Mr FERGUSON - Thank you for the interjection; I will take that. This model starts with the family doctor. Our model puts the process first and foremost in the hands of the family doctor.

I note the research or the survey the member referred to. I am not familiar with that survey but I will say that our state Health department works very closely with GPs in Tasmania. We have needed to do this a number of times to ensure people are absolutely clear about how they can support a potential referral to access the controlled access scheme.

You may sneer that six people have received support, but not only have they received a legal prescription, we have even paid, unlike other states -

Dr Woodruff - Hundreds more.

Mr FERGUSON - If the member would listen, this is an important point. Other state schemes do not provide the actual product; we do. We pay for it, it is expensive but we are happy to do it, because we know it is clinician-led. I am not qualified -

Dr Woodruff - That is not the issue - it's not about the money, it's about the access.

Mr FERGUSON - You may be a doctor, Dr Woodruff, but I am not. I do not think you are medical doctor; neither of us are, so neither of us are qualified to decide whether a person should have access to cannabis for their health care needs. This Government has placed it in the hands of clinicians. I invite all members of this House to show more faith in Tasmanian clinicians to very carefully and judiciously write those prescriptions for the people who need it.

The only reason we are having this conversation is because we are dealing with a product that is not approved by the TGA. You should not have drawn reference to opiates because they are listed by the TGA. The Government wants to approach this compassionately on evidence and to ensure we do not cause harm to patients. It stands in stark contrast to the Greens', and it appears the Labor Party's, platform on this, which is open access to recreational drugs.

TABLED PAPERS

Estimates Committee B - Transcripts

[11.04 a.m.]

Mr BROOKS (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, I lay upon the Table of the House additional information provided to Estimates Committee B by the Minister for Energy, the Minister for Resources, the Minister for Building and Construction, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Women, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Disability Services and Community Development.

STATEMENT BY PREMIER

Integrity Commission Findings - Dismissal of Allegations Against Former Minister for Human Services

[11.05 a.m.]

Mr HODGMAN (Franklin - Premier) - Madam Speaker, I inform the House that the Integrity Commission's report has dismissed the allegations made by the Labor Party against the former minister for human services, Jacquie Petrusma, and her chief of staff. This was a politically motivated witch-hunt by Labor and a shameless attempt by them to use the Integrity Commission as a political weapon. The Integrity Commission has found the Labor Party's claims to be baseless.

It is not the first time, and even in these sittings we have had -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. This is very significant and I request that everyone listens to the answer.

Mr HODGMAN - We have had the Opposition even suggesting, wrongly, interference in the Integrity Commission's functions. In this case the Integrity Commission's report has found there was no interference or direction of the Commissioner for Children, as was claimed by Labor, there was no breach of the act, and there were no improper actions. Labor should stop attempting to use the Integrity Commission as a political plaything.

This side of the House respects the independence of the Integrity Commission and its investigation of issues. In this instance Labor's politically motivated claims have been found to be baseless. Despite the fact that Labor's claims have been found to be utterly without substance, their baseless claims damage reputations. This is a very poor reflection on the conduct of the Labor Party and the Leader of the Opposition, Rebecca White, and her colleague who publicly made the claims, the member for Elwick, Josh Willie. They should not only apologise to Mrs Petrusma and her former chief of staff for their baseless claims, they should also commit to no longer using the Integrity Commission as a political plaything.

[11.06 a.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, we have not had the opportunity to read the report by the Integrity Commission that has been tabled today. Obviously it is a very serious matter and for the Integrity Commission to have warranted an investigation into

the allegations made proves there were matters that required investigation. They were serious enough for the Integrity Commission to conduct an investigation.

Given that the report has only just been tabled and given the accusations made by the Premier and the fact that we have not been provided with the opportunity of a right of reply without the evidence before us, I seek the opportunity for a right of reply at a later date.

Madam SPEAKER - I am advised that the proper form of the House is by way of a motion.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Access to Terminations

[11.08 a.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass - Motion) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: Access to Terminations.

This is a significant issue of importance to the community because the will of this House has again been subverted by the Minister for Health, Mr Ferguson. In a debate in this House for the Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Bill in 2013 Mr Ferguson said:

I am pro-life and people may know that, may assume that and may prejudge that anyway. There are other things I could say about the grey areas that I see, recognise and understand. I do not think it is a simple matter of a person of the Christian faith or my own personal convictions. You see, a personal morality always colours these debates but it does not necessarily mean that I as an elected member would then seek to use those values and beliefs and impose them as a legislator.

The very clear reality is that since the termination clinic closed he has done exactly that; used those values and beliefs and imposed them as a legislator. He has done so by his deliberate neglect in failing to act when each of the three clinics closed under his watch and he did nothing. The reports he has provided suggest that the clinics should let the minister know if they are planning to close so it never happens again. They did let him know and he did nothing. He has done so through his misrepresentation of the effect of these closures when he claims that this is the same policy as that which existed under the previous government. When we have had three clinics close under his watch, he knows that the closures of these clinics had an impact. He knows the 2013 legislation was to increase access for women. I know that because he complained about us increasing access and removing barriers. In his 2013 contribution he said -

The truth of the matter is that the minister is seeking to greatly expand upon the existing provisions and to make them even more open.

I posit the question, is this the right step for our society to take?

Within a few months of the legislation, the government changed and the work to ensure access was not followed through under this minister's leadership. The reproductive health strategy that was started once the legislation was passed was abandoned under this minister's leadership.

He used his values and beliefs and imposed them as a legislator when he advised his federal counterparts that the services had been resumed. He did when he told Tasmanians that women simply need to contact their GP. He has when he failed to accept that patient travel assistance is not a response, it is not timely and is definitely not enough. He has when he allowed a change to the status of vulnerability for public access at the Royal Hobart Hospital, questions very few women could answer successfully, judgmental questions, shaming questions.

He has done it when in this parliament, he stood and said that women were making the choice to fly to Melbourne. He did it when he moved an amendment that prevented him from being compelled by this House to provide public access in public hospitals. He has when he ensured that his consultation process included a pro-life group so that the final recommendations could be watered down and he has done it again by announcing that there may be, if negotiations can be concluded, only a limited service in Hobart. Today in parliament, when given the choice, he would not commit to that being a weekly service.

We do not know how frequent it will be and how much it will cost. We do know that women will still have to navigate a system and travel. A service will only be available in Hobart and therefore women will still have to jump through those hoops to get their application approved to travel and make claims, retrospectively in most cases, to cover some of the costs. We do know that his comments in 2013, when he said 'that it does not necessarily mean that I, as an elected member, would then seek to use those values and beliefs and impose them as a legislator' are not true. He has done exactly that. He has actively pursued an outcome as minister, to give effect to his pro-life anti-choice beliefs. He must be so proud.

Who else could be proud? The Deputy Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, who in the 2013 debate said -

I have unashamedly been pro-choice in my support for women to be able to determine such a matter for themselves.

He demonstrated that by not voting for the decriminalisation legislation but by a very weak statement on the 2001 amendments. This legislation was passed through both Houses of parliament, seven months before I was elected. I was not a participant. Had I been, I undoubtedly would have voted for the legislation. In 2013 when he could have done something, he did nothing. When the Health minister spent the last months fighting against access for women, Mr Rockliff has again done nothing.

Premier Hodgman also talks up a big game. We saw it on the ABC - he did not remember if he was in the room. In 2013 he said -

In 2001 steps were taken to clarify the law and improve the regime for terminations for women which passed that parliament. Like Mr Rockliff, I believe I would also have voted for that legislation at that time if I were in that place.

Again, in 2013, he did nothing. He has talked lots and done nothing.

We have talked in this House about the range of issues that give licence to violence against women. One of the key elements of the research is that by removing agency from women, including providing and promoting barriers to reproductive health, we continue a culture that ends in the devaluing of women's decision-making and fundamental rights. This leads to violence, the evidence

is clear. We have talked about the NotAllMen movement. I have said, if you are not him but you stand by him and you give licence to his actions and you do not call him out and do not act to give women agency, then you are him. We cannot tell the difference.

Today and every day that women are denied access, are forced to jump through hoops, are sent to Melbourne, to keep a child they do not want or are forced to make unsafe abortion choices and you stand by him and you licence his actions and do not call him out and do not act to give women agency, then you are him. We cannot tell the difference.

Every member on that side of the House, when they stay silent, they give permission for this minister's behaviour and his actions and they are responsible. The standard you walk by is the standard you accept. They are placing barriers in front of women because they will not stand up to Mr Ferguson's personal views and the right wing of their party. They can call themselves progressive. They can say they are pro-choice, but if every moment that you could actually do something to give effect to the decisions of this House of 2001 and 2013, if every time you could use your position of power or influence to ensure that women are provided access, are not punished and are not shamed, and you fail to do so then you are not pro-choice. You are not preventing violence against women, you are him. You will be judged not by your stated intentions, but by your actions.

[11.15 a.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, here we go again. Ultimately this debate is about ensuring that there is equitable, fair and affordable access to a legal health procedure here in Tasmania. It is not right that Tasmanian women at one of the most emotional and difficult times in their lives are forced to fly interstate because they cannot access terminations in their own state. This is a health issue. We have an obligation to ensure that Tasmanian women can access a safe, affordable termination service in their own state.

This is not a debate about whether surgical terminations of pregnancies should be provided for in Tasmania. In 2013 we had that debate regarding removing terminations from the Criminal Code and treating it as a health procedure, as it should be. The Government make the argument policy has not changed, but circumstances have changed. This Government has done nothing until forced by this parliament to address that.

In 2013 we acknowledged that good health is essential for women to lead productive and fulfilling lives. We acknowledged the right of women to control all aspects of their health, including their fertility, as core to the personal empowerment of women and to their overall wellbeing. As a parliament, we recognised that there is no other area of health care or of reproductive health where women are denied the basic human right to make their own decisions about their own bodies and their own futures. In that parliament we voted to support the Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Bill and it became law in Tasmania.

We understand that even with good preventative initiatives not all unplanned pregnancies can be avoided. In addition, abortion is often medically indicated for wanted planned pregnancies that then become unviable due to severe foetal deformity or death in utero. A significant proportion of Australian women, around 25 per cent, undergo an abortion at some stage during their reproductive lives. Even with the best prevention there will always be a need for abortion services.

We also know that Australian women undergoing termination of pregnancies have higher rates of socio-economic disadvantage and partner violence than the general population. The loss of an

affordable and accessible termination service in Tasmania has placed many vulnerable women in an unenviable position where they either have to find \$2500 to have a termination in the private health system here in Tasmania, fly to Melbourne for a termination, or make another decision about their pregnancy, which potentially places their health and wellbeing at risk.

The Public Health Association of Australia states that publicly funded services should be available in all states and territories, along with other reproductive health services, especially for women experiencing financial disadvantage and limited access. I take this opportunity to share a story from a woman who contacted me just last week. I will read it, but I will not disclose her identity, of course -

As a woman who is currently living through the emotional and physical struggle of making the hardest decision of my life I felt I had no other option, but to voice my situation in the hope it can benefit someone else or future women placed in this position.

After hearing our current health minister, Michael Ferguson, speak regarding the matter has left me disgusted and ashamed, and an urgent need to speak out. To hear him state that this government funded procedure is easily accessible to most people is an absolute lie.

After finding out I was past the point of being able to receive a medical abortion I was questioned by my doctor to see if I fell into the category of receiving it through the government funding, the criteria being as follows:

- (1) Am I Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? I fail to see how this relates even remotely to the need to have government assistance and feel this is borderline racism and discrimination.
- (2) Does my partner physically abuse me? No, because I have a partner who supports me, I am punished financially.

[by the government, she means]

- (3) Am I mentally disabled?
- (4) Am I significantly financially vulnerable?

This woman responds:

I clear under 50k a year. I have a house mortgage, a loan, 1 year old child who goes to day care and I work 40 plus hours a week. I live pay cheque to pay cheque, but still the government does not see this as vulnerable.

She was ineligible for support.

So because I do not fall into this extremely narrow, not to mention absolutely ridiculous category, I am made to feel forced into having a child - and we wonder why postnatal depression is on the rise. For Michael Ferguson to say this criteria caters for the majority of people is absolutely ridiculous and goes to show how

extremely out of touch he is, which is worryingly scary for someone in that position. This has now left me with not only being out of pocket by \$2500, but also has left me to wait 3 weeks until I could receive the procedure due to the high demand, which has made an extremely emotional and physical decision a million times harder.

In 2018, in a country which prides itself on freedom of speech, where we are fighting to end gender pay gaps and the movement of #metoo, I am left to leave the decision of my body and my life in the hands of a middle aged man who has no idea about my life and my personal circumstances.

The competency of women as decision-makers with full agency of their bodies cannot be ignored. Sadly and distressingly it is being ignored by this Government. It is still men who hold the power in this parliament. Despite us having equal representation, we do not have equal power. It is still men - the minister, the Premier - who are making decisions on behalf of women, despite women being equally represented in this place. It is shameful and it has to change. We must have equality for women to access a legal reproductive health service in this state. Just last week I asked the Premier in Estimates a very straightforward question, 'Are you going to provide access to the public health system for women to access a termination?' His response, 'It is not a policy position at this time to do so'. Shame on him. Shame on the Minister for Health.

You are putting women, like the woman I shared the story of today, at extraordinary financial and emotional pain because you fail to provide access to an affordable and safe service in the Tasmanian public hospital system. There is no legitimate reason why you cannot do that. Today women have been told again by you that they have to wait to access a service. They feel judged, they feel shamed. They should not ever be made to feel that about a decision that is only theirs to make in consultation with their doctor. They should not be judged by the Health minister.

[11.22 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Health) - Madam Speaker, this is an important subject that the member for Bass has brought on. I begin my contribution by rejecting many of the assertions raised by both of the previous speakers, including by the Leader of the Opposition. She has attempted to bring into the parliament and attribute things to me that I have said that I believe do not exist and that the member will not be able to substantiate. I also reject the nastiness and prejudicial statements that are being uttered. Nobody on this side of the parliament is trying to shame anybody. As we saw during question time there is a lot of politics being played here.

As for the work that has been done and the advice that has now been duly tabled, as the Government committed to do, I do not like to see public servants being attacked in the way that I have now heard occurring. I do not like to see members of the Opposition attacking senior members of the public service who, in good faith, have brought forward the advice that was called for, which I committed to provide back to the House and which has been duly complied with.

Tasmanians who have listened to or read anything that has been uttered by Ms O'Byrne or Ms White should take it with a grain of salt because the record is not a very good one for the Labor Party in terms of being truthful. I also reject the attacks that have been made against a group that provides kindness and care to anyone who comes looking for it. Pregnancy Counselling and Support Tasmania is a wonderful organisation. I want to defend it and I want to invite the member opposite to respect it. It is mostly women, I believe, who run this service, out of care. They provide

counselling options and support women who have experienced an abortion and want support. That is a very good reason to take the politics out of that group and to instead support it.

Yesterday, in accordance with the motion that was agreed in this House, I brought forward the report from the secretary of the department of Health on the provision of surgical terminations in Tasmania. The secretary consulted with nearly 30 stakeholders in the short time frame. He should be commended for that process. Descriptions by members opposite that it was the minister's process and the minister's hand-selected - that is all junk, it is not right. You have falsely asserted things and in so doing you are criticising senior members of our public service. The secretary did that work and in the report concludes -

... the provision of adequate resourcing to deliver statewide surgical terminations in the public and/or private system is best provided through maintenance of the policy and funding position that has applied for over 10 years.

I have been minister for four of those 10 years. Ms O'Byrne, you were minister for four of those 10 years and Ms Giddings was minister for two of those 10 years. I have been minister for 40 per cent of those 10 years. The secretary is referring to the longstanding policy - the quizzical looks will not help you here - of successive governments where our public hospitals provide terminations in case of high clinical need to save the life of the mother or where there is severe foetal illness or damage. The private sector provides most surgical terminations under 14 weeks. The reasoning provided in the report is that most surgical terminations under 14 weeks can be safely carried out in a clinical setting away from a hospital environment. The report also says -

It is critical we ensure that hospital services are available for those with higher clinical needs, where they can be treated safely.

The report notes that -

... women may not wish to access these procedures in a busy public hospital ...
for ... reasons of privacy ...

In accordance with the report I support the notion that an appropriately licensed private provider should continue to be supported with PTAS to be provided for those travelling intrastate.

It is regrettable that we see nasty politicking being exercised by members opposite. While the Labor Party chooses to pinpoint individual positions as a reason for the Government's position, it is a longstanding government position, of this one, of that one, as to what is provided.

Ms White - It changed in 2013 when it was decriminalised. You know that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, you have had your opportunity.

Mr FERGUSON - You cannot sustain that. You have failed to sustain that, because during that debate there was no suggestion -

Ms White - Three private providers have shut during your Government. Circumstances have changed.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - No, the member who is interjecting will not speak over me. During that debate there was no suggestion of a change to that longstanding policy. You cannot sustain that argument. It is a convenient argument for you today.

Ms White - Circumstances have changed. There are fewer private providers and it has been removed from the Criminal Code.

Mr FERGUSON - I will agree - if you will just allow me to speak - that some circumstances have changed, in particular the disruption to the availability of a private provider is acknowledged. I have also used the word disruption, I have acknowledged that. I do it again, today. We also reject the assertion -

Ms White - Disruption? They are not here. They shut.

Mr FERGUSON - If I could just be listened to with courtesy, as I listened to you. I have acknowledged, and the Premier has acknowledged, that there has been a disruption to those services and the access to them -

Ms White - It is not like Airbnb, it is not like disruptive technology. It is the removal of the service.

Mr FERGUSON - I can see you do not want to listen to a different point of view, but I will continue. That is why the Government has provided additional supports. That is why the Government has provided that interim arrangement for patient transport. It is not that we think that is the answer. It is not.

I do not agree with the shaming claim that has been made, which is wrong, because the system is there to support people.

Ms White - I shared a story of a woman.

Mr FERGUSON - You should not then assert that on the Government as to the purpose. We have been trying to support people -

Ms White - That is how she feels. She feels ashamed.

Mr FERGUSON - I recognise - if you could just allow a different point of view - the Government is here to support people. It is wrong that you continue to assert these things in a very personal, wrong way when the Government's attitude on this has been well expressed. We understand that a provider has reached an in-principle agreement and is going to start a service in October. We invite the member's opposite to be more respectful about that service and pregnancy counselling -

Time expired.

[11.29 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, this is a very important subject for us to be debating. It has been - it always will be - but particularly since the private service closed in December last year. I have listened very carefully to the debate, as I do on this issue, and I am going to say something a bit controversial here. I believe both sides of this

debate are doing their best within the confines of the situation we are in, because I have not seen a department act so quickly as it did following the parliament's decision to direct the minister to ask his department to consult with stakeholders and provide advice. That was not more than a month ago and we have before us now some advice which is hard to criticise in its substance. If we acknowledge that in the best of worlds women would have access to safe, surgical terminations in the public system, and that is a question of women's human rights, at the moment we are not operating in the best of all worlds. I do not think this comes down to the minister's personal ideology, to be honest.

I went back and found a few words of the minister from 2005, in the federal parliament debate when young Australian man, Nguyen Tuong Van, was executed. It was a debate over the abortion pill RU486 and Mr Ferguson said it was breathtaking hypocrisy for some people in the Australian Parliament to be fighting to save one young man's life while at the same time fighting for a drug which will allow the death penalty to be imposed on unborn babies. So you can understand, minister, why the women on that side of the House question your own personal views in relation to the policy decisions that have been made and the response to the fact that there are numerous barriers to Tasmanian women accessing safe, affordable terminations in Tasmania. There is a suspicion, minister, about what is inside your value set and how that might influence the application of policy and services, but I cannot find any evidence of that in the department's advice, which I have read and read again in order to try to understand what the options are here.

It is very clear that Tasmanian women who find themselves in that situation right now have extremely limited options. We are saying to them, until at least October, either you pay \$2500 for a very limited service or get on a plane to Melbourne, away from your family, friends and support network, or to Sydney. That is the situation we have been in in Tasmania since December 2017. It is our strong position that access to surgical terminations should be publicly funded and available in the public system, but we are not in that space here right now. We will be watching the minister's conduct very closely because there is now an understanding in the community that there will be accessible and affordable service available to Tasmanian women in October this year. For women who live on the north-west coast there will be little comfort in that because it still means travelling, but that is the situation we appear to be in.

I acknowledge the frustrations of Ms O'Byrne, who has been the most fierce and effective advocate of women's right to choose in this parliament since Judy Jackson and Fran Bladel. It is because of Ms O'Byrne's tenacity and commitment that access to terminations is now legal in Tasmania; it is decriminalised. This is an evolution of policy and services and we need to move towards the time when there are not these barriers to women.

I suggest that in the first instance the minister have a look at the testimony from Ms White's constituent and at those criteria because they would seem to me to be designed to lock women out of accessing the public system under most circumstances, and that is not acceptable.

Mr Ferguson - It has been misrepresented today and I can give you further information.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. I also urge you, minister, to have a look at those criteria because that set of questions the woman in that situation was asked are inappropriate. They are questions that establish barriers to access in the public system and at the very least they need to be examined because it should not be that difficult. Here we have someone who is obviously in a very stressful situation, on a low income and in a state of psychological pain, who clearly should be able to access a surgical termination in the public system in Tasmania but who, because of the criteria which

presumably have been in place for some time, cannot do that. On behalf of the Greens I extend my empathy to that Tasmanian woman.

I know this will disappoint Ms White and Ms O'Byrne but right now I am not prepared to get into a froth over this because it is such a sensitive matter. We have to be very careful when we are talking about this subject, given the deeply held views in this Chamber but, more importantly, the situation Tasmanian women are in right now, so we need to be very careful about the language we are using.

We need to acknowledge the barriers. Cost is a barrier, travel is a barrier, poverty is a barrier, lack of access to contraception is a barrier, lack of effective sex education in schools is a barrier, and this is something we need to keep working towards so that the day comes when access to these medical procedures is available in the public system, because public hospitals are not just about saving lives but there are circumstances where a surgical termination will save a woman's life.

[11.36 a.m.]

Ms COURTNEY (Bass - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Denison; I enjoyed listening to her contribution.

Yesterday, in accordance with a motion passed in this House, the Minister for Health tabled a report from the secretary of the department of Health on the provision of surgical terminations in Tasmania. I note and repeat what the minister outlined in that the secretary consulted with nearly 30 stakeholders in the short time frame and concluded that the provision of adequate resourcing to deliver statewide surgical terminations in the public and/or private system is best provided through maintenance of the policy and funding position that has applied for 10 years.

The secretary was referring to the longstanding policy of successive governments, where our public hospitals provide terminations in case of high clinical need to save the life of the mother, or where there is severe foetal illness or damage, and the private sector provides most surgical terminations under 14 weeks. The reasoning provided in the report is that most surgical terminations under 14 weeks can be safely carried out in a clinical setting away from a hospital environment. Further, the report notes, it is critical we ensure that hospital services are available for those with high clinical needs where they can be treated safely.

There is also a matter of choice. The report notes that women may not wish to access these procedures in busy public hospitals for reasons of privacy and in accordance with the report, that an appropriately licensed private provider should continue to be supported, with PTAS to be provided for those travelling intrastate.

Further to the secretary's report. in the consideration of feedback, a number of principles were outlined that emerged from the consultation that were consistent as being necessary for safe, effective and accessible surgical termination of pregnancy services in Tasmania. I want to outline these because I found them really interesting -

Patient-Centred - services are shaped around the health needs of individual patients, their families and communities.

Equitable - equitable access to essential services for women recognising women as competent and conscientious decision makers and recognising a women's right to exercise self-determination, sexual and reproductive freedom and sexual equality.

Accessible - equitable access to services, regardless of geographic location, where possible minimising the need for patients to travel for services.

Affordable - affordable services for all women regardless of their socioeconomic status.

Timely - access to services is timely minimising restriction of termination options as the gestation period advances.

Safe - procedures are provided by appropriately qualified and trained medical staff in suitable premises, safeguarding women's health and reducing mortality and morbidity as a consequence of unsafe and illegal termination.

Appropriate - by the right person, in the right place, at the right time for better health outcomes for the community. Data about numbers of terminations is collected.

Transparent - information about what services are available in the public system, referral pathways and eligibility criteria for access is provided by the Tasmanian Health Service to both referrers and the public.

Holistic - termination services are considered within a broader sexual and reproductive health framework, including education and health promotion, testing, counselling, acute review and post procedure follow-up and appropriate contraceptive services.

Targeted - public health services are a scarce resource, meaning that services are limited. This requires targeting of services to the most vulnerable patients, based on clinical assessment.

Consistent - services are consistent with the current Tasmanian law, the Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Act 2013; and

Sustainable - recognition that both public and private health providers have a role to play in the provision of services as One Health System.

With regard to what has been proposed and has been happening, the Government has made available the PTAS, Patient Travel Assistance Scheme. I was pleased yesterday when the department of Health announced it had reached an in-principle five-year agreement for a new private provider to deliver low-cost surgical termination of pregnancy services in Tasmania.

I reflect that it was disingenuous of the Leader of the Opposition in her contribution to somehow suggest that the debate we had that led to this report being produced was the catalyst for this to happen. A number of members on this side, including myself at a number of media events, have been on the record saying the Government was in discussions and negotiations with providers. That has been over a number of months. I have to check my records for the dates but it is disingenuous to say that the Government and the Minister for Health were sitting on their hands with regard to this. There were active discussions and negotiations underway. Not being privy to those I do not know the details, but I was advised of those many weeks, if not months ago. I made that publicly available, as did other members of the Liberal Party when questioned on that.

I put it on the record that the Minister for Health does understand the importance of this topic and its seriousness. I acknowledge the range of views that there are. I wanted to make sure that was noted.

The service will commence by October, contingent on the finalisation of the terms of agreement and licensing and accreditation requirements.

It is important to note that this is not a simple thing that needs to be established and it takes time to conduct negotiations both in the lead-up to the in-principle agreement and in terms of the provision of these services. This is a challenging area. There are a range of legislative requirements that will necessarily need to be met.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

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

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

Reports of Estimates Committees

In Committee

Resumed from 3 July 2018 (page 116)

DIVISIONS 4, 7 and 8 -

(Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Minister for Health, Minister for Science and Technology)

[11.44 a.m.]

Ms WHITE - Mr Chair, I had the opportunity to sit across from the minister for most of the output group examining Health. It was six hours; I was there for four. Given that it was scheduled at the same time that the Premier was in the other committee I was not able to sit across from the Health minister the entire time but we did have an exchange covering a number of different areas that are covered in dot points.

One of the matters that I will continue to place on the record as of concern to the Labor Party remains the long waits for patients in our emergency departments. We discussed this with the minister, particularly looking at the performance data in the budget papers which demonstrates that we are not meeting our targets. We are not meeting our clinically recommended time frames for when patients presenting to the emergency department should be seen. There is a nationally agreed time frame for all patients to be seen within four hours. Unfortunately, the budget papers show the figures are going in the wrong direction, both in performance data for actuals for last year and the year to date for the financial year just gone.

The minister argues that was due largely to a very bad flu season last year. We all recognise that it was a very bad flu season last year. It was a problem that states dealt with right across Australia. It was not for a want of warning. The minister was told in the lead-up to flu season last year that he needed to have a winter flu plan; that he needed to provide additional capacity in our hospitals to cope with the presentations that would be received at the emergency departments. They fell on deaf ears.

You just have to look back at press releases issued by the ANMF, the AMA, the RHH Medical Staff Association in the months leading up to winter last year to see how concerned they were about

the lack of action taken by the minister. Here we are again, it is winter again, and people still ramped at our hospitals. Ambulances ramped at the Royal Hobart Hospital, the Launceston General Hospital, and the North West Regional Hospital; patients waiting for hours and hours in the emergency department and the flu season has not really started to take effect yet.

I remain concerned about the provision of care to people seeking treatment in our health system this winter and whether they are going to access timely care. I fail to see how the Government is going to meet the targets they have set for themselves because they have failed to meet them every year they have been in office. More concerning than that, they have gone backwards when it comes to meeting their emergency department targets and the performance information in the budget paper proves that.

On Monday this week, there were 12 admitted mental health patients waiting in the Royal Hobart Hospital Emergency Department who could not get a bed in the hospital. The emergency department is the worst possible place for someone who is suffering mental ill health to be waiting.

We had the story revealed over the weekend of a young boy waiting in the Launceston General Hospital Emergency Department for 90 hours. I believe he was 11 years old. That is an unsuitable place for a young person to be waiting for appropriate care and had it not come to the attention of the media I wonder how many more hours that young boy might have waited.

It is not the fault of the staff. They are doing the best they can possibly do. They are absolutely stretched trying to cope with the demands that they are facing. We have the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation conducting industrial action as we speak. They are holding vigils today and every day outside the Launceston General Hospital to highlight the concerns that they have for the patients that they care for and calling on the Government to do more.

They have been forced to take industrial action because the Government has ignored their concerns. They have been now seeking to find a resolution to those concerns for a number of months, providing a number of solutions for the minister to address the problems that they are facing at the Launceston General Hospital. It has become so bad that every single day they are now holding silent vigils outside the hospital in protest over the situation that they are dealing with as staff.

We have elective surgery waiting lists blowing out again; outpatient waiting lists blowing out again. We all expected this would happen given that the minister received a windfall from the federal government to help tackle the waiting list for elective surgery in Tasmania. That money ran out and what we saw was the Government announce in Braddon, surprisingly - I say that cynically of course because obviously everything is getting announced in Braddon until the by-election. They were announcing more money for elective surgery, with \$20 million being brought forward, but brought forward from where, because it certainly was not an election commitment that the Government took to the people of Tasmania? They made no commitments about additional resourcing for elective surgery, but it is a recognition of the fact that the waiting list is continuing to balloon and patients are waiting extremely long periods of time to access the services and surgery they need.

I had the opportunity to sit down with a wonderful gentleman in Devonport, Mr Theo Stolp, who has been waiting over a year now for the surgery he needs. He is on opioid medication that has been prescribed to assist him with the pain and it is having a very debilitating impact on his quality of life. This is a matter that has been raised with the minister directly, both by myself and Justine Keay, the Labor candidate for Braddon in the federal by-election, and it has been raised

through the media, but he remains waiting for access to the surgery he needs to improve his quality of life. He is not alone. We know there are thousands of people on the gastroenterology waiting list for a colonoscopy or endoscopy procedure at one of our public hospitals. The outpatient waiting list for that specialist category is incredibly concerning because we know that early detection of cancer is the best way to provide appropriate treatment, not just to improve the person's quality of life but to take pressure off the health system because you do not have the costs of much more intensive acute intervention further down the track if matters like that are addressed appropriately when they are first detected.

The minister refused to provide details around the escalation protocols in place across the major hospitals and he refused to detail how many times the Royal Hobart Hospital had gone to level 4 and how many times the Launceston General Hospital had gone to level 3, which I find extraordinary. He also refused to provide details about the recruitment of the new staff he has promised to deliver in the next term, and refused to provide details about how many additional nurses, allied health professionals and doctors would be brought online every year to increase the capacity of the workforce. He argued in Estimates that he would not do that because, 'Ms White, you would just politicise it.'

Interestingly, in the Education Estimates the Education minister had no hesitation in providing a breakdown of his recruitment targets for every year, commensurate with the election promises that were taken to the people in March. The Education minister has a much more transparent and honest approach to his portfolio than the Minister for Health. The Education minister had no hesitation in sharing with us how many teachers he thought would be recruited every year. Why can't the Minister for Health do that, given that presumably he would be able to detail how much of the budget each year would go to recruitment for staff? If he has not allocated money in the budget for recruitment of those staff, can we really believe him when he says he is going to recruit any additional staff whatsoever? He certainly was too scared to share with us how many staff would be recruited each year to increase the workforce and the capacity of our health system to provide the care to Tasmanians who we know are desperately in need of it.

We asked questions around the targets to be met by the Government in relation to the first 100 days of office. One of the key concerns that has been raised with the minister now for over a year has been the governance arrangements of the Tasmanian health system. The changes were brought into effect when parliament resumed this year with legislation that started to be given effect from 1 July, just a couple of days ago. In the first 100 days of office, the Government promised to provide a new organisational structure detailing the governance framework for the new health system management, and also promised that at every hospital there would be local managers in place. The minister failed to meet that target that he set himself.

He also failed to commence construction on the 10 new beds at Mistral Place that were promised. The Chief Psychiatrist was brought to the table to provide an explanation on progress to meet that target by the 100-day time frame and essentially told the committee it was much more complicated than that and it seemed unlikely to the committee, certainly from my interpretation of the response provided by the Chief Psychiatrist, that there would be progress made on those 10 additional mental health beds at Mistral Place any time soon. I hope the minister can provide an update today around when the bricks-and-mortar construction will start to take place so we can have the 10 new mental health beds he promised up and running, when they will be commissioned and when patients can start to use them, because in holding the Government to account for their own time frames and targets they set themselves, those are areas they have failed in.

We also spoke about access to reproductive health services and it will be no surprise to the parliament to hear that we inquired on behalf of women everywhere on what progress had been made by the minister to provide access to reproductive health services and surgical terminations of pregnancy either in the private system or in the public hospital system in Tasmania. There can be no doubt in anybody's mind that Labor's preference is for that service to be provided in the public health system and there should be no barrier to the Government to provide that service.

Just as a little refresher in history, given that the minister likes to do that for us so regularly, it was not until 2013 that this parliament decriminalised terminations of pregnancy in Tasmania. Prior to that it was in the Criminal Code. There was uncertainty in the medical profession about whether they could provide that service in the public health system without falling foul of that provision because it was in the Criminal Code. We removed it from the Criminal Code in 2013, giving certainty to medical professionals that they could provide surgical terminations of pregnancy without fear of criminal retribution. It is a health procedure and needs to be treated as a health matter, not a criminal justice matter, which is why we removed it from the Criminal Code.

What changed in 2013? The policy settings changed significantly because we recognised terminations of pregnancy to be a health matter and particularly given that 25 per cent of women in Australia at some point in their life have a termination, it is not something to be ashamed of. It might be regarded as a sensitive issue by some people, but I regard it as a health procedure like any other, as do most women I know. They do not want to feel ashamed for talking about access to a service that should be provided to them in the public health system, but that is how they are being made to feel right now by this Government.

In March 2014 we had a new government come in, a conservative, right-wing, Liberal government with a spineless premier unable to stand up to a Health minister who ultimately has made the decision not to make it more accessible in Tasmania and has stood idly by while three private providers have closed their doors. He has done nothing to address the fact that there is no longer a safe, affordable and accessible pregnancy termination service available in Tasmania.

It is only because this parliament put forward a motion, that was then amended by the Government and supported by the parliament, calling on the Government to come back to this place with a framework around how they are going to provide services to women that we are even in a position today to have a debate around those recommendations provided by the secretary. That would not have happened had it not been for the debate in this parliament and the women in this parliament standing up on behalf of other women. I am distressed by the fact that despite having equality of representation in this place we still do not have equality of decision-making power. It is still the men who are making decisions on behalf of women when it comes to our reproductive health rights.

We spoke about accreditation of our hospitals, particularly the Launceston General Hospital which has accreditation until September this year but is still working towards meeting 10 areas that the minister would not outline specifically, but we know there are 10 areas that the LGH is continuing to work towards meeting in order to retain its accreditation in September. We had hoped the minister could provide further details to the committee about those areas, because it is in the public interest.

We also spoke about training accreditation that has been lost under this minister: training accreditation for psychiatric medicine at the Royal Hobart Hospital, training accreditation for emergency medicine at the Launceston General Hospital, training accreditation for physician

medicine at the Launceston General Hospital. This is training accreditation that impacts on the reputation of those hospitals as training providers. They are training hospitals. We are proud of the links they have with our university to provide opportunities for Tasmanians to undertake training in those areas. It gives us the ability to recruit the best and the brightest to work in our health system.

The fact that this minister has lost training accreditation for not just one but three areas is a disgrace. He should be ashamed. When asked about this during the Estimates process, because it affects our ability to deliver services for all Tasmanians, he said that his advice to the department was to get it back. We asked him what he was doing, where they had failed and how he was going to support the staff and the service to return accreditation to those disciplines. He said it was not a matter for him, it was operational. His advice to the department was just to get it back. It may be the case, minister, but how are they supposed to do that without being properly resourced and supported by you?

Mr Ferguson - Do you know it is Sleep Awareness Week this week?

Ms WHITE - Sleep Awareness Week, is it?

Mr Ferguson - You want to get a good night's sleep and then tell the truth.

Ms WHITE - I need to tell the truth? You are going to lecture me about honesty? This is the minister who could not give answers in Estimates because he did not want to. Not because there was not information available for him to share. This is the minister who, despite a coroner's report saying very clearly that a man died at the Royal Hobart Hospital because of the lack of beds, has failed to reverse the cuts he made to the number of acute mental health beds at the hospital. How do you sleep at night, minister? You ask me about how I sleep at night - I do not know how you sleep at night. This is a minister who denies access for women to affordable, accessible, safe reproductive health services in their own state. I will not be lectured by you, minister, on honesty -

Mr Ferguson - No, you just do not want to tell truthful representations about -

Mr CHAIRMAN - Order. Interjections will cease.

Ms WHITE - or integrity. I am pleased I am not you. I would hate to be you. I am so pleased that I am nothing like you.

Mr Chairman, we spoke about medicinal cannabis and access to that through the Controlled Access Scheme. Since it began last year, just six people, six Tasmanians, have been able to access medicinal cannabis under this Government. It was not until early 2014 that there were moves underway to try to provide access. Again, what changed? The government changed. We have a conservative, right-wing Liberal Government that is dead against providing compassionate access to medicinal cannabis to people who are in pain and unwell.

The minister is in denial regarding the struggles our health system is facing, the crisis that our health system continues to be in, the chronic underfunding of health services and the fact that every year we come back into this place in February or in March usually providing additional funding to Health because it has been chronically underfunded. Every single budget. I expect to be back here in March next year with another RAF coming through the parliament providing more money for Health. It has been chronically underfunded by this minister every single year. The people who

suffer are the people of Tasmania - the patients who are waiting to get access through our emergency departments, the patients waiting on the outpatient waiting list. The patients like Theo Stolp, waiting in pain, medicated up to his eyeballs because he is in so much pain it is affecting his quality of life. Patients like Theo who are let down by you. Women like the woman whose story I shared earlier today who cannot access reproductive health services in her own state unless it comes at extraordinary cost. Women who feel judged by you and ashamed to have you as their Health minister.

This output group was unhelpful in eliciting detailed information from this minister. Unsurprising, given his performance over the past four years. He is patronising, arrogant and he fails to understand the significant and important role he has to provide health care to all Tasmanians. He has failed to be honest.

Time expired.

[12.05 p.m.]

Dr BROAD - I rise to discuss Estimates, especially in the areas of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. It was a different experience at Estimates compared to last year. Last year the Estimates process was informative. I have been critical of the previous minister for infrastructure, Mr Hidding. However, during the Estimates process Mr Hidding would go out of his way to answer questions. Even when there were interruptions via interjections, instead of using those as a means of not answering questions, he would endeavour to continue with the discussion and try to provide answers to the best of his ability.

Police, Fire and Emergency Management was a completely different experience. The minister did not want to answer questions and the answers he did give were laced with insults and value judgments. It was an unpleasant experience because of that.

The role of Opposition is to ask questions, to delve deeply, to try to get a better understanding of the Budget and government policy. Every answer had some form of snide comment and insult. That was an absolute disgrace. None of the other ministers I sat across from acted in that manner. I find that an indictment on the minister.

We discussed a number of things. We discussed firearms initially and whether the Liberal policy that was taken to the election by former minister Rene Hidding breaches the National Firearms Agreement. We heard the standard response. The Government insisted they would not do anything that breached the National Firearms Agreement, when their policy did exactly that, especially in two key areas. It was the extension of licences from five years to 10 years, which is expressly against the National Firearms Agreement. Licences can only be issued for up to five years and no more, yet the Liberal policy was for 10 years. That is a prima facie case for breaching the National Firearms Agreement.

The excuse that everything in their policy had been done by other states does not hold water. The discussion is about the policy that was taken to the election by the Liberals and it was a clear breach of the National Firearms Agreement. The addition of Category E to the firearms regulations in Tasmania is a clear breach of the National Firearms Agreement. Category E is designed as a back door access to semiautomatic machine guns and pump action shotguns and so on to people who otherwise would not have access. That is also a clear breach of the National Firearms Agreement. These things are inarguable.

The minister likes to say our policy was exactly the same. That could not be further from the truth, which is demonstrated by Gun Control Australia saying in an ABC report that our policy does not breach the National Firearms Agreement. The group also said the Liberal policy is a clear breach of the National Firearms Agreement. On that matter, I rest my case.

The other issue delved into was, did the Government ask the honourable Ivan Dean, in the upper House, to set up an inquiry? The minister admitted it, when asked if he discussed the Liberal policy with the member before the inquiry was set up. He basically coached it in, he had numerous discussions with numerous people. He did not deny that he had discussions with the member and did not deny that the Government had asked the member to set up the inquiry. We saw the Government with massive issues that they found themselves with after the election, having to deal with a mess about a clear breach of the National Firearms Agreement. They were looking to back-pedal in any way they could. This inquiry is definitely one way for that to happen.

We also saw issues around the so-called loyalty payment, the income top-up recently paid to police officers. In the past before my time, government departments were made the offer of either accepting a pay freeze or sacking staff. Instead of having to sack people, the police took along the pay freeze.

Mr Ferguson - Are you trying to mop up?

Mr CHAIRMAN - Order.

Dr BROAD - Here we go. The department did a deal with the Government about increasing police numbers but the trade-off was that they accepted a pay freeze. They were the only people who did accept a pay freeze. Other departments, other sectors, the minister has some control of including Health, did not accept a pay freeze and as a result had to sack up to 500 people to stay within their budget.

The police subsequently received the 2 per cent pay rise that the others received, but the trade-off that originally resulted in other departments having to sack people, that deal had been altered because the police received a loyalty payment in this Budget which resulted in a 4 per cent pay increase. The police department in its budget has had that original deal topped up. Other departments that were forced to sack people have not had such an arrangement. A whole bunch of value judgments and laced comments resulted from that.

We talked about step-down provisions which only apply to police. We have a situation where frontline workers such as ambulance, paramedics, firefighters, et cetera, do not receive that same consideration of step-down payments. When querying that inconsistency across the minister's own portfolios, the only response that we received was, 'that was our election promise'. There was no justification for the difference in treatment between different sections of his own departments, including Health. It was justified simply as 'that was our election promise'. Apparently \$150 000 a year is going to be enough to do that.

When we looked into the recruitment of police across the forward Estimates, the rate of pay for police is \$115 000. That is the amount of money they are accounting for with payments for each individual police officer. This year, there is no doubt that would be an accurate assessment. The issue in the Budget is that it was not indexed at 2 per cent across the forward Estimates. The assumption is that the 2 per cent pay policy is in place. If so, that \$115 000 should have increased by 2 per cent every year. By the time you get to the end of the forward Estimates, the result is a

\$700 000 black hole in the budget that is not accounted for and we received absolutely no justification for that obvious accounting error. That was an issue.

We also talked about the proposed insignia laws which are yet to come to this place and the complete misconception that has been propagated by the Government that Tasmania is the last place to act on insignia in public places. That could not be further from the truth. The assistant police commissioner, when he was referred to by the minister confirmed that the only place in Australia where there are public laws against displays of motorcycle gang insignia, or whatever you want to call it, is Queensland. So we would not be the last place to act on this, we would be the second. That was something that was -

Mr Ferguson - Are you against it or not?

Dr BROAD - When you say that everywhere else has something and it is not true - that certainly was made very clear by the assistant commissioner in his response. I am not making any judgments about it. All I am saying is the claims -

CHAIR - Time has expired.

[12.15 p.m.]

Mr BROOKS - I welcome the opportunity to talk on the Estimates Committee B and the departments of Health, and Police, Fire and Emergency Management and the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

In particular I congratulate my honourable good friend and colleague, Michael Ferguson, who as the Health minister has delivered an unprecedented improvement and funding increase for health because of his hard work and relationships with the professionals that work in the health system. I find it offensive that the member for Braddon, Dr Broad, complains about the fact that we are putting record investments into health -

Dr Broad - I did not talk about health.

Mr BROOKS - and actually putting more police on the street. Shame on you, Dr Broad, for not even talking about health because apparently it is the number one priority for the so-called opposition.

Dr Broad - I am responsible for Police, Fire and Emergency Management so I talked about my own portfolio. Give me half an hour and maybe I will get to Health.

Mr BROOKS - I apologise to you, Dr Broad. I sincerely apologise that health is not your problem. Okay, I apologise for that.

Dr Broad - How can you say stuff like that? Seriously.

Mr BROOKS - I apologise, it is not your problem, not your responsibility, you do not care about health. I will talk about police because maybe you care about that.

Dr Broad - I get 10 minutes.

CHAIR - Order.

Mr BROOKS - Police - 125 more police. That is a great outcome. Mr O'Byrne, the former failed minister, who was sacked by the community not only when the government was thrown out but he was thrown out of the parliament by the people, he sacked police. In his usual weasel word, snake oil salesman way, he says, 'I did not sack any police'. The simple answer is there were fewer police in the Tasmanian police service when he left the portfolio than when he came in. He reduced police by 108. He is twitchy about being Labor and sacking them, but he reduced the police by 108 and we restored it and to the minister's credit - through our hard policy work - he has increased the numbers by a further 125 this Budget over forward Estimates.

I congratulate the minister for tabling the document that outlined the police recruitment courses. For young Tasmanians and people who are looking for a career in the police service they are able to see on the horizon what their long-term opportunities may be in applying for the police service. They do a fantastic job. They do a tremendous job in trying circumstances and dealing with what Tasmania talks about - the 2 per centers of the community - and ensuring that the laws of Tasmania are enforced. I congratulate the minister for delivering more police, and also for being so forthcoming with information on when these courses are going to take place. This enables people to plan their careers or for those who are leaving school or at uni, they can now have a bit of plan. That is great. It is a positive step and it is the difference between a government that listens and understands what the community wants and an opposition that is too lazy to ask a sensible question. All they want is a headline and to pull political stunts.

Mr Chairman, they are now complaining that we are giving police an additional financial benefit because they were willing to forgo a pay increase because of the circumstances of the Tasmanian budget left by the disastrous Labor-Greens opposition. It was a real show of not only the maturity of the Tasmania Police service, but it goes to show the calibre of our Tasmanian police that their preference was to work with their existing numbers because they understood the budget restraints we were under and took a personal sacrifice. Now that is being restored to a point, yet the Opposition is complaining about that too and criticising the police for that. It is outrageous and offensive. No wonder they are hanging their heads in shame, because it is disgusting.

Witness their hysteria over the sensible changes to the firearms laws we have suggested. They are based on making it more practical and workable for the community, for law-abiding firearms users. I know those opposite like to demonise people who have firearms and those who may want to go the Olympics for shooting or anything like that. They have made relentless attacks on legitimate firearms owners and now their coalition partners, the Greens, are again complaining about our sensible reforms. We welcome the inquiry by the upper House. The tinfoil hat brigade and the conspiracy theory of Dr Broad that there was somehow some collusion is offensive and also ridiculous.

We welcome the Legislative Council inquiry because it will allow the facts to be put on the table as to why these reforms are being implemented, what they will do in a practical sense, and the fact that they will not endanger the community in any way. That is a good thing, because it puts on the record the facts, whereas the hysteria that Labor and the Greens carry on with about this is just ridiculous.

I stand by my colleagues and the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management in our sensible reform and improvements of the Firearms Act. We tried to bring in mandatory sentencing for those who were caught committing crimes with a stolen firearm, and who voted against that? The lefties, the greenie anti-everything Labor brigade over there that do not like anything voted against that, but now they do not like sensible changes to firearm requirements that are built on

practical requirements. They are not going to create a danger to society; it is ridiculous to say that. It just shows they are still a fully owned subsidiary of the Greens movements and the anti-everything brigade.

What I found really interesting in this Estimates was the wonderful opportunity for Tasmanians to work in the health service we are bringing in with the additional funding. I believe it is \$757 million in additional funding, but what did we hear from those opposite? They whinged and complained about it and that is because they have no real understanding how this stuff works. You cannot find 1200 professional nurses and doctors and medical specialists in six months. It is going to take some time to implement and do it properly. People are sick and tired of having a short-term political debate on policies. We have come up with serious money, not Monopoly money, a long term that delivers a better outcome and all they do is whinge about it.

Time expired.

[12.25 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE - I would like to say that that contribution was erudite and impressive but *Hansard* does not record that kind of sarcasm. It was the standard political speak that we got from the previous speaker, which is disappointing, but there you go.

I want to turn to some of the matters that were raised during the minister's time in front of the Estimates committee. It was an interesting process. After my questions I am still a little unsure as to where the minister's responsibility fits. The minister in his opening statements last year said that his priority was twofold: one, government IT within government and two, external industry support. He talked a little bit about external industry support but I am still not quite clear and I know the minister took some umbrage at my lack of clarity but I did try to seek some understanding as to what the minister's role and sense of responsibility is.

The minister said that he does not provide day-to-day operational oversight of decisions that are made within each agency, but there is a clear expectation of the Government, transmitted via him through DPAC for the Government principally, to ensure that agencies are fully aware of their responsibilities if they are not already. Mr Lewis was there providing that support so they are not left on their own.

I am still not quite sure where the minister sits other than saying that agency heads do not respond to him though he can provide guidance around ICT policy. I do not know if that is guidance personally from him or guidance from Mr Lewis. I recognise that I offended him and I was not really trying to, I was trying to understand. He said -

I am not going to let that sit on the record. I do have oversight over the Office of e-Government. I am annoyed that you continue to do this. The actual day-to-day responsibility for those things does rest with individual agency heads.

After getting some additional information from Dr Lewis, I was quite confused as to where the line of authority ends. That is important for us to understand. This was raised in the context of the cybersecurity monitoring and whether people are meeting the Auditor-General's requirements. Whilst the Office of e-Government reports to the minister, the minister said it is the view of the Government that is transmitted through that office on to agencies. I am really not clear who reports to who and at what point somebody has the final line of responsibility.

At the end of the day, if they have sought advice or guidance from the minister and not acted upon that or sought advice and that information was not what they needed, does it then sit with the head of agency or with the Premier, because it reverts back because it is a whole-of-government policy, or does the minister under his responsibility for electronic services to government agencies and the community have any capacity to require agencies to meet those requirements? Is there a process when they do not meet it where they report to him, or is it really just left in the KPIs that would be negotiated between heads of agencies and the Premier? I am sure the minister can provide me with a clear understanding of how it fits because I genuinely do not understand where that process fits.

As you know, I had concerns previously when the Education department were using CUDA and where that data would be stored and how that data could be accessed. CUDA was under investigation and there was a lot of work in the United States because every keystroke that the child puts in is locked. Whilst they are under the protection of the Education department and they are a student that data cannot be used because we have individual protection of students, but I did not then understand where that data sits and who is responsible for its protection afterwards. So once you have left the education system that protection no longer directly applies. Is that something that the head of agency for Education is responsible for? Does it revert to the Office of e-Government? Those were the things that I did not understand.

Online privacy has, for the past 10 years, been one of the biggest debates. We are not clear about it, because we are not sure where the data is stored. The Government has had conversations about having all Tasmanian data in a Tasmanian cloud. The cloud is supposed to be accessible anywhere. Does that provide greater protection or less protection? Have they even done that? Where does the Government sit? Have I taken up all my time just asking that question? Hopefully not. Half of it? Excellent.

Other matters raised in addition to portfolio responsibility - I have touched on the Auditor-General and requirements for IT, which was a significant concern, as was cybersecurity. The minister said the commitment to employ a chief information security officer was not undertaken. We are not employing a new chief information security officer. Rather, the role will be defined as four different jobs that I am assuming all report to Dr Lewis. We had limited time so we could not question further.

Can the minister say whether those four jobs equal the same amount of funding as a chief information security officer? Where might they end up in the longer term? There is a deputy chief information officer, a senior manager of ICT governance, cybersecurity and risk, a principal cybersecurity officer and a senior cybersecurity officer reporting to the deputy CIO. There a lot of people there and I want to understand their roles and how that is going to work. Were some of those positions there but called other things? Have we moved and re-prioritised some of those responsibilities?

In Health, I have concerns about the Healthscope contract. The minister talked about the requirements not to discuss contract negotiations and we do not want to affect the contract outcomes, but I am concerned that the mother and baby service at St Helens be maintained. It is an excellent service. It is the only one that we have in the state. Those people who have used it speak highly of it. We do not want to see an outcome, and Tasmania women do not want to see an outcome, where the mother and baby unit did not exist. The best outcome is that the contract arrangement with Healthscope will provide that. A commitment to that mother and baby service is

crucial and we would like to see it extended. It has been a fantastic support for mums who are adjusting.

Ambulance ramping was raised by other members. I am concerned, and the community is concerned, that our response times have blown out so much. Everyone knows about those golden few minutes that you have. We rely heavily on our paramedics and there is the issue of compensation for paramedics. First responders have a very high stress job. We want to see that they are appropriately supported when dealing with some of the very traumatic circumstances that they encounter. That is the same for first responders across government and across entities. None of us in this place has taken on those roles, so we need to recognise that when people do take on those skills and those stresses that we support them appropriately.

We discussed reproductive health and the access to reproductive health. At that stage the secretary would have had the information provided to him from the stakeholders that were consulted. The minister included in that list of stakeholders an organisation that does not support abortion in order to get a different outcome in the report. The report would not say 'all submissions', it would say 'most submissions'. There was deliberately, within that list, an organisation that was not going to support access to abortions because it does not believe in it. It is very clear about that fundamental belief.

Time expired.

[12.36 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - There were many very important elements of the long day the minister and I spent in each others company. There were a lot of serious exchanges and useful dialogue. It was interesting reading the *Hansard* to see some of the things that were said. At the top of the list and of immediate concern for many Tasmanians was the Liberal gun policy. We have spoken about this many times in parliament and outside. We will continue to do so.

Before we start on things that came up in Estimates, I want to reflect on why Tasmanians care so much about gun security. We live in a state where gun violence is incredibly low. We are fortunate and the reason we are fortunate is because we took such a strong stand after the terrible shootings at Port Arthur 22 years ago, on 28 April, where 35 people lost their lives. Across Australia, but especially in Tasmania, tripartite agreements were reached to make sure this never happens again. It has not happened again in Tasmania, and Tasmanians are glad about that when they look at what is happening on a daily basis in the United States, at schools. They value the strength of our firearms laws and were concerned at the policy changes the Liberals proposed before the election, for a narrow range of gun advocates. It was done secretly. It was only made public after the Greens released it to the media when we received a tip-off.

The Government has confected a parliamentary inquiry into this. It became clear in the questions I asked the minister in Estimates that this is being used as a cover to avoid difficult questions. The truth is, the truth will out. On this issue, more so than many others, people are passionate and determined we will not weaken our gun laws in this state.

The minister said he would not be talking about those matters. I asked the minister to provide the advice about the policy changes that gave the Premier so much confidence when he assured voters two days before the state election that there was no breach to the National Firearms Agreement. I asked to see the advice. The minister said he would not be talking about those matters because they are going through an inquiry process. How convenient that the very Liberal-

supportive Mr Ivan Dean has gone ahead and promoted a parliamentary inquiry into this matter because now we cannot get any advice or information out of the Government on the basis of that. Shame on you for not assuring Tasmanians by providing the advice and the evidence because if it is there -

Mr Ferguson - What advice are you talking about?

Dr WOODRUFF - All the different forms of advice that have been talked about at different times. The Premier said before the election that he had received advice from the Police minister that there was no breach of the agreement, so do not get tricky with me now, minister, because I asked that question so many times in so many ways throughout the Estimates. I asked you when the Premier got advice that it did not breach the National Firearms Agreement, and did the police provide you with written advice that the policies did not breach the agreement? Is there any advice that they did not do that? 'The minister has not answered the question', I said endless numbers of times. I also asked if it would breach the firearms agreement on another occasion. So do not be tricky because these are the same questions we have been asking and they are not being answered.

This is a direct lie because you said the people have had ample opportunity to consider the issues.

Mr Ferguson - Where is the lie?

Mr CHAIRMAN - Ms Woodruff, if you are going to accuse the minister of telling a lie or lying you need to do it under a substantive motion rather than stand up with flippant accusations. Perhaps you might choose another word that would satisfy the normal protocols of this Chamber.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, Chair, I hear what you are saying and I suppose it is a reasonable interpretation of the definition of the word. The minister said that the policy had been shared with the Tasmanian community. From that people would think that any person was able to access that information and they had ample opportunity to consider the issues. A reasonable person would assume they had an opportunity to a formal consultation, a formal engagement. It could not be further from the truth. None of that happened.

What we know is that a stakeholder group was hand-selected and they are the people who saw it and no-one else, and it was purposely kept silent because it is toxic and on the nose, for a good reason. Just a week before the Estimates session, as people would know, there was a random act of rapid firearm shooting into a nightclub door right here in the middle of Hobart in very close proximity to more than 1000 people celebrating Dark Mofo. It is very topical. We do not want to end up like the United States.

I specifically asked about the proposed doubling under the Liberals' policy of licensing category A and B firearms for up to 10 years instead of the five years which is current. The minister would not allow that to go to the police commissioner to seek his advice about whether that would breach the National Firearms Agreement. He would not let the commissioner answer the question. I want to put on the record that this is in the context of April this year when Gun Control Australia released research they have done on the national database over the last decade which shows that 27 000 firearms have been stolen over that period. Most of those are never recovered; they go into the illegal firearms trade market. We know that in Australia 1700 were stolen in 2007-08 and 3000 in 2016-17. That is almost a doubling of firearms theft in that period. This is a current issue that is on the increase.

In Tasmania where we only have 2 per cent of the population we had 8 per cent of the thefts so it is an ongoing issue that is increasing across Australia. It is especially increasing in Tasmania and guess which guns are most likely to be stolen through firearm theft? Categories A and B, because they are most prolific and easily accessible. This is the same Government that secretly released a policy to its stakeholders committing to doubling the period for those firearms -

Time expired.

[12.45 p.m.]

Ms STANDEN - Mr Chairman, due to other rostering responsibilities I only had the pleasure of sitting across from the minister for a fairly brief time, about three-quarters of an hour, and got a whole one question out in that time. It is all a learning experience. Nonetheless the minister would know I have a significant background in health and community services and maintain a very strong interest in a range of areas. I wish to briefly touch on the topic I raised within the Estimates, but perhaps if time allows flag one or two other areas of particular interest of mine.

Having begun my career as an allied health professional on the north-west coast in particular, with a brief responsibility for statewide public health nutrition services across the state, I have maintained that professional interest, although if I were to practice in a hospital today I would probably be accused of being dangerous. With that caveat, I flag my professional interest, despite not being registered as a dietician any longer. My career has diverged, as has my speech.

I want to speak briefly about community psychiatric services on that point. I have maintained an interest in my electorate of Franklin, particularly in GP services in Risdon Vale. It is an interesting community which has changed quite a bit over the last 30 or so years. I understand that when the super clinic was established in Clarence seven or eight years ago publicly funded general practice services were based there with a satellite agreement to Risdon Vale and there was a particular arrangement set up. I would be interested at some stage to have a discussion with the minister about the arrangements for the general practice service provision within that community today. I understand that because there are now only two general practitioners, one of whom is 76 years of age and approaching retirement, there are particular workforce retention and development concerns there. No longer is there a possibility to provide registrar supervision, for instance, so there is potential for bringing on new general practitioners into that community and providing continuity of service, because no longer can the practice offer full-time services to the community. I think it is down to something like three days, from memory.

Particularly for young families - I can imagine those with chronic diseases and so on who need frequent access to general practice services - it is particularly difficult. For those who can afford it those families inevitably move - provided they have transport and/or if they have a bit more financial means, those families are more likely to seek general practice services outside of their community. Nonetheless, it leaves those who perhaps do not have access to transport and who are dependent on welfare benefits and such in that jeopardised situation of not being able to access GP services on a daily basis.

I understand that is not an isolated situation in terms of general practice services right across the state. I am interested in the Government and the minister's intention to address medical workforce development issues like that.

In the case of Risdon Vale, I was speaking with one of the general practitioners that work there. She has had a longstanding commitment to that community. Initially as a public-health funded GP,

she was on the public payroll but the contract service is now under a different provider, IPN. The commercial feasibility of that practice had dropped away and hence we are in the situation that I described today.

I asked the question about access to community psychiatric services which was a particular issue she raised with me. I read into *Hansard*, there was not time in the Estimates committee, to provide the minister with background to this. She said -

I wanted to highlight an issue about which you might be already aware. It may also be a situation with no easy remedy.

There is a major shortage of psychiatrists in the Hobart region at the moment (I don't know about the rest of Tasmania). I only infrequently refer to private psychiatrists but I gather that even in the private system, there is a shortage. However in the public system things are dire.

Yesterday I saw a young woman (mother of two young children) who is a patient in the eastern shore mental health service. Her regular psychiatrist is away on leave for a number of months, and as she was experiencing an exacerbation of her mental health issues she came to me to ask how to access assistance. I advised that the best move was for me to contact the mental health service and request a review by another of their psychiatrists.

When I phoned the Mental Health Helpline (our usual route for referrals) I was advised that currently there is a major shortage of psychiatrists. There is at least an 8 week wait to be seen, even for existing clients needing review. The shortage of psychiatrists employed in the public system is exacerbated by the recent deregistration of private psychiatrist (name withheld); apparently he had about 300 patients who now have to be managed by other clinicians. As (the doctor) used to bulk bill people on health care cards, I imagine that his patients are in large part people unable to afford gap payments in the private system, even if the private system had the capacity to take on his case load.

One option is for us to refer patient for online psychiatrist consultations. Eg there is a site called Psych2U that provides online psychiatrist consultations. Because all of Tasmania is classified by Medicare as being somewhat remote/disadvantaged, Medicare will accept online consultations with psychiatrists as long as the patient is >15 km away. (This creates the absurd situation in which patients in Risdon Vale can't have an online consult with one of the Hobart based Psych2U clinicians, but can consult with one of their clinicians on the mainland. A colleague told me that she suggests her patients drive to New Norfolk with their phone or tablet so that they can then access an online Hobart based psychiatrist).

I have used this Psych2U service twice in the past month, with patients consulting with a mainland based psychiatrist. For one patient who had relatively straightforward issues and presented pleasantly, it worked well. For another patient with much more challenging mental health issues and a short fuse, it was a failure. No rapport was established and it ended with the patient feeling even more distressed. So my conclusion is that an online consultation service can be

helpful in some situations for some people, but is unsuitable for others. Also for people with chronic mental health issues, it would seem much preferable for them to be managed by a local psychiatrist/mental health service providing continuity of care and continuity of record keeping, and links with the local mental help helpline etc.

So we urgently need some more psychiatrists in the public system ...

That was the issue I wished to raise. I had other questions, had time allowed, around waiting times for colonoscopy. I will wait for the response to the question on notice in relation to that. It will be interesting to look at the categorisation and also regional statistics. I understand there is some significant delay, particularly for people in the south of the state compared with the north and the north-west.

I am interested in the area of preventative health services. There is a very ambitious target for Tasmania to become the healthiest state by 2025. I cannot understand why or how this Government, with the burden of chronic disease that is prevalent in Tasmania, intends to get there.

Workforce development I briefly touched upon with a policy around the 2 per cent wages cap. As a former allied health professional, I understand, very acutely, how important it is to enter into good faith bargaining with the workforce -

Time expired.

[12.55 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON - Those 10 minutes slip away very quickly. I remember those times well. Thank you to each and every one of my colleagues across the Chamber who have spoken on this.

I will make some overview comments. First, with my portfolio responsibilities of Health and Police, Fire and Emergency Management and Science and Technology, it is a big workload and it is a good workload and I am supported by a lot of wonderful people, including my office. My Cabinet colleagues have given me a lot of support. We work together on all our issues. I want to mention my office, a group of very dedicated, professional people who support me and support the Government. If ever we do something that is good, usually it is with a decent slab of thanks to our advisory staff who help to develop our policies and guide us on the issues that are at play and help us as politicians to make those judgments.

I express my sincere gratitude to our senior public servants, all of our public servants - senior and not - who tirelessly work for the interests and benefit of Tasmanians. As a minister, it shapes your opinion of the public service, going from opposition to government. There are some things you can only know after having worked with colleagues and people in the service. There are times where you have to crack the whip and insist on good outcomes and reform and there are many times where our public servants are doing that every day and striving to get better outcomes for our community.

I was at the Estimates table for 19 hours and I think that is almost a record. I was there for 10 hours with the House of Assembly committee and it was an honour, and nine hours with the Legislative Council. There were a lot of questions asked. In response to some of the observations made by members opposite, it is my practice always to answer honestly and faithfully to the questions asked.

Sadly, given the peppering of commentary on this, I was rather disappointed with the Labor Party in particular about their lack of real interest in the issues the Budget provides for. The Budget is about providing significant, recurrent resources and capital resources so we can make the investments into the health system that people have been calling for. Rather than scrutinising the Budget and the various line items, what we saw was a pepper spray on particular issues that, arguably, is within the domain of the Opposition to ask, but was more or less a waste of their own time.

We respond, we answer and when you see the shadow minister for police - who I noticed fled the Chamber after making his contribution, he is gone - pointing out that, in his view, it is unfair for police to get a pay rise to catch them up for the pay freeze, that shows the tactics that were being played and to try to get the Government to explain that was only a pleasure for me to do. We were saying thank you to our police for accepting a pay freeze for that time and prior to entering caretaker period, the Government entered into a new enterprise bargaining agreement with police which included a loyalty payment. I had hoped and expected that would have been supported and applauded.

I note Ms White, the Opposition Leader, has given her contribution and immediately she has fled the Chamber, cannot stick around. It points to the fact that Labor talk about health as their number one priority but, as we saw after the election, as soon as the Labor Party lost the election, Ms White ran away from the Health portfolio.

Notwithstanding those criticisms, it is a very good budget for our health system. It is a very good budget for our Police, Fire and Emergency Management services and it is a very good budget for science and technology as we work.

I will be having a good look at all the things that have been offered, particularly by Ms Standen and also by Dr Woodruff, who raised a couple of issues that are of interest and of note and I will be happy to come back to members on those issues.

We have big responsibilities to the Tasmanian people and the Budget strongly supports our very positive goals to improve our outcomes.

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

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

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

Reports of Estimates Committees

In Committee

Resumed from above.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Chairman, just a few threads I would like to pick up on during the discussion. Winter flu: it was a very busy winter flu season last year, the busiest on record. The services certainly were well prepared and even more so this year. We always want to encourage people to do what they can to help reduce demand on hospitals. I have been very pleased to find

that in 2018, the rates of people in the general community being vaccinated for flu is higher than ever. No doubt that is as a result of our advocacy on this.

Also this year we have been able to stand up extra resources. We have more beds on line now and we have more beds coming on in the next two or three weeks. It is great that despite the negativity about the challenges that emergency departments face, and I want to be very up-front on this point, there is no running away from the challenge or the simple truth that our emergency departments are busy because of increased demand.

What also has to be said, and it has not been said by any of the previous speakers, is that our staff should be commended for holding their performance targets broadly stable during increased numbers of presentation. The other thing that did come out of Estimates was not just the presentations being higher than before, not only the admissions being higher than before, but the percentage of patients who require admission was also higher in the period. A huge thanks to our staff. I know that at times it is very frustrating and it can be very demoralising when health care professionals feel that they are not providing the quality of service that they aspire to. That is often the case when hospitals are at capacity.

Unlike previous years, thanks to my friend, the Treasurer, and my Cabinet colleagues, we no longer have a situation where we have empty spaces and staff wanting to be able to use them so that they can improve patient care. We have funded those; we have opened those. In relation to current concerns, which I acknowledge and do not ignore, if you want more beds - and you do - then we need to build more beds. That is exactly what we are doing, because we have opened all the wards that were closed.

Mr Bacon - No.

Mr FERGUSON - We are. In fact, we are opening a further 22 beds -

Mr Bacon - What happened with mental health beds at the Royal then? Why did you ignore advice?

Mr FERGUSON - I will answer the question -

Mr Bacon - Yes, you will not talk about that.

Mr CHAIRMAN - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - We are opening a further 22 beds this month, Mr Bacon. If you were at my Estimates you will know that we did discuss mental health beds. I suggest you check your *Hansard*. We did discuss it and I have also made the point that both Labor and Liberal -

Mr Bacon - It is right here and I am just reading it right now and you are very condescending.

Mr FERGUSON - Thanks, Mr Bacon, you are not making an awful lot of sense, but I will just humour you by saying, both governments have reduced the number of inpatient mental health beds to shift resources into the community.

Mr Bacon - That's right. You did it against advice and did not tell the truth about it.

Mr CHAIRMAN - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Bacon, please this is not good. We recognise that since the Labor Party and the Liberal Government made those decisions there has been an increase in demand. What should you do when you have increasing demand? You should open more beds. That is what is in our Budget, Mr Bacon, I invite you to see that. Twenty-five extra beds for mental health. Labor's policy did not come anywhere near that.

Organisational charts: let me offer one sentence on this. The Government made its commitment and provided those charts on time, as promised. The suggestion that that has not occurred is incorrect. I will also move to note that Dr Broad in his comments claimed that the minister was not giving answers. The minister did give answers. I see Dr Broad and Ms White have again fled the Chamber during their own interest in this.

Mr O'Byrne - That is not fair.

Mr FERGUSON - I will tell you what when we were in opposition if we had not been here for our minister's Estimates we would have been excoriated. But that is okay.

The suggestion by Dr Broad that police getting the loyalty payment is unfair was one of the most dramatic decompositions of a shadow minister at the table that I have ever witnessed. Just completely fell apart. Furthermore, challenging the step-down provisions that the Government promised to do and further claiming falsely - and I heard it again today - that there was not adequate provision in the future even though at the Estimates, on advice, I made it very clear that the agency advised that it was sufficient.

There were issues raised in our debate just now by Ms O'Byrne in relation to the Office of eGovernment. I can answer her question about the four new roles in cybersecurity - they will be answering to the Chief Information Officer. I refer to the *Hansard* on governance and my ministerial portfolios in regard to the DPAC outputs for the Office of eGovernment. That is pretty clear. I tried to think of another example and the one I came up with was workers compensation. We have a minister who is responsible for the Workers Compensation Act but just as is the case for ICT policy, it is then for agencies to follow through on those guidelines and responsibilities. I hope that is clear.

I do not mind touching base as well on Ms O'Byrne's comments about Healthscope. You would expect the minister to be circumspect in discussing this but the Government certainly is in proper negotiations with Healthscope about its lease of the Hobart Private Hospital, the asset that is owned by the state. The mother and baby unit, where that is based, is not a state government-owned asset but we do want to reaffirm our support for the mother and baby unit, that Ms O'Byrne raised.

I dealt with the Pregnancy Counselling and Support organisation which is to be supported in both question time and in the MPI.

Dr Woodruff raised quite a lot in her time around firearms legislation. It is not really fair to be coming in here saying that the commissioner was not allowed to answer. It is the minister who is there to answer questions on the Budget and the minister has advice and support from agency people. I do not like seeing public servants being dragged into political debates. On behalf of the Government, I reject that notion of secrecy and the notion that the inquiry is a cover.

Ms Standen raised some points, which I will go back and consult on again. As a new member of this House Ms Standen has made some constructive and legitimate points around access to medical practitioners in the community, not necessarily government employees, but access to them. I assure her and any member that we are absolutely committed to improving access to medical practitioners for the members of the public. This is a space which very much involves the Commonwealth's role. It is the case that many medical practitioners are sole practitioners and also, to borrow a phrase, they are small business operators. They are more or less independent in many cases but there is an important compact between the state and primary care. I will further look at what Ms Standen had to say as well.

We have a very positive Budget. I can only reaffirm my thanks to my Cabinet colleagues, all my Government colleagues, for the support they have provided for important health reforms over the last four years. It has been positive. I know that people like to focus on the negatives and there are negatives. It would be dishonest to say otherwise and I would never say that. We have problems and there are issues, but things are a lot better, in many respects, than they were prior. We have a bigger workforce. We have more beds. We have more skilled staff in key areas where there were significant shortages, or lack of service. We are seeing waiting lists in a much healthier condition than they were previously. I noticed a jibe in there about the waiting lists. When this Government came to office, the number of people receiving their surgery on time was in the 50th percentile. It is now in the 70th, with 74 per cent of people being treated on time. It is still not good enough, but we have made that improvement. People should not rubbish it and say it has declined if it has not. We had people waiting 10 years. Now the longest wait is two years. Not good enough but it is a lot better than it was.

We have made a \$2.6 billion infrastructure spend, of which health has a major share. We will spend \$87.3 million over six years in a major redevelopment and expansion of LGH. I am passionate about this. We have seen major investment in the Royal Hobart Hospital. The project is going extremely well. It is due for practical completion in August next year. Clinicians are looking forward to being able to provide better care to patients. That is what we are also looking forward to.

The LGH is also supported. We want to improve, through a master planning exercise, medical, surgical, maternity, obstetrics, paediatric and mental health units. The Treasurer and I have put \$5 million of funding to provide for more car parking. We understand a busy hospital means more visitors and it can be very tight there, so we are working on that.

We want to consult with staff on the very best ways to deliver improved facilities. We are looking to refurbish existing wards, create more single rooms and we want to expand existing blocks to accommodate additional beds. We are going to put on a new top. We are making 4K into a much bigger project. Rather than just a children's ward, it is going to be part of a larger building, a women's and children's precinct. We are going to create a new ward and open 32 more beds, on top of the eight extra beds in the adolescent care unit. Hobart is getting an adolescent unit. Launceston will have one. These are facilities which, even over the weekend, clinicians are calling out for. I wish I could get them built quicker, but we are building those facilities. They have never been built before and I know they are going to make a meaningful difference to the care provided to families in northern Tasmania. I thank my colleagues for believing in these investments and delivering them in the Budget.

In Police, Fire and Emergency Management we have significant investments. Our goal here is to build our service so Tasmania can be the safest state in Australia. We have reinstalled the police

officer positions that were cut. We have employed more than the 108 who were released. We have employed 113 more. This Budget, in front of the House today, provides me, as Police minister, with the funding to put in another 125 over the next four years. The commissioner advised me, and I told the committee, that means 10 more recruit courses over the next four years. The academy has never been busier. We have more money for police stations at New Norfolk and Longford, as well a new emergency services hub at Sorell.

We want to continue the strong, positive relationship between Tasmania Police and the community and there is a range of other supports and initiatives. One way we are supporting small business through this is with funding to allow a no-interest loan program for CCTV cameras instore.

We have more to come. We are keeping the state safe with our nation-leading fuel reduction program, which has continued in the Budget with \$36 million. I look forward to having more to say about this in the future. Tasmania is gathering a reputation for fuel management practices. The fuel reduction program is being described to me as nation-leading. Tasmania can look forward to some more reporting on this, because I am very proud of what has been achieved. I try not to miss an opportunity to credit much of those achievements to Mr Hidding, the former minister who carried this policy into reality from opposition into government. It has been a great success.

In closing I commend the Budget to this committee.

Estimates of the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Minister for Health and Minister for Science and Technology agreed to.

DIVISIONS 1, 5 AND 10 -

(Minister for Energy, Minister for Resources, Minister for Building and Construction, Minister for Veterans' Affairs)

[2.46 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE - I rise to make a contribution on Estimates Committee B, the Minister for Energy, Minister for Resources, Minister for Building and Construction and Minister for Veterans' Affairs. I will focus predominantly on my shadow portfolio, which is the ministry for energy.

Energy policy in Tasmania is crucially important. It has been a matter of significant debate and influence since the hydro-industrialisation of Tasmania. It is a key ministerial portfolio that holds both the economic future of Tasmania in its hands, and also liveability advantages and the ability for Tasmanians to get access to affordable, reliable and regular energy to ensure they keep warm in winter and increasingly keep cool with the warmer summers we have been experiencing.

This has been a majorly contested portfolio area, particularly over the past few years with a number of waves of reform. Only a few years ago Tasmania was on the brink of having the lights snuffed out by the mismanagement of this Government in the previous term, relating to their ham-fisted attempted sale of the Tamar Valley Power Station and a weather event. While you cannot predict the year, you know that from time to time there will be significant droughts. We will be seeing increasingly regular events so we need to ensure that Tasmania is able to cope with those dry spells. In 2015 and 2016 we also had the Basslink outage, which caused extraordinary damage to our network, given that we did not have a redundancy asset in the Tamar Valley Power Station up and running. It was being prepared for sale. It cost us over \$100 million in taxpayers' money to get the generators to the state to keep the lights on.

That has had a significant impact on energy policy in Tasmania, when you talk to small and medium companies, the major industrials, farmers and major users of energy in the state. Energy security is one of the fundamental tests of the competence of a government. In the last term they failed that and were perilously close to costing the economy and our industries significant job losses and significant power outages. We were fortunate that the drought broke, we were able to get Basslink back up and the Government saw sense and put the Tamar Valley Power Station back on line.

This is a significant portfolio area for energy security for industry, but also energy security for residential customers across Tasmania. It is clear from the Estimates process that energy policy in Tasmania is in a mess. There is a zombie walk towards a position which we think is concerning. The process of the two hours I had in front of the Energy minister involved asking for information and evidence around reasons for various decisions, and we are on a unity ticket for keeping energy prices low, there is no doubt about that. But based on the answers at Estimates, having a series of decisions made on a clear lack of evidence and advice about not only short-term impact but medium and long-term impacts, is frightening.

We put a series of questions to the minister around advice the Government had received and I will focus on the decoupling from the pricing mechanisms in Victoria. We know that across the country there have been significant increases in energy prices to the point where clearly it is becoming a key issue for industries. We have also seen a number of shocks to the system which has created a flow-on effect in prices. We saw the massive impact of the removal of the Hazelwood coal-fired power station from the energy grid and the impact that has had on prices. There has also been significant investment in the assets over the last 10 to 20 years which in some respects has flowed through to the regulator, and when you take into consideration the cost of generation and transmission and setting the prices, that investment and shocks like Hazelwood has led to a volatile situation in the national market.

The decision that was taken in the election campaign to decouple was a big one and we supported them on the basis that we made an assumption that the Government had received extensive advice and there would not be a medium- to long-term impact on our energy generators, but also understanding the nature of the market, the ebb and flow of markets on the mainland and with the policy change with the National Energy Guarantee from the federal minister, Mr Frydenberg, designed to take the price shocks out of the pricing mechanisms currently in place.

A series of questions remain unanswered. While we absolutely support any endeavour and effort to maintain low energy prices and, where possible, reduce energy prices, you need to ensure that this is a fragile and a very finely balanced mechanism in achieving that outcome because you have the generators, the transmission, and the retailers. They are all very complex pieces of machinery. Having government business enterprises in Tasmania and non-privatised assets means there is a level of control but also a level of responsibility to ensure the sustainability of those businesses.

The delinking of the wholesale price from Victoria is a big decision and whilst on the face of it we think it will keep prices low, we know already that if you take the shock of Hazelwood out of the system and you look at the NEG and a number of developments on the mainland, the long-term wholesale prices are starting to fall and that will have an impact on us. It will not if we decouple, but we need to fully understand the impact we have when we make a decision on something that is so complicated and fragile.

We sought advice from the minister around the energy market consulting associates who undertook a review from October last year into the Tasmanian wholesale electricity market about regulatory pricing framework. We asked whether the consultants provided any advice to government before they entered the caretaker period. After the election we asked if the review was still going and what advice they had provided in terms of a decision to delink. We asked about the electricity business and whether they had costed the financial impact of the policy to cap prices and to provide ongoing rebate to business consumers. We did not get an answer to that.

Essentially, we had the line repeated at us that the Tasmania First policy will deliver low prices. We are all for that if it does, but the Opposition and the people of Tasmania have every right to understand the evidentiary work that has been done. What is the research and the advice to ensure that not only do we keep energy prices low, but the sustainability of our energy businesses is maintained to deliver good services to the Tasmanian people and they are making best endeavours to keep the cost of energy low for Tasmanian consumers? It is not only the major industrials that are the predominant player in the energy market in Tasmania but residential properties as well. It hits the hip pocket. It is a cost-of-living issue for many Tasmanians and having businesses that are sustainable and able to keep prices low is a crucial policy outcome.

We also asked about the costing of the financial impact of the delinking. We asked about the cost of the price cap policy, because Western Australia has also gone through a price cap policy to deal with some spikes in energy prices. They are completely transparent about that process and clear with the Western Australian community about the cost of that. In the lower House Estimates we asked why that was not generally reported and why you are not open with the Tasmanian community about the costs of the cap. I was informed that in Estimates being held in the other place that the members for Murchison and Rumney were both able to elicit an answer from the minister that the cost that will borne by Hydro is around \$40 million.

They scheduled in last year's Budget to take \$10 million out of Hydro and in this year's Budget it is approximately \$63 million, so there is another \$40 million-odd increase in dividend from a GBE, but they are also being asked to wear the cost. My understanding, and I am sure the minister will correct me if I am wrong, is that they will have to bear another \$40 million cost on the bottom line of that company. That is a significant cost and not an insignificant issue. Tasmanians need to know when parties make these kinds of decisions, particularly heading into an election campaign, exactly what it is going to cost so they can make an informed decision about their vote, particularly as it pertains to energy policy.

We asked the minister about consulting with respective energy market participants before announcing the policy. We asked whether they had advice from Treasury around the policy and had commissioned any market modelling on the policy. Again, we were not able to get an answer to these questions, which was quite frustrating.

There is also a major question now about the role of the Economic Regulator as it relates to setting energy prices within Tasmania. Essentially, the policy of the Government is to move responsibility away from the regulator to the minister of the day. It is not just about setting a CPI cap; it gives ultimate power to the minister to set the prices directly. We understand that the new pricing mechanism under the policy is the cost of hydro generation. We do not know how that is assessed or how it will be identified. The minister will have the power to set prices directly, but there is no transparent way of putting a transparent value on the cost of hydro generation.

Traditionally we have allowed the market to operate within restrictions, within a framework, to ensure that people are able to make submissions and provide evidence so there is a transparency around energy pricing. The Liberal Party, or the party of the market, has now moved away from that and moved back to political interference in terms of setting the price.

Mr Gutwein - Do you support higher prices?

Mr O'BYRNE - No, I have said. If you listened earlier, you were probably doing some signing, there is no way -

Mr Gutwein - I was listening.

Mr O'BYRNE - I said we were on a unity ticket.

Mr Gutwein - You are having a bob each way. That is what you are doing.

Mr O'BYRNE - No, I am not. What I have said is we are on a unity ticket for low prices.

Mr Gutwein - It is very clear that you are trying to have a bob each way.

Mr O'BYRNE - I can absolutely understand why you are sensitive. Are you going to release the Treasurer's letter? The advice from Treasury around the Tamar Valley -

Mr Gutwein - The issue here is not something that happened while you were on holiday and not in this place. The issue -

Mr O'BYRNE - Holiday? Working for the Beacon Foundation and working for the trade union movement is a holiday, is it?

Mr Gutwein - You are now the shadow energy minister.

Mr O'BYRNE - It shows the disrespect from the Treasurer for the trade union movement.

Mr CHAIRMAN - Order, the interjections will cease.

Mr O'BYRNE - On a holiday, apparently. Let us be clear -

Mr Gutwein - What *Hansard* will show is that you have just gone off on a rant because you are not prepared to explain why you are having a bob each way.

Mr CHAIRMAN - Order, interjections should cease.

Mr O'BYRNE - We are on a unity ticket for low prices. When you make a fundamental decision that will have an impact on the GBEs not just in the next six to 12 months, but for the next five, 10, 15 years in terms of pricing and public policymaking around a transparent setting of prices and transparent decisions of government, that is not something that flows off the tongue with your Government, I am afraid, Mr Gutwein, member for Bass, Treasurer. It is not a word that is regularly associated with your Government in terms of transparency.

We asked a series of questions around what was the advice, what was the evidence, what was the justification for this, apart from an intent - and we do not disagree with the intent to keep a cap on prices, but when you make significant decisions such as this you need to understand the consequence on your government business enterprise and your energy companies.

Essentially, the people of Tasmania have no transparent view about the justification for the minister setting a price, apart from the generic reference to the cost of hydro generation. The minister will transparently make a decision if the market prices are below the perceived cost of hydro generation. There has to be a mechanism - you are just hiding it from people and you will just make a number up based on the politics of the day. Just say that you are playing politics with the prices. Do not say you are being transparent. Do not say you have a philosophical, ideological or even a technical approach to the setting of energy prices, apart from base politics. We get that. What impact does that have on the energy businesses?

What happens if the market or the cost of hydro generation on the advice from Hydro, 'this is the cost of generation,' but the market actually produces a lower price, what happens then? We did not get an answer. I do not think we will get an answer.

Mr Gutwein - On this one issue of lower prices for Tasmanians you might have been supportive, but again complaining, whingeing.

Mr O'BYRNE - I am not engaging in that sort of misinterpretation, a deliberate verballing of me by the Treasurer. It is not true. We are on a unity ticket for low prices. If you cannot explain the full impact of this decision -

Mr Gutwein - Was that the same unity ticket that saw prices go up by 65 per cent under -

Mr CHAIRMAN - Order. Interjections should cease.

Mr O'BYRNE - Whenever you make a decision around this you need to have evidence. This is not just a whim, it will potentially have a significant long-term impact on our energy businesses. It is a fair question to ask: have you taken advice? Have you considered all options? Sometimes the short-term sugar hit is an absolute disaster long term in terms of the impact on our energy businesses.

We have a federal minister working on a NEG, which is designed to take out the spikes, and by 2021 when we move to setting the new framework, decoupling, we do not know what the circumstances of the market will be around that time.

We asked question after question, we asked about the evidence, we asked about the justification, and all we got back was a rant about Tasmania First but with no depth to it. It was very frustrating in terms of the questions and answers. There is still a big question mark about the long-term impact of this decision and the Government does need to come clean with the Tasmanian people about what that looks like.

There was one major question that we asked around the cost to farmers. We know that farmers now are receiving power contracts which are 30 per cent to 60 per cent higher than their last contract. We asked the minister about that. He did not seem to be aware of that but we are very concerned about the impact on farmers as they are negotiating their new contracts.

We did not get a date for when the Momentum Energy call centre jobs would be coming back to Tasmania. We asked if all the 70 jobs would be safe. We did not get an answer. We did not get an answer at the time on the Entura sale, although I saw a press release after the fact from the government media unit which says Entura is not for sale.

We talked about a lot of things but were very disappointed in the answers and transparency for the Tasmanian community.

[3.06 p.m.]

Dr BROAD - In giving my point of view on the Estimates process, particularly on my shadow responsibilities for the resources portfolio, touching quickly initially on the energy portfolio, I will speak for the benefit of the member for Braddon, Mr Brooks. I am here to talk predominantly about my shadow portfolio responsibilities rather than absolutely everything that the minister, Mr Barnett, discussed. It does not mean that I do not think anything is more valuable, one or the other, it is just that I have only 10 minutes so I will be concentrating on my portfolio responsibilities, Mr Brooks. Just to clarify that you might get wound up and say that I did not mention something like pumped hydro and I do not think it is important, that is not exactly the issue.

One thing that we discussed in the energy portfolio, which the member for Franklin, Mr O'Byrne, briefly mentioned, was that farmers are seeing an increase in their power price in the contracts that they are being offered at the moment which is 30 per cent to 60 per cent higher than they are currently paying. It is an extraordinary amount and it is very concerning. Farmers use a lot of power, especially for powering rotary dairies, lights, et cetera, but most predominantly in irrigation. In a way, irrigation is basically converting electricity to pasture growth. Farmers are very heavily reliant on energy and energy prices. That is very concerning and the minister gave absolutely no response to that except for getting back to his talking points on his so-called Tasmania First policy and that was about as far as we got.

I brought up in that particular section the TEELS program, having recently received a letter from the minister suggesting that a constituent who had real problems accessing the TEELS program through Westpac had been excluded basically because Westpac would not include the partner's income in the calculation for whatever reason. That particular constituent felt quite aggrieved about that. I received a letter back from the minister directing that particular constituent to have a look at the NILS program, the No Interest Loan Scheme program, the only issue there being that the program is fully subscribed. No money. That program had run out of money a couple of months before the letter. The minister was obviously not aware that that program had run out of funding and was not accepting any more applications, which is very curious. He may need to send another letter to explain to that constituent why he has been misled.

Then we moved on to resources. There was a lot of discussion about plantation sales especially the sale of the forestry right to Reliance Forest Fibre. There was something very curious in the forest right - it was initiated on 5 October, but it was not registered with the Land Titles Office until 10 April. That is a substantial time delay. Last year the minister said Reliance Forest Fibre was going to take over in October. Maybe that was the plan. Maybe there was an issue with the right or with payment, but it was not registered until 10 April. We did not get an answer on that. The way to convince everybody it was a good thing to give up forestry rights for nearly 100 years was that \$15 million would be injected into the health system. What we saw in the Budget is that the money is not happening this financial year. It is sitting off until next financial year. The minister replied that Health or the Budget did not need it. That was not the way it was sold. Is it because the Health budget did not need it, or was it because there were big problems with the sale and that

is why it was not registered until 10 April? Is that why the \$15 million is not there until next year? We did not get clarification.

A pattern of behaviour across all the Estimates I sat in on was the buck-passing. Questions about the plantation sale were directed to Sustainable Timber Tasmania. Some questions were answered. Some were said to be the responsibility of the GBEs, even if it was a policy matter, or the Treasurer. The Treasurer was buck-passed. In Estimates, when I was directed to ask another minister a specific question, they would often refer me on to somebody and then refer on to somebody else. The strategy to avoid scrutiny now is to buck-pass between one minister and the other. It was like the trick you probably did as a kid when you wanted to ask your parents if you could stay at a friend's place. You would say to dad that mum said it was all right. Then you would go to mum and say dad said it was all right. These ministers have this habit of buck-passing. It is very hard to keep them to account, slippery.

There were issues in forestry that the minister would not discuss. They were mainly about the fact that areas deemed by Reliance Forest Fibre to be unproductive could be handed back to the Government without being regenerated. There were clauses relating to when that might happen. I sought clarification and got absolutely nowhere. Even when I asked a simple question - has Reliance Forest Fibre started harvesting any of the plantations? - I received no answer.

Another question was about Sustainable Timber Tasmania's writedown of assets. It sold the plantation rights for 99 years. It cost approximately \$90 million-plus to plant and was sold for \$60 million. What was the asset writedown, for accounting purposes? I did not get an answer.

There was a common theme of not getting answers and getting talking points pumped back at us instead. There were questions about FSC. FSC is crucial to the future of Tasmania's forest industry as that is what the market wants. We discussed the welcome addition of support for the Hermal mill. The Hermal mill at Hampshire is going to be a fantastic opportunity for Tasmania and for Australia to be world-leading in the construction of cross-laminated timber panels, using our wonderful eucalypt plantation forest. Hermal is insistent on two things: it has to be plantation-based and FSC certified. Ta Ann is very keen on FSC certification and yet FSC certification has not been achieved by Sustainable Timber Tasmania. The minister will not guarantee Sustainable Timber Tasmania will get FSC certification in the next four years, yet it is essential for the future of our forest estate to have FSC certification. The market has spoken. You can keep bringing up what has happened in the past, but the market is demanding FSC and the minister will not guarantee that will be in place in this term. FSC is crucial, so get on with it.

We also heard about the MRT relocation to the north-west. That took some digging but the minister finally asked the department to clear it up. The department was very good at giving us the situation on what has happened with the MRT move from down south to Burnie. We heard there were 10 employees working in Burnie but only one full-time position has been a transfer from the south to the north. That meant that nine other employees who were previously employed in the south are no longer with MRT. They had been redistributed within the public service. The nine others employed in Burnie to bring the number to 10 were predominantly from outside of Tasmania, or definitely from outside the north. There had been quite a loss of intellectual memory or corporate memory because only one employee transferred. We heard that there are potentially five more on the north-west coast.

Five more good paying jobs in the north-west are welcome, but what it showed, from the numbers, is that there are 20 in the south plus five in the core library, so 25 MRT. There are always going to be more MRT employees in the south -

Time expired.

[3.16 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF - I want to go through some of the questions I failed to get answers to in these Estimates. We had some interesting conversations, but I did not get direct answers from quite direct questions I asked the minister.

It is disappointing for Tasmanians who are interested in these issues and have a right to know how the resources the Government has at its disposal are being used on such important topics as the use of finite public resources, the environmentally and financially sustainable management of very large industry sectors and decreasing carbon emissions from industry and overall.

I asked the minister a question about the Tasmanian Energy Strategy. There were 39 actions listed by the Government in the Tasmanian Energy Strategy. Only seven of them are currently listed as ongoing. The seven are all small-target actions that are about the basic administration of any government department. They include monitoring, improving, advocating with federal bodies - those sorts of things. Small fry stuff when we are talking about the big issues confronting Tasmania, establishing our future prosperity, security, sustainability as a state, including a strategy for liquid fuels.

The minister did not respond to my direct question about when the Government will produce a liquid fuel strategy for Tasmania. I asked that a number of times. I restated the question quite simply: when are you going to develop a liquid fuel policy? I was quite clear about it. I did not provide a very long preamble. I have been known to provide lengthy preambles, but that was very straight. I hope the minister understands that when talking about liquid fuels policy it is not appropriate to talk about small fry support for electric vehicles. We do not even have a state government electric vehicle fleet. We are so far behind the eight ball when it comes to dealing with the liquid fuel issue in Tasmania, where all of our fuel comes over the sea, is vulnerable in that passage and produces about half of the state's total carbon emissions. Carbon emissions come from liquid fuel. It is a huge issue for climate change but also a huge issue for security, expense and vulnerability with rising markets. It is really concerning that we are at the beginning of a second term of Liberal government and there is no attempt to look at developing a strategy on this very important issue. We will not stop talking about it because it is important.

The second issue I raised in Energy was about all the puff around pumped hydro. I know the Leader of the Tasmanian Greens, Cassy O'Connor, has been ribbed by some people for making reference to what she said in one comment was a bit of a 'blokey' budget. Specifically what she was referring to was a budget that was developed with a very strong emphasis on building roads and bridges, and a far lesser emphasis on the so-called caring professions. It is looking at the big-ticket items of a \$5 billion investment into so-called pumped hydro that has had nothing more than a couple of tiny feasibility studies, both of which I have seen have been pretty much canned by federal economists, people of great standing, who have put this idea of a massive 15- to 25-year development of something like pumped hydro with a second interconnector that it requires, into the 'it's a great idea' bucket.

When we are really talking about putting up money in this budget, the figures the minister was quoting about the so-called number of jobs it would produce and the so-called value it would provide for the state make no sense when he says now that a feasibility study must commence for it. Where do these figures come from? How do you come up with 3000 jobs if you have not done a feasibility study? My point is, who is going to pay? The Labor member for Franklin made a good point about costs for people on low incomes and electricity prices. The biggest cost people would have to bear over the next generation would be if we added another \$5 billion to the already \$2.65 billion debt of our GBEs. That is the biggest cost. People have to pay for it and it has to come out of somebody's pocket, and \$7.65 billion is a massive debt for a state like Tasmania.

I spent most of my time in Estimates talking about wood, because this Government is doing everything it can to restoke division in Tasmania and restart a forestry industry in a form that was economically, environmentally and socially unsustainable and would have to be unsustainable by those three measures if it were to start again in the way that is being discussed. It is possible to value-add quality to plantation wood. Of course it is, but that is not what we are looking at. I asked the minister when the moratorium on logging on Bruny Island would be declared, because the whole of south Bruny, all the trees there, all those forests - which is a known swift parrot habitat that does not have sugar gliders predating on them - all of them would be needed to feed the chipper in Southwood to take down and export through the proposed Dover woodchip port.

I also asked questions that the minister did not answer about the traffic and what he thought about trucks with logs going through the middle of Hobart coming from the east Derwent Valley. He refused to answer that. I was particularly amused at what Mr Barnett called a 'derogatory slur' that I made. He said I was being derogatory in respect of James Neville-Smith. I went back and read the comment I made and I said -

It seems you think it is your job as a government to assist private proponents with their desperate attempts to make wealth.

It is interesting that Mr Barnett considers my reference to a private investor attempting to make wealth as a slur on that person.

Mr Hidding - No, a desperate attempt to make wealth.

Dr WOODRUFF - I agree, Mr Hidding. I have considered my words and I think the word 'desperate' was immoderate. What I should have said was 'considered'. You are absolutely right. There is nothing desperate about the attempts of James Neville-Smith to extract money from the Tasmanian public purse; it is highly considered. He and his company are doing everything they can to do the deals they need to do behind closed doors, with Crown Lands, Treasury, the Premier's office and Forestry Tasmania to get the arrangements in place to create the wealth they want to create. That is exactly where we are and we will not stop talking about this business -

Time expired.

[3.26 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD - It is an honour to speak about the Estimates Committee B proceedings. I was at the table for a short but interesting time, specifically in the minister's portfolio regarding workplace relations and building.

We asked a number of questions. I thought I would start by expressing a little surprise that after my first question, the minister made a real point of being quite shocked that the question I had asked was reminiscent of some he had heard asked by union leader Kevin Harkins from the CFMEU. That seemed to be quite a shock to the minister. I was surprised at that shock, simply because it is not a surprise that members of the union movement would be interested in the work of WorkSafe Tasmania and the WorkCover board. In fact it is a duty for leaders in the union movement to be quite rightly interested in the work of those organisations. It would be remiss of union leaders and Labor parliamentarians not to raise issues, as we did at Estimates, around the staff numbers at WorkSafe Tasmania, about reviews into presumptive PTSD legislation, and other issues. I do not shy away for a moment from saying quite freely that I seek the views of union leaders who are experts in the field of protecting Tasmanian workers. Indeed, it is incumbent on any government minister who has responsibility for Tasmanian workers to do the same.

The first question I asked the minister, the one he found such a surprise, was quite a simple one about staff numbers in WorkSafe Tasmania and the change in work practices going on in WorkSafe Tasmania. I thought I would alert the committee to some of the numbers that were heard. There is an FTE complement of 6.8 in the north-west, 7.2 in the north and 11.4 in the south. Over the budget years we were reporting on, there was a very high number of matters referred for response to those units - 3249 in the north-west, 3620 in the north and 4916 to the south. In simple terms for the information of the committee, those 11.4 FTE who are employed in the south, and on any given day I am told there are usually six inspectors available on site, are responsible for the health and safety of 270 000 workers across 8000 businesses, small medium and large.

No, it was not surprising that a Labor MP would ask about staff numbers across WorkSafe Tasmania and about changes in work practices at WorkSafe Tasmania. That was vital information for the committee to hear at Estimates and for the committee hear again today.

The next question I asked the minister was about the review of the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988, specifically the decision of the parliament last year to legislate for a review into presumptive PTSD legislation for certain workers. We support the work of the WorkCover board and we support the right of frontline workers to have presumptive PTSD legislation introduced - in fact, it was an election commitment from Labor. What I did find extraordinary was that rather than doing the right thing and simply providing for presumptive PTSD legislation for first responders, or commissioning a review from the WorkCover board, the Government chose to take the very long path of legislating to make the review happen. That has really truncated the time line available for the work and for public consultation. We did have it confirmed from the chair of the WorkCover board that there will not be time for public consultation or submissions into that review because of the tight legislative time frames.

Those tight legislative time frames are, in fact, time frames that were chosen by this Government when they took the decision to legislate to conduct a review, rather than simply doing a review or introducing presumptive PTSD legislation.

The final area of questioning during my time at the table in that portfolio was the removal of step-down provisions for workers compensation that the Police minister announced in his portfolio for police officers. We asked questions about whether that would be extended to other first responders, including firefighters, nurses, paramedics and the like. We were told that was in scope for the work of the WorkCover board. I am quite pleased to hear that that is potentially the case. I am told by my colleagues in the upper House that the answer was a little bit less clear when there was questioning on that same line for removal of step-down provisions in workers compensation

law for first responders. I seek further clarification from the minister in today's process around who is in scope for consideration for removal of step-down provisions for workers compensation. Is it going to be simply limited to police? Are other first responders in the mix for the work that the WorkCover board will be doing in their investigations? Will other categories of employees, outside of first responders, for example, cleaners who also work in jobs that can often lead to injuries of all kinds, be considered in that legislation review by the WorkCover board?

[3.33 p.m.]

Mr BROOKS - Mr Chairman, I speak on this committee because of my deep affection for mining operations and mining requirements across Tasmania and for what that sector actually provides, not only to the budget but to the community as a whole. It is not just about the revenue, the royalties, payroll tax or those types of things, but about the flow-on effects of small business, of jobs growth, of housing investment and of people relocating here. Within the report it is listed as an output under Resources, such as MRT relocation, mine restart support, mining royalties, jobs numbers and those sorts of things. I have not spoken about mining in detail for a little while and it is really an important aspect.

If you look at what the mining industry provides to the community - even those who oppose all mining use products from it every single day. Tasmania has an amazing amount of mineral resources available. We also have very stringent environmental controls and protections in place.

Ms O'Connor - Venture has 800 000 cubic metres of acid-forming rocks sitting up there on the river.

CHAIR - Order. Ms O'Connor, you will have opportunity for a 10-minute contribution. Please do not interject on Mr Brooks.

Mr BROOKS - That is great. I find it interesting around mining investment and mining projects and I have said this previously - probably not to Ms O'Connor - people like mining, but just not here. Some people think it should be in Third World countries where there are no controls. I stand by the strict environmental requirements that are put in place for mining operations and the people who work on mining operations themselves.

Dr Woodruff - What about the remediation they did not keep any money for?

CHAIR - Order.

Mr BROOKS - I will get to that in a minute, Dr Woodruff. I suppose the question is, do -

Dr Woodruff interjecting.

CHAIR - Order, Dr Woodruff. Order.

Mr BROOKS - Out of control, as always, but that is typical of the Greens. They think they are above the law in a lot of ways.

The question is does Dr Woodruff support mining?

Ms O'Connor - Our policy is really clear if you have a look at our statements. Those existing mines are fine.

CHAIR - Order.

Mr BROOKS - I am pretty sure I have seen a couple of vehicles out the front -

CHAIR - Through the Chair please, Mr Brooks.

Mr BROOKS - Of course, through the Chair, I have seen a lot of cars out in that car park and some of those cars have some green-leaning stickers on them. I am pretty sure those cars would have come from products that came out of the ground and from mineral processing and come from things.

Ms O'Connor - What an illuminating observation.

Mr BROOKS - What I find interesting is the fact that those who do not like mining operations are quite happy to use the products that come from them every day. That shows the complete hypocrisy of the anti-everything brigade who say, 'we do not like mining, we do not like mineral exploration, we do not like mineral extraction but we need the products from it'. Always what we see is the hypocrisy of the Labor-Greens opposition that stands for nothing other than hypocrisy.

We proudly stand behind the mining industry in Tasmania, not just because it delivers the products that everybody in this Chamber uses on a daily basis, but for the economic benefits that it provides in line with very stringent environmental controls, and very strict requirements. It also engages people who do care for the environment. This is part of the challenge.

Some in the community, mainly the greenies out there in the community, try to demonise those who work in mine sites -

Ms O'Connor - Says the person demonising environmentalists.

Mr BROOKS - Try to demonise those who are trying to earn a living. They demonise those that work in an industry that they do not like, but they like the products that come from it. I am proud to stand up here alongside my very good friend and colleague, Mr Barnett, who is seeking some clarification.

The mining industry in Tasmania is crucial to our economic viability and crucial to the opportunities for so many Tasmanians who want a job. It is also crucial to the industries it supports. Even if that is advanced manufacturing, for example the buses we are manufacturing on the north-west coast, I am sure there would be a fair few products out of the mining industry that go into that.

I proudly stand up today on behalf of the mining sector and the many people who work in it and the many industries it supports, with the knowledge there are a lot of people who work in the mining and mineral extraction industry who do care for the environmental impact inappropriate practices can have. If we look at the legacy from periods gone by, we are still paying for those today. To the credit of governments -

Ms O'Connor - Yes, Shree and the Nelson Bay River mine - 80 000 cubic metres.

Mr CHAIRMAN - Order.

Mr BROOKS - I will give the Labor Party credit, which I admit I do not like doing very often, because they also understand the importance of mining. When they had the Greens in Cabinet they shut the industry down to a point. They all agree on the importance of the mining sector in Tasmania. That is one industry in the north-west. Our relocation of MRT was opposed by Labor and the Greens, opposed by the past leader, Bryan Green, opposed by the current leader, Ms White, and sometimes opposed by the members for Braddon, Dr Broad and Ms Dow, but we stand beside the industry in that policy initiative that restored confidence in the mining sector. This Budget includes investment in exploration drilling where we have to compete for those mining and exploration investment dollars. That is crucial to the continuation of the mining sector in Tasmania.

I had the privilege of attending, alongside my good friend and minister and colleague from Braddon, Mr Jaensch, the celebration of Grange's operation. They employ some tremendous people but they also take very seriously their environmental responsibility and the rehabilitation responsibility that comes with extraction and mineral extraction as well as mineral resource exploration. We stand proudly by the mining sector -

Time expired.

[3.43 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR - Mr Chairman, what a load of bollocks we heard again from the member for Braddon, who gets up in this place, makes the same speech, just variations on a theme, a bit of a cut-and-paste and a bit of a total sledge, and really has no idea how to conduct himself in a thoughtful and considered way in debate, none whatsoever. We hear the same garbage. I will tell you something, Mr Brooks, I grew up on Stradbroke Island, a sand mining island. My father, who had worked for Gough Whitlam, after Whitlam lost went and worked in the sand mines at Stradbroke Island. My sister, brother and I used to go out and collect wattle seeds in hessian sacks for money to replant sand mining areas. Don't give us this garbage that we do not understanding the importance of mining to human civilisation.

You present this House with a false choice that we cannot have good mining and the protection of wilderness, and you did not go anywhere near the fact that Shree, which was a dodgy company that fell over, has left 80 000 cubic metres of acid-forming rock on the banks of the Nelson Bay River. You, Mr Brooks, are disgrace to this Chamber and to this place.

I did not have the pleasure of Mr Barnett's company for the full day of Estimates Committee B in his session but the short time I had with him was not illuminating in any way, shape or form. What we do know from the budget papers is that a special dividend was paid by Forestry Tasmania, the entity with the Orwellian title of Sustainable Timbers Tasmania, to government of \$15 million out of a \$60 million sale of 29 000 hectares of public plantations in the last term of government. There is still a subsidy going to Forestry Tasmania. That subsidy at the moment sits at about \$45 million, which is the spare change from the \$60 million from the sale of a public plantation asset.

We had no clarity from the minister about how the lease and licence process for the proposed logging of rainforest species in conservation areas and regional reserves will be undertaken. We are talking about trees here such as sassafras, myrtle, celery top and King Billy, extraordinary trees that have been put into reserves. Some of them, like the Savage River Regional Reserve, were protected by former prime minister John Howard in 2005. It is that Savage River Regional Reserve that Mr Barnett wants to allow the loggers into to hook out rainforest trees. That is wilful recklessness and wilful ignorance to the fact that industrial native forest logging almost wiped out

the special species sector here because of their wanton waste at public expense. We have all seen images of whole forests burned and special species left on the ground to burn because they were not part of the business model of Gunns and Forestry Tasmania at the time.

Sadly, it is a bit like whaling in the Derwent. There comes a point when you can no longer justify further destruction because you have taken so much in the past or allowed so much to be wasted. That is the scenario we are dealing with now. The reason the special timbers sector is being encouraged to go into areas set aside for their protection is because for decades, Forestry Tasmania, in collusion with majority governments and Gunns, paid no respect to the needs of the special species sector. They allowed myrtle and sassafras to be torched on the forest floor. In fact rainforest trees were going to the chipper.

The industry has cost the special species sector a future because it was just take, take, take, and what you cannot take, burn. That is why we are in a situation where we have a minister who is stuck in the twentieth century and thinks that a living and beautiful thing that is part of this biosphere is there for human beings to extract and take. It is exactly that attitude that has got us into the environmental strife we are in. We are hurtling towards climate disaster. It is because of a mindset that says we can take everything, we are entitled to everything, and if it earns a buck, that is the only justification we need.

As we know, unless forestry in Tasmania is in the plantation sector, it does not earn a dollar. It costs taxpayers a dollar. We have contracts embedding subsidies out to 2027. We have subsidies coming in which the Government is pretending are not subsidies. I think I even heard the Treasurer talk about indirect subsidies. A subsidy is a subsidy is a subsidy. So we have subsidies coming in from the sale of public assets and a mission to log 356 000 hectares of high conservation value forest across the state from 1 July 2020. A fact the minister conveniently ignores is that the industry agreed that those areas should be set aside for conservation. The industry has a large area of permanent timber production land and the 356 000 hectares was part of a brokered agreement that took a lot of sweat, tears and compromise to reach. We have places like the Southern Forests and the forests on Bruny, and Tasman, at Wyelangta and up in the Blue Tier in the north east, the Tarkine, the great Western Tiers, and on the west coast, which the West Coast Wilderness Railway drives through, that this minister would log.

He would log the forests - coupe 191, which sits in the middle of the West Coast Wilderness Railway's track. He would log that if he had his way. That is the policy that we are dealing with. A minister who refuses to tell the truth about what is happening to jobs in the forestry sector. The growth is in the plantation sector. In the four years that the Liberal Party was in government, the Australian Bureau of Statistics data is very clear: 1100 jobs were lost from the forestry sector on this minister's watch. He gets in here with his propaganda, 'We are rebuilding the forest industry'. Well, not on the numbers.

The final comment I wanted to make was in relation to the minister's total disrespect for Her Majesty the Queen. Mr Barnett claims to be a monarchist, yet when we put the question to him about whether he would reflect his love for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in making sure that we made a contribution to the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy, he dismissed that request out of hand. We had table thumping. 'God save the Queen', he said.

Mr Brooks - Are you a monarchist?

Ms O'CONNOR - I love Elizabeth and respect her greatly. I am a republican, but I love Elizabeth. The minister out of the side of his mouth says I love the Queen and I am an avowed monarchist. The Queen, who is over 80 years old, as one of her last wishes -

Ms Butler - She is over 90 now.

Ms O'CONNOR - Over 90 now? Wow. You would think an avowed monarchist, knowing how old Her Majesty is, you would think a minister who had the power to make a gift to her, to the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy, you would think so would you not, Mr O'Byrne?

Mr O'Byrne - You would. How many opportunities do you get?

Ms O'CONNOR - Words are cheap. He has this opportunity, as a minister of the Crown with the forestry portfolio right now, to write to Her Majesty and say, 'Your Majesty, it is a mark of my love and respect for you that I am prepared to protect some extra forests in Tasmania in your name', but no. No, he banged the table, said 'God save the Queen' and in the other side of his mouth he said, 'Not enough - I do not love her enough'. That was basically what he was saying. It was very disappointing.

Mr O'Byrne - As she was passing by.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, he did but see her passing by and said I am not giving you one more stick.

Mr O'Byrne - Cop that.

Ms O'CONNOR - That is right, cop that. So words are cheap. This is an opportunity - 53 nations of the Commonwealth have signed up to make a contribution towards the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy. It is her wish that the nations of the Commonwealth contribute, yet Mr Barnett snubbed her as he saw her passing by.

[3.53 p.m.]

Ms STANDEN - I rise to make a brief contribution in relation to Mr Barnett's Estimates committee hearings. I had the pleasure of his company for all of 90 minutes, joining my colleague, Ms Haddad, on Building and Construction, then the last half hour on Veterans' Affairs.

I want to make a few points on Veterans' Affairs. I do not think I asked Mr Barnett this, but I did ask it of Mrs Petrusma regarding the department of communities, a newly formed department. I want to know the cost of establishing this department, and its policy intent. I believe it is about bringing together a range of programs and services directed at improving outcomes for communities, children in particular, and veterans in this part of the portfolio. I respect that policy intent. As a former bureaucrat, I understand the disruptive cost of establishing a new department within the public service. When I asked Mrs Petrusma what it cost to establish the new department, she said not one dollar, not one cent. Not one additional dollar had been established within the Budget for this endeavour. That is incredible.

There is no greater example of why that is the case than when it came to examining the Estimates around Veterans' Affairs. The budget papers talk about budget allocations for the active recreation program. It is an excellent program for veterans in partnership with Parks and Wildlife. There are similar intents for seniors. I asked the Premier in his portfolio as Minister for Parks

whether he would be open to this for children and youths. He indicated that he was. In terms of the Government's goal of being the healthiest state by 2025, it should be more open to these types of innovative initiatives. They promote physical activity to areas of the community that would not necessarily have the same opportunities, particularly lower income backgrounds. I applaud that endeavour. The amount of funding allocated for that is \$75 000 per annum over three years, a total of \$225 000.

I asked Mr Barnett how the one-off \$50 000 for Armistice events would be allocated, given the number of RSLs. A Google search found 51 RSLs in the state. It beggars belief that \$50 000, or a little less than \$1000 per RSL, would go very far. From memory the minister said there would be regional services rather than the pot being divvied up 50 different ways. You would hope that is the case, although I attended a good service recently to remember the Boer War. It was obvious that a great deal of volunteer effort had gone into pulling it together. Events like this have increasing significance in the Tasmanian community. My son is 10 years old and he and other kids of that age are getting behind remembrance events of various kinds, particularly as time moves on from these wars. It is wonderful to see young people taking the time to pause, reflect and understand the notion of service to the community. It is difficult for them to understand the very real impact of husbands being away for years, the loss of brothers, uncles, whole communities decimated by war. It is wonderful to see the Government putting funding aside to allow the community to recognise such events.

However, \$50 000 will not go very far. I would like to see a considered approach for funding such events in the future. Perhaps the Teddy Sheean grant program will go some way towards that. I know of the minister's passion for remembrance of Teddy Sheean and his contributions to this state. I applaud his initiative in naming the grant program after that great man. I think that \$300 000, \$100 000 per annum over three years, is for grants. Also the Frank MacDonald Memorial Prize study tour grant of \$405 000, Time-out Workshop \$45 000, RSL project funding support for clubs and a headstone project of \$40 000. It was not clear and we did not get to a discussion of how that money would be prioritised and how many headstones would be funded.

I have a science degree and a masters in business administration. I do not profess to be an accountant but I have some understanding of figures from that professional background and as a senior public servant for many years, and any rudimentary adding up of those figures comes to \$665 000 for 2018-19. That is on page 16 of the budget papers. On page 31, a few pages over, it is \$734 000 and I could not understand where the discrepancies there lay. It did not appear, for instance, that the core funding for RSLs appears within the budget output there, so that was the question I put. The department and the minister agreed to take that on notice and provide some clarification of the budget figures. I thought it was indicative of the rushed nature of establishing a new department and all that is involved in carving up the funding streams between different areas of the department where those discrepancies arose.

To make matters worse, I looked back to their policy document about supporting our veterans. The elements were there, but I noticed a notice of motion proudly touting an indication that the Government had fully funded its commitments of \$750 000 per annum, so which is it? Is it \$665 000, is it \$734 000, or is it \$750 000 as indicated in the notice of motion and in the policy document? The elements appear to be there but it is not clear and it is not good governance to provide that information to the public but not be clear as to how those figures add up.

On an initial look at the Liberal policy document my maths added up an additional cost to this policy over three years being \$750 000 and it looked to me like the funding commitments were

actually \$175 000 short. There are at least two or three different ways of adding up the figures. Whilst what is intended in terms of supporting our veterans is a good thing, as they say the devil is in the detail, and it would be good to see some reassurance that those elements are all there.

In relation to skills development I am going to make the point later about the allocation for TasCOSS of \$350 000 over two years for industry development. That is a good thing, but if one looks at Saul Eslake's figures the shortfall is significant in relation to hospitality industry development -

Time expired.

[4.03 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER - I rise to respond to Estimates Committee B and reaffirm my support for industries, which create jobs. I will start by talking about this Estimates process. As a newbie, I found it really interesting to watch the dynamics and theatre of the Estimates process.

Mr O'Byrne - You've got to get out more.

Ms BUTLER - Yes, I do need to get out more.

Mr Hidding - You should have been around when it first started - my word, it was on.

Ms BUTLER - I remember being one of those people who used to pull together those massive folders that the ministers have in front of them. I understand how much work those government departments put into those folders and the sheer amount of effort and information those people bring to the Estimates table. It was quite an enjoyable process, but you are right, maybe I should get out more.

I would like to continue talking about the potential southern port in Huonville and the logistical infrastructure requirements to support such a site at this stage. I asked the minister a few questions about the southern port. I am aware that their proposal would see Southwood Fibre process certified plantation forests at the existing Southwood processing facility before being transported on forestry roads to a purpose-built loading facility at Strathblane and then packed into vessels for export. On paper, the new Southwood facility would open up more options for owners of certified plantation and native forest to gain a greater return on woodchip logs, with a local option cutting the transportation costs of moving product to the north for export, reducing the number of log trucks driving to Bell Bay. Southwood Fibre claims that the venture could generate \$55 million of economic activity annually.

Quorum formed.

Ms BUTLER - I am sure the community would welcome the opportunity for secure employment but there has been little community consultation undertaken and the question concerning whether appropriate approvals have been sought for the building of the facility is contentious. The group has stated that they will utilise existing forestry roads to transport the product to the southern port. I asked the minister what state those roads are in and whether there had been any expectation from the group that the Government would potentially pay for the improvements to these roads. It is expensive infrastructure. I asked during Estimates how much money the Government had put towards the facility to date and the minister's answer was, 'At

Strathblane, none'. He then stated that the proponent had not requested any funding support for the development.

Due to my status as a newbie I should have asked about the associated investment from the Government such as roads and complementary infrastructure to the facility and what deals had been done by the Government to secure private investment by Southwood. The proposal includes an offshore loading facility, amenities, a woodchip pile site, access roads and a ship loading conveyor belt to transport the woodchips to waiting bulk carrier ships. Is the plan to transport the wood by truck through the Huonville township and has there been any consultation done with local people, with the community?

I am curious as to the status of those development applications and I will go back to the community consultation. Does the community feel included in this process? The information I am receiving is that they feel isolated from the process.

Another matter of concern is the consultation between yourself and the salmon industry and what you, as a minister, are doing to listen to the concerns.

They are both extremely important industries to our community and we need to make sure we have a good balance. It is my understanding the boats with those products would dock regularly between the shore and Tassal lease areas and that seems to be the main bone of contention there. I know Tassal has voiced their concerns and I am aware there are permits for the southern port and they are approved by the council and other appropriate authorities. Can I have some more information about where that is all at?

With the new facility, I am aware it would be a major lift for landholders who own plantation lots in southern Tasmania. The big question is when will you turn the first sod, minister? Has it progressed that far and when will construction of a facility potentially start? Do you consider the approval process and the consultation will end up being a positive or a negative?

Ms O'Connor - It is an assessment process, not an approval process.

Mr DEPUTY CHAIRMAN - Order.

Ms BUTLER - An assessment process, thank you. I am a practical person and I understand the projected injection of \$55 million a year into the local economy would support the local plantation owners across the south and help them grow their operations and generate more jobs. I understand that and I hope projects like these will help rebuild the sector in a region that has faced significant difficulties in recent times, including the closure of the Triabunna mill and export facility, the demise of management investment schemes and low woodchip prices.

The private forest estate now contributes 73 per cent of the state's forestry production and, through projects like the Southwood export facility, more options are open to our private growers. I recognise the importance of forestry to our overall state economy and our regional economies. I will monitor the progress of the Southwood Fibre woodchip export facility closely and I hope there is a market for the product and the facility will continue to completion.

[4.13 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT - Mr Deputy Chairman, it is an honour to support this motion and to highlight the importance of each of these portfolio areas in the context of the budget debate. Despite the

disinterest from the other side for the responses I have, I highlight that Energy, Resources and Building and Construction are very exciting portfolios. Likewise, Veterans' Affairs is an important part of the fabric of Tasmania and it is great honour and privilege to be an advocate for each of these portfolios.

I will respond to some of the observations, reflections and criticisms from those who have contributed during this debate. In wrapping up and summarising, with respect to energy and energy policy, our Government will put Tasmanians first. The Tasmania-First Energy Policy is a very good one because it is delivering lower prices for Tasmanians. The cost of living is a top priority issue for Tasmanians, not just individuals and families but also for small, medium and large business. The fact is, this Government is delivering. In our Tasmania-First Energy Policy, we have a plan to have the lowest regulated power prices in Australia by 2022. Likewise by 2022, we have a plan to have 100 per cent fully self-sufficient, fully renewable energy generated here in Tasmania. That plan is backed up with action.

We have come from challenging circumstances where in 2015-16 there were electricity security challenges and through my predecessor we put in place - and congratulations to Matt Groom for putting in place the Energy Supply Plan that led Tasmania through a difficult and challenging time with no interruption to supply. This was on the back of 16 years of Labor but specifically the last four as a Labor-Greens government where you had a 65 per cent increase in power prices.

It was Mr O'Byrne, my shadow in terms of energy, who said and I quote: 'Government energy policy is a mess'. This is what I would describe as the gadfly of opposition politics, where he pops up here, pops up there, makes an annoying interjection or dissertation and then pops down again. This is the member who was responsible for economic development when 10 000 jobs were lost under the Labor-Greens government, when you had a 65 per cent increase in power prices for seven years. A 65 per cent increase.

Members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY CHAIRMAN - Order.

Mr O'Byrne - Even your own party kicked you off the Senate because you are a goose.

Mr DEPUTY CHAIRMAN - Order. I would ask you to withdraw that.

Mr O'BYRNE - I will withdraw it on the basis he withdraws the gadfly comment. I seek the withdrawal of the gadfly.

Mr DEPUTY CHAIRMAN - It is not a condition under negotiation, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr O'Byrne - I did not ask for it to be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY CHAIRMAN - You will withdraw.

Mr O'BYRNE - Are you saying the word 'goose' is something that I have to withdraw. Is that a ruling?

Mr DEPUTY CHAIRMAN - It is unparliamentary. It has been a longstanding tradition that that is unparliamentary and I ask you to withdraw that.

Mr O'BYRNE - In the interests of the good name of geese, I withdraw the comment.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Chair. Can I ask the question, is 'gadfly' a parliamentary word or term, to describe someone as a gadfly? So to judge that to call someone a goose is worse than to call them a gadfly? I seek your clarification on this otherwise it is becoming quite authoritarian in here.

Mr DEPUTY CHAIRMAN - I will seek clarification.

Mr BARNETT - Through you, Mr Chair, if I can continue with my contribution and say if any offence is felt or received on the other side -

Mr DEPUTY CHAIRMAN - Order, order. To save this turning into a circus that it appears to be becoming by some members, given that someone has taken offence, I ask the minister to withdraw the term he used and likewise Mr O'Byrne has withdrawn the term he used. Parliamentary standards are a long held tradition and I ask all members to use appropriate terminology and titles.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Mr Deputy Chairman. I withdraw that on the basis of the contribution that you have just made.

I go back to my point that Labor has a predisposition to higher power prices. The Liberal Government has a disposition to lower power prices and you cannot have two bob each way, which was the contribution of the Treasurer just a few moments ago. Labor is attempting to have two bob each way on the issue of power prices and that is not possible. They are supporting super profits. Labor and the Greens support super profits for our energy businesses. We support lower power prices for Tasmanians. It is that simple. A 65 per cent increase. They allowed the dams to be drained and supported energy rationing.

None of that occurred under us. We put in place the Energy Security Taskforce report and recommendations that the Tasmania First energy policy is delivering. You saw it last week with the Economic Regulator making it clear that there could have been a 10.5 per cent increase in power prices, yet it was capped at 2.05 per cent. Tasmanians are now saving more than \$150 per year and businesses more than \$160 per year. We are delivering in terms of power prices through that capping legislation and I hope that will be supported by all parties in this Chamber.

That is a response to Mr O'Byrne regarding his allegations, which are entirely unfounded. To make it clear, you cannot have two bob each way. He is trying to say there should be a unity ticket when it comes to lower prices. Get with the strength. Support the Tasmania First energy policy and get on board.

There was a reference to Momentum jobs and that the answer was not provided during Estimates. The answer was provided during Estimates and I made clear that the location for those jobs would be identified within the first year of this Government. That instruction has been provided to Hydro. That was an election promise and we are acting on that promise. We have acted already and that is underway. By the end of this term, those jobs will be returned to Tasmania. That is because we support more jobs, more growth, more development and more opportunities for Tasmanians and their families.

With respect to pumped hydro, Dr Woodruff, the Greens member for Franklin, referred to our efforts to progress pumped hydro as a 'goose chase'. She ranted against the merits of pumped hydro in her contribution to this Chamber a few moments ago. Based on the latest report, it could well deliver a \$5 billion investment over a 10- to 15-year period, 3000 jobs across rural and regional Tasmania and a doubling of our energy capacity, so another 2500 megawatts. She made reference to the fact that this policy had been canned by a range of consultants and federal economists but was not willing to say by who or provide any evidence to back that up. The criticisms are coming thick and fast from the Greens.

We are a renewable energy powerhouse and we are making the most of it for the benefit of Tasmanians. Tasmanians come first and this will deliver lower prices, more jobs and other benefits big time. The member was asking who would pay. That question was answered during Estimates and to suggest it was not is rubbish. She knows it was answered by me on the day. There is a study being undertaken for the next 18 months to look at the feasibility of these projects in terms of economic viability and who will pay. That will be a decision that will be determined in due course. They are the answers to the questions that have been put.

We are very excited about the pumped hydro and the further interconnector and what it will do to unlock a range of renewable developments, not only pumped hydro and the projects I have referred to but also a range of wind energy projects across the north-west coast and other parts of Tasmania. I have made reference to the redevelopment of Tarraleah and the doubling of the capacity of that power station, one of the oldest of our 30-odd power stations across the state, and to increase that to 220-odd megawatts. That would be injecting a \$500 million investment over a three-year period supporting hundreds of jobs through the Derwent Valley, the central highlands and across southern Tasmania. Jobs galore. I mentioned the wind farm developments at Cattle Hill and Granville Harbour during budget Estimates as well.

There was reference to the Tasmanian Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme, the solar feed-in tariff and the COAG Energy Council meeting coming up in Sydney on 10 August. That is a very important meeting regarding the National Energy Guarantee, but those on the opposition benches did not seem to express much interest in that most important policy area.

Nevertheless, in terms of the observations from the other side with respect to farm energy, I made clear during Estimates that we have a commitment that was jointly announced by the Minister for Primary Industries and Water, Sarah Courtney, and me, of a further \$750 000 being allocated to a three-year On-farm Energy and Irrigation Audit Program. This has been very much welcomed by the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association. The On-farm Energy and Irrigation Audit Program was launched on 31 May and details are available on the Department of State Growth website, so it is there for all to see.

In addition to that, Aurora Energy has already established a Farm Energy Advocate. There will be a review of tariffs relevant to the agricultural sector and that was made clear publicly before budget Estimates and again at budget Estimates. This is all on top of the CPI cap over the coming years, which is legislation that has already been tabled in parliament.

I would like to focus on the Resources sector, which was an area of interest for a number of Opposition members, specifically to say that we are very proud of the mining and mineral processing sector and likewise the forestry industry. Together they are worth over \$2 billion a year to Tasmania, with more than 10 000 jobs across the state. The wood and forestry sector is rebuilding and we are backing it with \$4 million in the Budget last year and that is continuing with a further

commitment of \$13 million in funding and training support for the new \$190 million, 80-hectare Hermal Group cross-laminated plantation timber mill and production facility in Hampshire out the back of Burnie. That is expected to create 200 new jobs and approximately 160 jobs during construction. We as a government, have committed, through the Tasmanian Development Board, a loan of up to \$30 million for the project. That is expected to begin construction within the next year. There are very good prospects indeed and certainly those on the north-west coast and those in the industry are very positive about the prospects in the future.

Of course many are very disappointed with the policy announced in the budget response by the Greens in relation to the killing off of the native forest harvesting sector in Tasmania and the abolition of Sustainable Timbers Tasmania. That would put out of work thousands of Tasmanians in one fell swoop and we reject and oppose it 100 per cent. The Greens have a policy to put out of work thousands of Tasmanians. I made it clear during budget Estimates and again today that that is a policy that we totally reject and oppose very strongly.

They also have a policy to lock up another 10 per cent of Tasmania in a Tarkine national park and World Heritage Area. That would have massive consequences, as I indicated during budget Estimates hearings and again confirmed today, with the impact on the forest industry of some \$20 million over the next 20 years, on the mining industry of some \$150 million and a dreadful impact on the number of mining leases and eight current mining licences. That includes Tasmania's biggest mine, Savage River, owned by Grange Resources. As Mr Brooks indicated in his contribution, I was there with him and Mr Jaensch just a few weeks ago to celebrate the 50-year anniversary of Savage River Mine. It was an excellent event and the prospects for the future are positive because they are looking at investing further funds in exploration - more than \$10 million in the period ahead. That means, depending on the success of that, possible underground mining. That will create significant jobs and access to more resource. The Greens policy is very dangerous and sends all the wrong messages. This can only occur under a Labor-Greens government at either the state or federal level. It will never occur under a majority Hodgman Liberal Government.

In forestry, there was a question about \$12 million for roads for Sustainable Timber Tasmania. Although that is a matter for GBE hearings at the end of the year, I am happy to confirm at budget Estimates and happy to confirm today that the \$12 million is for roads for community benefit, whether it be tourism, access for firefighting, recreational land use, or the like. That information is very clear. It is in the Budget - it is in the budget papers - and it is open and honest. It is transparent. So to suggest that is a taxpayer subsidy, is wrong. It is a community service obligation, it has been identified as such, and it benefits the tourism industry, firefighting, recreational land use and the like. We back it and we are very happy to back it.

Before I speak further on the forest sector, I want to respond to observations regarding the Mineral Resources Tasmania move from the south to the north. It was opposed up hill and down dale by the former leader of the Labor Party, until Dr Broad confirmed on the record last week that the Opposition did support it. That is a massive back flip. You do not know where you stand with Labor. They are flip-flopping all over the place. For years Labor opposed the MRT shift to the north-west coast. We saw it as an initiative to create jobs in Burnie, nearer to the heartland of the Tasmanian mining sector in the north-west and west coast. After changing their mind, Labor has the temerity to question why we have not forcibly moved all the jobs to Burnie. They must take the people of Burnie for mugs. If Labor had its way there would be no MRT jobs in Burnie - they would all be in Hobart.

Under the Government's plan, all MRT functions not associated with the Core Library have been moved to Burnie, in accordance with our promise. We are meeting our promises, we are meeting our commitments. More positions are slated for relocation to Burnie over the coming months as function dictates. The Government has been clear from the get-go that staff and functions associated with the Core Library would not be moved. I am putting that on the public record, yet again. It must be embarrassing for the Labor member, my resources shadow minister. This has been supported by the Tasmanian Mines and Energy Council -

Time expired.

Estimates of the Minister for Energy, Minister for Resources, Minister for Building and Construction and Minister for Veterans' Affairs agreed to.

DIVISION 9 -

(Minister for Racing, Minister for Primary Industries and Water)

[4.34 p.m.]

Dr BROAD - I rise to give a contribution based on Estimates Committee B, in particular time spent opposite the minister for Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment. A lot of time was spent dealing with matters of crown land. I started talking about a particular issue with Shane and Sharni Radford at Moriarty. I went to see them as they had some issues with crown land, particularly a crown land dispute on a reserved road. Reserved roads are land intended for a road or put aside for a road sometime down the track. Quite often these roads are a historical artefact and not useful. However, they can result in access issues. I discussed them with the Radfords. I was given advice from the Chair that I should not name people unless I had their permission. I had permission from Shane and Sharni Radford to discuss their case. It was the minister who named the proponent opposing their application to purchase the reserved road. I am not sure if the minister was aware that was not the case, that I did not mention the other proponent, but the minister did, so that was quite ironic.

I moved to issues on crown land access roads in Howth, particularly with reference to the honourable member for Montgomery, Leonie Hiscutt. The situation in Howth is complex.

A number of reserved roads were put in place years ago so it is a chequerboard of an area. There is only one road, but there are a number of accesses that are about 20 metres wide, turning a large area into a chequerboard. They were put in place for the short-lived Copper King Mine. There were thoughts of a town there, but the Copper King Mine did not last very long and there was no need to build a town. It has left behind a number of issues.

The big issue was about the way Crown Land Services and the honourable member for Montgomery have dealt with it. A number of constituents have come to me with crown land issues that are quite complex.

I have had issues in Braddon but also outside of Braddon. One thing that needed to be cleared up was whether the honourable member for Montgomery had direct communication with Crown Land Services.

I was aware that one of the aggrieved landowners in the area had put a case to the Integrity Commission, which was dismissed. The allegation was that the member for Montgomery had used

her position to influence a decision in her dealings with Crown Land Services. I wanted to clear that up.

The honourable member for Montgomery had then apparently been at pains to distance herself from the issue. I wanted to clear that up so I asked quite a simple question to start with: was there any direct contact between the honourable member for Montgomery and Crown Land Services? The answer I received was a simple no.

What we have seen with the minister is there are easy ways to clear things up and hard ways to clear things up. Yesterday, when the member for Franklin, Dr Woodruff, raised concerns about pilchard orthomyxovirus in salmon leases, the minister could have answered that this was not an issue, that the levels are low, it is naturally occurring, and the levels of orthomyxovirus in these salmon pens is lower than previous years. That would have cleared it up. Instead, the minister segues to talking points, does not answer the question and then creates an issue because it looks like a cover-up. It is one of two things. Either the minister is not informed about her portfolio, or she does not want to give answers, and cover-up is the first instinct. Or both.

From what I understand, the Greens were shopping that issue around over the weekend and did not get any media buy-in, so the minister should have been aware that was an issue and had a prepared answer that would have cleared it up. When we get back to the Crown Land Services issue, if the minister had said there had been contact between the member for Montgomery, Leonie Hiscutt, and Crown Land Services and the Integrity Commission had made a judgment on that, it would have been a completely different scenario. We probably would not have spent a couple of hours investigating it because we would have received a lot of answers straight up.

Instead what we got was, 'No, there hasn't been any contact', and there was no effort made by the minister during the various breaks to check there had been any contact. The issue for the minister was that that was misleading because there had been contact. That is what got the whole ball rolling, unfortunately, because the member for Montgomery included in an email statements such as, 'I urge you grant me unfettered access to my most productive acreages' and so on. This hardly seems like somebody who is setting themselves aside from the issue. Instead of clearing it up, it has just been getting murkier and people are starting to wonder what comes along with this.

The minister will not commit to an internal investigation and will not even admit there had been any contact. I am not sure if the minister has had time to get Crown Land Services to do a simple email check to find out the extent of the email communication, but we know there were numerous communications between Crown Land Services and the member. Indeed, there was one passage where the member seemed to be asking for legal advice, talking about how the opposing side was engaging lawyers and asking CLS if she should engage a lawyer.

This is a situation where you have a member of parliament asking a government department, who is going to make a decision on a matter whether they should engage a lawyer, which is wholly inappropriate in anybody's mind. The minister needs to have a bit of a think about the way Crown Land Services is dealing with this and needs to be open and transparent about the level of communication between the member for Montgomery and Crown Land Services, because it is murky. What has gone on here? We need to get that cleared up.

I have mentioned already today about the buck-passing that happens. The Resources minister said I should be talking to Sustainable Timbers Tasmania, or I should be talking to the Treasurer, and so on. The member constantly directed me to make contact and discuss this with the Justice

minister, Ms Archer, the member for Denison. As we were investigating this issue in the Estimates process in Committee B, apparently if I was serious, I should have been in two places at once. I should have been in the upper House, of which I am not a member -

Ms Archer - You have two Labor members sitting at the table.

Dr BROAD - I cannot be in two places at once so I cannot ask questions, because it is going on at the same time. Are you suggesting I need to be asking questions of the minister and texting questions to other people at the same time? It is outrageous.

This matter could have been cleared up or made a bit clearer throughout the whole four hours. There were numerous opportunities to at least correct the record on the whole statement that there had been no contact. The minister stood by the comments of her department secretary that there had been no contact when there had. She would not even check the email, would not even look at it. Obviously she did not want to deal with the content of that email because it raises some serious questions and other emails, which state things like, 'Thank you for your effort to date, which has greatly improved the amenity of our titles.' That did not sound like somebody distancing themselves from the matter. Then there were things like -

I wonder if you and [name removed] could revisit this before it is finalised and consider extending the eastern access further to the east to allow access to the existing council road.

That also does not sound like somebody distancing themselves from the matter, but the minister did not even get close to admitting that there had been any contact, so apparently that contact did not exist - it is phantom contact. I do not know how you would describe it any other way. Somebody is in denial and I do not think it is us. This needs to be cleared up. Hopefully the minister has sought a review of at least the emails. We know emails are a sensitive topic on that side of the House; it seems it takes a rather long time to find emails and do email searches. It is something that maybe needs some KPIs to improve the process there so that you can quickly check emails and make sure that everything is hunky-dory.

Then we moved on to issues around fruit fly and particularly biosecurity. This Government has a horrendous record when it comes to biosecurity. There are numerous firsts when it comes to biosecurity outbreaks here since this Government has been in power for four years. We have seen myrtle rust, blueberry rust, we have seen POMS, and now we are seeing an outbreak of fruit fly. We learnt throughout the Estimates process that Plant Health Australia did a preparedness project and unfortunately flies were placed in traps and they were not found. This only happened a couple of months before the fruit fly outbreak. This goes to a pattern of behaviour and the lessons of the past are simply not learnt by this Government. The initial infections of myrtle rust that came into the state came through the nursery sector, so the lessons were not learnt. When blueberry rust also came through the nursery sector, the lessons obviously were not learnt. Then we saw a farcical situation where blueberry rust was declared to be eradicated, only to show up again literally within weeks and now has become unfortunately endemic in the state, making it very hard to eradicate.

We now see the same with fruit fly. We had a warning. We had a process issue which was identified by Plant Health Australia which the minister would not elaborate on, hiding behind supposed confidentiality in discussing the details of the report. However, we found that there were flies placed in traps that were unbeknown to Biosecurity staff as part of this project and they were not picked up. Apparently that is down to wind-stripping. But only a few months later we had fruit

fly show up in the state and, as we have seen, an outbreak in nine or so different locations. This highlights that biosecurity is a major issue for this Government and they do not seem to be learning their lessons. I asked simple questions around fruit fly. For example:

Minister, when are you assuming that Tasmania will get back to its fruit fly-free status?

The minister would not give me a direct answer on that. He would not give me an estimate of a time and basically said, 'We will do everything we can to ensure the status is regained as soon as possible'.

Yet it was only two days later when Nick Hansen from Fruit Growers Tasmania said, 'If everything goes to plan the state's fruit fly-free status could be reinstated in December'. There is no doubt the minister did not want to mention the words December and fruit fly-free in the same sentence, because it would have brought on further scrutiny, so all he said was, 'We will do everything we can to ensure the status is regained as soon as possible'.

I would really like to get on the *Hansard* the absolute power of work that Fruit Growers Tasmania president Nick Hansen has done around this whole fruit fly issue. He has been amazing in his efforts and has gone well and truly above and beyond with his efforts in helping growers cope with what has been a very difficult situation. Nick Hansen came out a couple of days later and talked about the fruit fly-free status being reinstated in December, but the minister could not. The minister basically tried to fob that off.

One thing we are seeing from this minister is no direct answers. Her first instinct is to either say nothing, or go back to the talking points, or just regurgitate the same thing over and over and it makes scrutiny very difficult. The reason this is a problem is because strawberry growers like Craig Morris who runs the Berry Patch in Turners Beach, a magnificent operation, is very concerned because November-December is probably the busiest period for his business. He is really questioning now whether he will plant strawberries, because there are no guarantees they will be fruit-fly free. Because of the market that he has, treatment and so on is not an option. He is very worried and his quote -

We are very worried what this is going to do to our long-term business.

No wonder the minister did not want to talk about this and did not want to tell us that December is likely to be the earliest. What Craig Morris says is -

We have been establishing a pretty good market in the last 10 years and we have always been a reliable supplier.

And now this is happening through absolutely no fault of their own and unfortunately these guys are on the very edge of the exclusion zone. This is the statement that came as a response from the Government -

While the cooler weather is believed to be a barrier to fruit fly establishment in Tasmania this alone cannot be relied on to achieve eradication, so it is necessary to continue with control measures over the coming months.

Which is fair enough, but we still have issues going on here. We know that fruit fly has been in the retail supply chain. Over time, we know that the Government has looked at various chambers. First it was tracked down to one fumigation chamber in Victoria and that solved the problem. Problem solved. Well, it did not. More fruit fly larvae was then found in Tasmania and it was tracked down to a second chamber. Then after that we had fruit fly found in Mowbray and then after that, the most recent fly was found in Franklin. When I asked the questions of the minister, who directed the department to answer, we got the admission that it most likely came through the retail supply chain, once again. That retail supply chain issue has not been solved.

Everybody has their fingers crossed hoping that the cold weather knocks out the flies that are currently in Tasmania. If we do not solve, or more to the point, if the Government does not solve the problem of fruit fly larvae in the retail supply chain there is going to be an outbreak somewhere else. It just happens. All you need is a rotten piece of fruit, someone says, 'that is a bit off', they chuck it to the chooks, or they put it on the compost heap, bang, you have another outbreak.

The absolute priority has to be getting fruit fly larvae out of the supply chain and everything needs to be based around that. What we also need from this Government is some preparedness for these issues. We know that they were not prepared to do anything about the rust when they discovered myrtle rust in the nursery supply sector, so maybe another outbreak of rust will occur.

People in Tasmania need confidence that you have a Government that is serious about biosecurity and that will do these preparedness projects, so that if phylloxera or some really horrible disease like that showed up we would be prepared and the Government would know what to do in case of that. The minister in her answer to one of my questions talked about a risk-based method - managing biosecurity based on a risk profile. That is 100 per cent: I agree with that in totality. You cannot have a zero risk strategy; you have to have a risk-based strategy. However, you also need to be prepared. If the worst happens the Government needs to be prepared. You cannot dillydally with these things - we certainly saw that with blueberry rust, and we have seen with fruit fly that the Government simply was not prepared. That highlighted the outcomes of the Plant Health Australia investigation.

There was one thing that I did not get onto during Estimates and that was to do with irrigation, with the Tas Irrigation tranche 3, which seemed to be just a cobbled together wish list. There are a number of projects on there that seem rather odd. The first one I talk about is the Meadstone project which is on the list. I would like the minister to clarify whether that dam will literally hold water. I have seen the file on that. The Meadstone dam has been mooted a number of times, but the dam site is on fractured rock. The fractured rock simply will not hold water. Yet, again, Meadstone dam is being talked about.

Another project at Redpa of 3200 megalitres -

Time expired.

[4.54 p.m.]

Mr BACON - Mr Deputy Chairman, I rise to speak on the Estimates Committee B examination for Minister for Racing and Minister for Primary Industries and Water. We kicked off the day with an examination of the racing output, which was every interesting from my point of view. We had some initial questions around the appointment of a new CEO for Tasracing which the minister, as is her right, did not answer but put off until December. It was a little bit frustrating in terms of that appointment, which will be made before we get to the GBE in December.

I wanted answers to concerns raised by the industry that either a review is done into Tasracing and the way the racing portfolio is dealt with across government before a new CEO is appointed, or that industry could have a voice at the table through the chair of Racing Clubs Tasmania when it comes to the selection of a new CEO for Tasracing. This is a fairly reasonable request, you would have thought. The minister refused to address that issue until December when it will be too late.

The issue of a point of consumption tax around online gaming which has been introduced right around the country. It will be in place right around Australia apart from the Northern Territory which has a low tax environment to attract corporate bookmakers. The rest of the country will have it in place, a consumption tax for online gaming. This started off in South Australia at 15 per cent. Now there is a range of different rates around the country. New South Wales is 12.5 per cent and Western Australia is 15 per cent. The industry has written to the minister to point out that this is an opportunity. There are not many opportunities for government to look for further revenue sources at this point. It appears from what the minister said in Estimates that her concerns in representing the industry do not run that deep. She is happy to wait for advice from the Treasurer when it comes to this issue, which is disappointing. You would like to see more proactiveness, standing up for the industry, from a new minister.

The Labor Party is a strong supporter of this industry. It provides jobs around the state, particularly in our regional areas. The Labor Party has been a long-term supporter of the racing industry. As supporters of the industry, we wish the minister luck in this new portfolio. We hope it goes well. However, the minister has not started off on the best foot when a respectful request has come through from the industry to look into this tax. Effectively the minister has handed it over to the Treasurer and not put forward a strong case on behalf of the industry. This would go a long way to putting the industry on a sustainable footing for the long term.

There were some issues that it appeared the minister was unwilling to delve into, first saying the incoming minister was not briefed on cultural issues within the Office of Racing Integrity over the past few years. It is around two-and-a-half years that the Office of Racing Integrity has been part of the department of Primary Industries and Water. In that time evidence was given to the committee by Dr Whittington that in the last 12 months there had been three workers compensation claims within the Office of Racing Integrity. I will look for the exact quote he used and it is, 'all three claims are due to mental stress'. It appears 100 per cent of the workers compensation issues within Racing Integrity in the last 12 months have been due to mental stress and of 47 workers compensation claims across the department, 11 are down to mental stress and three of those in Racing Integrity. It does seem that there is a high proportion of stress on those hardworking members of Racing Integrity.

There was some reticence on behalf of the minister. After initially saying she was not briefed about historical cultural issues within Racing Integrity, she later went on to say she did not want to confirm exactly what briefings had taken place as an incoming minister, which is interesting. If there had been a long-running issue, which is what it appeared from evidence from Dr Whittington and evidence from the head of Racing Integrity, Mr King, in putting things in place to improve the culture, that would come from a background of problems in the past.

We hope these things do improve. We do not want people in their workplace to feel under mental stress to the point where they cannot perform their duties. I certainly wish Mr King well in his new job and the minister all the best in resolving those cultural issues, which have been raised with me time and time again. They have been ongoing for a period of time and are not as yet

resolved, so we certainly want to see that resolved in the best interests of the people working within the Office of Racing Integrity.

There was also talk about the New Norfolk harness club, which was deregistered by the Government. In early 2017, Tasracing recommended to the Director of Racing that the New Norfolk Pacing Club did not meet the requirements of club registrations, as set down in section 40 of the act. This recommendation was based on the solvency of the club and other administrative matters. I would be interested if the minister could update the House on a bit more information. There was only an hour provided for Racing and we ran out of time. We got to the fact that it was a solvency issue for the club but there were other administrative matters involved, so it would be interesting if the minister, in her contribution, could outline for the House exactly what those administrative matters were.

I sat in on the examination for the Primary Industries and Water output as well. It was disappointing to see some of the minister's reluctance to answer, particularly on issues around a couple of crown land disputes, one involving the Leader of Government Business in the upper House and an email that the minister seemed to want to claim did not exist. Of course it exists and could have easily been found by the department. There was an opportunity given going into the lunchbreak for the department to find that email, give the minister a chance to have a look at it and then correct the record around saying there had been no direct contact between the Leader of Government Business in the upper House and the department when it comes to this long-running crown land dispute. I am sure there is more to follow on this issue.

As the shadow minister just talked about, there was a lot of talk around biosecurity - fruit fly and other issues. The minister is obviously new in the role and there are some very big portfolios when it comes to our primary industries and our important racing industry as well. We would support the Government in seeing the racing industry more as an agricultural pursuit in breeding more horses in the state. We are well suited to breed more horses in Tasmania and if we can get the incentives right, hopefully we can turn around what has been a decline in breeding not just in the thoroughbred code, but particularly in the harness code. We have seen that decline in breeding in recent years. We want to see that reversed if possible and we think some of the things put in place by the Government will hopefully lead to an improvement in breeding in Tasmania.

We have only really seen the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the breeding industry in Tasmania and we want to see that improved, but we urge the minister to take on the concerns of the racing industry with more enthusiasm when it comes to their sustainability. We urge the Treasurer to look at the point of consumption tax, which figures have said could raise \$10 million a year for the Tasmanian government. This is not a tax on Tasmanians. This would in fact be a tax on corporate bookmakers and there is no reason that the Government should not introduce it at the first available opportunity.

Time expired.

[5.04 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR - There are just two issues I am going to highlight today in my response to the Minister for Primary Industries and Water and Crown Lands budget Estimates. You may or may not want this advice, Ms Courtney, but I am going to give it to you for free. As a new minister, you should try to get into the practice of giving straight answers. What we have seen out of you, Ms Courtney, particularly, is an aversion to giving straight answers, a reliance on scripted responses and reading lengthy materials that have been provided to you by your department or somebody in

your office, where the default response is to deflect, avoid or deny. It is extremely disappointing but unsurprising, because Ms Courtney spent the past four years, her first four years in parliament, watching that happen all the time. There is a very small handful of ministers in the last term of government who could be counted on to give something close to a straight answer when they were elected.

Mr Hidding - She should ask the Parliamentary Library for some footage of you when you were minister to see how well you went.

Ms O'CONNOR - My word she should. I would be very happy for Ms Courtney to do that because we made a point of answering questions that were asked in a straight way to the greatest extent possible. If, for example, I had been asked about some of those crown lands issues, I would have immediately said we can put them on notice.

We wanted to get to the bottom of how much crown land is being leased, sold or traded in some form under this Government's EOI process for developments in the World Heritage Area, national parks and other crown lands. I first asked the Minister for Parks, and you would think he would have some idea but, no, he said I would have to talk to the minister responsible for crown lands. We asked the State Growth minister, because he is overseeing the EOI process, how many areas of crown lands were subject to the EOI process and he flicked the question off to the Coordinator-General, who said, 'That is confidential.'

When we asked the minister responsible for crown lands, Ms Courtney, what was the area of crown land as at 30 March 2014 and the area of crown land as at 30 March 2018, we still have not received a straight answer on that question. When I was reviewing the Estimates *Hansard* I saw that Mr Whittington committed to bring that information back. I have not seen it and I do not know if I have missed it, but it would be good to have access to that information.

The major disappointment in the Estimates of Ms Courtney was on the issue of animal welfare. Ms Courtney was on the parliamentary inquiry into the greyhound racing industry in Tasmania. In Estimates Dr Woodruff asked her questions about the cruelty inherent in this industry that sees dogs killed because they are not fast enough or have gone past their use-by date; dogs that are catastrophically injured at tracks that encourage injuries because of the way they are designed; and questions about the treatment of greyhounds. Ms Courtney made an unequivocal statement, saying, 'I absolutely reject your assertion that the industry is inherently cruel.'

All the evidence presented to the joint select inquiry was that, at its foundation, this industry is cruel because it relies on the breeding of lots of beautiful greyhounds in order to feed the industry and relies on a model of animal husbandry that sees these dogs put in cages that are one metre wide by two metres long, as the regulations allow them to do. It is an inherently cruel industry when dogs are being shot because they are not fast enough or because they have run their last race and the trainer or the owner could not be bothered going through the GAP or Brightside. It is much easier for some trainers and owners to simply put a bullet in the head of a dog and we do not know how many dogs have been disposed of in this way because the data is still woefully incomplete.

This is despite the findings of the joint select inquiry that the data needed tightening up significantly because we need to be able to track an animal from its birth to the end of its life. That information is still not available because it still has not been implemented. This is an inherently cruel industry that relies on the breeding of surplus dogs so you can find one that will win some money for you. This is an inherently cruel industry because it endorses the killing of dogs that are not fast enough, and nothing Ms Courtney says on that can deny the facts of the grotesque cruelty

of the greyhound racing industry and the fact that it does not have majority community support. We know that from the hundreds and hundreds of emails that came in to us during the joint select inquiry, from letters to the editor in the paper, and people who rang up talkback radio who recognise that this industry is cruel at its foundation.

I have no doubt there are greyhound owners, breeders and trainers who are good people who love their dogs, but they are not in the majority in an industry which has a business model based on breeding dogs to dispose of them before the term of their natural life. Therefore it was doubly disappointing to have the minister effectively crab walk away from the commitments made by her predecessor to ensure that a second tranche of amendments went through in this and the last term of parliament to some of the 60 recommendations put forward by the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. Just in case anyone in this place wants to say that the AWAC is made up of bleeding hearts, at the moment with the retirement of Malcolm Caulfield, the principal solicitor of Animals Australia, there is only one voice on the AWAC that is solely focused on animal welfare and that is the RSPCA. It is a committee made up in significant part of industry and primary producer participants.

On that basis, the recommendations made in 2013 with that make-up of AWAC have been effectively dismissed by the minister. They are not revolutionary recommendations. They are clear in that they recognise the intrinsic rights of animals. One of the most significant and neglected recommendations of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee in 2013 was to amend the act to clarify that pain and suffering includes, but is not limited to, distress, mental suffering and physical suffering. I ask the minister and anyone else in this place, when you think about the greyhound racing industry - and for anyone who saw the images that Dr Woodruff put to the minister on the Estimates committee day - would you want that to be the way a dog you loved was treated? I think not, but the problem here is cultural and it is embedded in legislation, because under our statutes greyhounds are a different class of dog; they are regarded as livestock. Part of the reason they are regarded as so disposable by the greyhound racing industry is because they are regarded as livestock and they have a different and far diminished set of rights to welfare than the family pet, for example.

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee made 60 recommendations, 12 of which came through under the minister's predecessor, Mr Rockliff, who I must acknowledge helped us to facilitate the establishment of the joint select inquiry into greyhound racing at a time when there was not the fluidity of the numbers we have in this place. He had tripartisan support for it. Some changes came into the parliament that principally focused on increasing the penalties, which is important, but if you think that penalties alone will change behaviours you are wrong. The proof of that is that in the United States they have the death penalty in a number of jurisdictions, but it does not stop people who are violent sociopaths or psychopaths or just hell-bent on taking a life. Penalties are no deterrent. What we need to do is have a contemporary act that recognises the intrinsic rights of animals and gives inspectorates much stronger power.

I see that the minister is just over this and has her head thrown back in the chair, but I urge her to instead of saying she is going to consult on whether there should be changes, to read the recommendations of AWAC, the committee she so roundly ignores.

Time expired.

[5.14 p.m.]

Mr HIDDING - It is one thing putting up with free character assessments, but to have a description of how somebody is sitting in the House described as disinterested at this time of the day -

Ms O'Connor - The minister was sitting there rolling her eyes.

Mr HIDDING - No, she was not doing any such thing. It is just cruel to do that to anyone in this place.

This was a robust scrutiny and, by and large, I think the parliamentary process ran its course and did a good job. I think the minister did a good job. Questions were strong. There were some lowlights with people being tossed out. In fact I will make the point that -

Dr Broad - Not in that committee. That was the next day. Not with this minister.

Mr HIDDING - That is right, it was, so I cannot raise that now. There was in fact a person the following day who deliberately said something to get thrown out and was. Doing it deliberately is just beyond the pale and in the long run does not do any of us any good in this place.

One of the portfolios of this minister is of course fisheries. Tasmania has a world-class wild farmed seafood sector, worth around \$900 million to the Tasmanian economy and supporting thousands of jobs, and the great news, particularly for me in the electorate of Lyons, is that most of these jobs are in regional communities. Wherever I go around Lyons, around the coast and further afield in Franklin you see ports like Dover and St Helens wherever you go. The fishing boats are at Nubeena, for instance, where they are in and out of there regularly because the Port Arthur jetty is used over summer by visiting cruise ships. The number of people it sustains, not necessarily on the fishing boats, but the people around it supporting the fishing boats and fishing fleets, is very substantial indeed, including chandleries, fishing net suppliers, bait suppliers, all those things. It is a very substantial industry.

It does have a recreational focus as well. The wild catch harvest off the Tasmanian coast is one of the reasons Tasmania is one of the most liveable places on the planet. We are allowed to catch a rock lobster in the wild, or dive for some scallops when they are about, which they are not at the moment, or rod-and-line fish for blue eye, hapuka, or stripey trumpeter. I have seen people coming in with one stripey trumpeter from a day's fishing and you hear them radioing their mates saying, 'I got one'. You think maybe they have a crayfish but no, they got a stripey trumpeter and a good-sized one. If they were up for it every night that would feed a family for almost a week, a good-sized fish like that. They do not overfish, they are happy with bag limits. Everybody I know in the recreational fishing sector understands bag limits and the concept of fishing -

Dr Woodruff - Is there a bag limit for escaped Atlantic salmon in this state?

Mr HIDDING - No.

Dr Woodruff - That's lucky. Everyone gets a feed in Tasmania, particularly if you live in Storm Bay.

Mr HIDDING - That is right, but you would have this House believe they are all dead. You would have this House believe that every salmon in Tasmania died and you'd know the name of every single one of them.

Dr Woodruff - Sorry, but 1.4 million dead salmon in Macquarie Harbour is a rather large number, isn't it?

Mr HIDDING - The fact is you are often talking about fingerlings or tiny fish and it is part of farming. You come in here and say extraordinary things that are proven the next day to be complete rubbish and you do not retract it. You do not come in and say, 'Whoops, I got that wrong', you just make up some more claptrap and come in and say it again.

Dr Woodruff - Mr Hidding, retract that statement. It is not true at all. The proof is in the anglers who stand there hooking them out.

Mr HIDDING - Yesterday you were on about some virus in the salmon. There is no such thing. In fact we have a better virus footprint at the moment than we have for many years. But no, the Greens make up some nonsense they have heard somewhere amongst one of their subversive groups that a fish died in a fish pen - 'Get its name, let's have a funeral, let's go to the parliament and claim that 10 million of them died.'

Dr Broad - Why does the minister not clear it up straight away? All she had to do was say that there was no issue there and it would have gone away.

Ms O'Connor - Yes, that was the big mistake because you deflect and diverge. You could have just said, 'I don't know'.

Mr HIDDING - The minister listens in amazement, goes out and finds the truth.

Dr Broad - These guys have been shopping it around the whole weekend, why didn't she know?

Mr HIDDING - The old cry wolf principle applies, nobody is listening any more.

Ms O'Connor - How many escaped during the storm event?

Mr HIDDING - A very unfortunate storm. Net technology will now change as a result of that. As people have learned more, that will change. There were holes in nets the size of as far apart as my hands now, but you claimed you could drive trucks through them. That was a complete and utter fabrication. It is what the Greens do. The Greens want every farmed salmon in Tasmania to die or be consumed and not replaced, because they do not want any salmon and ocean trout industry in Tasmania. It is one of our great industries. People pay very big prices for our farmed salmon, as they should, because they are brilliant. People going to the Sydney Fish Market are paying \$29.95 a kilo for our beautiful salmon.

Ms O'Connor - Well, that makes everything that the industry does all right.

Mr HIDDING - The point is it is that good that they will pay that amount of money for so much great protein. But you do not want an industry here in Tasmania.

Ms O'Connor - No, what we have said is it should be world's best practice. At the moment it is ad hoc and you are expanding it all through inshore waters. Have you been to King Island lately?

Mr HIDDING - No, but you guys have been. You guys well and truly got into King Island.

Ms O'Connor - Rosalie went to King Island in the weeks before the election.

Mr HIDDING - The sky was going to fall in on King Island. The sea fishing portfolio is an exciting one and it is in very good hands with this minister. I say to all my friends in the fishing industry that I have been working with for 23 years, and because of the Lyons electorate and the connections there, this portfolio is in very good hands indeed. We have strong plans for a sustainable, wild catch fishery in Tasmania. We have the great benefit of IMAS, which is able to work with the various fishing sectors. It has been great to see, particularly over the past 10 years or so, acceptance of every participant in the wild fishing sector, and farmed as well, that sustainable catches, sustainable practices, a restraint of effort, and all the matters that go with having a responsible, sustainable fishing industry are well understood.

To have a good talk to one of our commercial fisherman in Tasmania about the science of it all is a terrific thing to do. These people are responsible. They also understand that they have some of the biggest penalties that have been put on them by this House in the past, where if one fisherman makes a mistake by a couple of millimetres on one fish they could lose their house. It comes down to that. For that reason it is a dangerous existence and a lot of people do not go into the industry because of that. However, they have chosen to set high standards for themselves. I think that is appropriate. In the past I have grappled with legislation, and had some legislation changed where there were appalling outcomes -

Time expired.

[5.24 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF - Given the limited time I won't talk at length about greyhounds that I asked questions about in the early part of the inquiry, except to say that it was saddening, particularly for members of the greyhound rehoming community who were sitting at the Estimates hearing, to see the wilful disregard for the truth of the cruelty of the greyhound industry in Tasmania. It is cruelty to individual dogs - beautiful animals in their own right, who ought to be living in the loving households of people who would care for them and not feed them bread and powders. We saw confronting images posted on the Facebook page of a person working in the Tasmanian greyhound industry. They were shocked at the conditions that they were forced to work in and the images they had seen. They clearly had warmth and connection for the dogs they were working with because they took the time to photograph and post the evidence of the cruel conditions these poor dogs live in every day. It is an industry that needs to end.

I turn to other questions. I asked the minister about the massive and rapid expansion of the salmon farming industry in Tasmania. The Greens have asked many questions about this.

We will continue to speak up for the communities of Bruny Island, Tasman Peninsula, Kettering, the Tinderbox area in the Channel, the people of South Arm near Betsy Island, and the many other people in Tasmania who use Storm Bay's beautiful waters for sailing, diving, swimming and simply for the beauty of looking at. Other people make a living from this place every day, other commercial fishermen who have not had a formal say in the expansion of the leases or the creation of the marine farm development plans.

We asked the minister about the Derwent Estuary Program submission to the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel hearings on Storm Bay. They made strong and unequivocal statements about the impact of increased effluent their modelling shows. The Storm Bay salmon production would achieve effluent levels in the Derwent Estuary up to 14 times greater than currently flow into the Derwent Estuary from the catchment areas around Hobart. The Derwent Estuary Program is concerned about increasing suspension levels of heavy metals and low oxygen levels that greater

amounts of effluent would produce because of the microbial activity and the possibility of algal bloom.

Serious questions are being raised. They demand a high-quality investigation. The Derwent Estuary Program is clear about what that needs to involve, at the minimum. It needs to involve a cumulative impact assessment of the three marine farm development plans of the three companies, Petuna, Tassal and Huon Aquaculture. It needs to include underlying, baseline modelling and it needs to involve some modelling of the estuaries adjacent to Storm Bay. Those were Frederick Henry Bay and the Derwent Estuary. They say that work is essential to occur before any farms are operating.

I asked the minister, given they consider that to be an imperative to safe operating of fish farms in Storm Bay, whether under the powers granted to her within the act, would she require that to occur? I also asked whether she would direct the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel to undertake such wider consultation and modelling if they do not do that in the conduct of their report.

I am disappointed that Ms Courtney does not seem to understand the powers she has vested in her. She is capable of doing that. We expect she would take the recommendations of the Derwent Estuary Program very seriously because of the wide number of people who would be affected by increasing effluent levels going up to the Derwent Estuary, up to the Bridgewater Bridge, and also because of the impact on the threatened species listed under the EPBC act, which she would need to invoke in this process.

There is a whole range of other issues surrounding fish farms and one of the interesting things about Ms Courtney's portfolios is it includes crown land and Primary Industries. Primary Industries is responsible for aquaculture development and the promotion of the industry, as well as biosecurity in general. Within that suite of three portfolio responsibilities, we have an unusual development application that is being proposed for Dover that requires Ms Courtney to take her responsibilities very seriously in terms of crown lands.

Along with people from the Dover community and more widely, we are very concerned that Ms Courtney attended a meeting with the Treasurer, the Premier and the minister for Sustainable Timber Tasmania, Guy Barnett on 27 April this year, or at least we asked the minister whether she had attended it. Minister, you did say you would seek advice to clarify whether you had attended that meeting and even though it was six weeks ago, you could not remember attending but you promised to receive advice. I have not heard an answer from you about that. Perhaps you have forgotten and you might like to check your diary to see if you were at a meeting or online with those ministers on 27 April about the smart fibre development by James Neville-Smith.

What is relevant about that is that meeting was to discuss the issue of that development application. The Premier has been on record numerous times saying it has nothing to do with the state Government. We know this is not true. Within the power vested in her, Ms Courtney has the ability to enact a public interest test. She has signed over provisional landowner's consent. What she could have done is to have a public consultation about the issues surrounding that development. They involve known biosecurity threats with ballast water and microbes hanging to the side of the hulls of the massive big ships that will be coming into Port Esperance. All those matters are not the remit of secretive meetings, they are the remit of public consultations.

Time expired.

[5.35 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER - I want to have a discussion today about irrigation and the importance of irrigation to my electorate of Lyons. I was told today that I need to get out a bit more when I was saying I quite enjoyed the Estimates process and I have been doing a lot of research into irrigation lately. I quite enjoyed that as well, so maybe that is another indication that I do need to get out a bit more.

Tasmanian Irrigation was established by a Labor government - the actual proprietary limited group itself - in July 2011 as a state-owned company responsible for development and operation of the irrigation scheme. It was a Labor initiative and I am really proud to say that my former boss, the honourable David Llewellyn, was a major mover and shaker within that irrigation section. We are now seeing the consequences of all that fabulous foundation work with irrigation.

One of the things I am very concerned about from what I have taken out of Estimates, is that I am not sure whether the federal government has agreed to fund tranche 3 at this stage. I know that the state Government has put in the forward Estimates, I think \$70 000 -

Dr Broad - Promised \$70 000. There is \$45 000 in the budget.

Ms BUTLER - Promised \$70 000 and there is \$45 000 there in the forward Estimates, but without that federal government investment it is just sitting there and we have had a few concerns about the language. I would appreciate some more information about that.

The Water Act was established in 1957, giving the Rivers and Water Supply Commission extensive powers over the regulation and use of Tasmanian water resources. The body oversaw the construction of three large-scale irrigation schemes - the Cressy Longford Scheme in 1974, the South-East District Scheme in 1986, and the Winnaleah Scheme in 1987, with the planned Meander Scheme still in contention. The Water Management Act in 1999 contained the commission as a government agency, giving it ownership management control over the operation of public irrigation schemes. This tranche 3 has been in the pipeline, so to speak, for quite some time.

In total, this irrigation program now represents a total commitment of more than \$310 million, including \$220 million from the federal and state governments. These schemes have a total capacity of 71 638 megalitres and have attracted almost \$60 million in private investment. This will increase to \$90 million once all water entitlements have been sold. To date, the investment sits at a contribution from the Australian Government of \$149 million, the state Government of \$80 million, private sector and water licence entitlements of \$90 million and private sector on farm infrastructure of \$265 million. That is a total of \$584 million that has been invested into irrigation in Tasmania.

In February 2015, the Australian Government committed \$60 million for the tranche 2 irrigation scheme, which consists of five schemes - the Scottsdale, Swan Valley, Southern Highlands, Circular Head, and North Esk irrigation schemes. All five tranche 2 projects have a combined capital cost of \$193 million.

My main frustration here is, and our farmers need to know and the people of Tasmania really need to know, have you secured the federal funding for tranche 3 yet? Is this going to be another example of going begging to the Turnbull Government for money? Is this going to be the trend that we end up with after the GST distribution is announced? Are we going to be constantly at the beck and call of 'hand out, please help us'? We really need to get that funding secured for the tranche 3. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2015-16, 7 per cent of land used for agricultural

production in Tasmania was irrigated and the gross value of irrigated agricultural production was \$815 million. Notwithstanding that, less than 10 per cent of the state's agricultural land is irrigated and produces 55 per cent of the gross value of Tasmania's agricultural production. Irrigated land is estimated to produce more than 10 times the value per hectare compared with improved agricultural land that was not irrigated. The transformation in Tasmanian agriculture that is related to regional, large-scale irrigation development managed by Tasmanian Irrigation has been significant. Irrigation has been such a game-changer for Tasmania and I cannot say enough how important it is to receive that federal funding to match the state government investment and also the investment by private owners.

Recognising that there has also been considerable private sector investment in irrigation schemes and on-farm storage that contribute to this transformation, the development of the Tasmanian Irrigation schemes provides an opportunity for the increased use and further sustainable development of the state's water. It makes highly reliable water supplies available for growth in agriculture for investment and infrastructure. In many cases, the provision of highly reliable irrigation water supplies through the schemes has been recognised as a game-changer.

Key outcomes relating to farm businesses include commercial certainty and security, flexibility and risk management in irrigation water requirements and providing for farm business restructuring and modernisation.

In developing its tranche 2 program, Tas Irrigation conservatively estimated the additional on-farm investment for the five schemes at \$1.69 for every dollar of public contribution. That is a pretty good return. This represents a significant investment in Tasmania's regional economies with the usual flow-on benefits to maintaining the viability of regional communities. For example, the Midlands irrigation scheme, the largest completed so far, is expected to contribute economic benefits valued at \$193 million with a benefit-cost ratio of 1:2. For this scheme it is very clear that job creation and additional value are two benefits that have been provided to the Tasmanian economy for the recent program of investment in irrigation. It is so important that the Tasmanian and Commonwealth governments are working together in this with lobbying for the full investment in tranche 3 provided by the Turnbull government.

As part of the Government's tranche 3 irrigation taking agriculture to the next level election policy, there was an additional \$70 million allocated. We could see that there was \$45 million put in over the forward budgets, so there is a bit of a gap there and we would like some more information about why there is a gap there and the status of that federal investment.

[5.43 p.m.]

Mr BROOKS - Time always flies on this because there is so much to talk about. I enjoyed going through what we saw in the Estimates. I would like to talk about the Racing portfolio. I know there are some who do not like it, who think it is offensive and bad and would like to get rid of it, but I enjoyed the company of the minister and my dear friend, Ms Courtney, at the Devonport harness racing on Friday night. We probably increased the numbers. No, that was a joke.

A lot of people in Tasmania - and in particular some on that side of the Chamber - underestimate what the racing industry does for the Tasmanian economy and the jobs it creates, but also the flow-on effects. The Greens - who are not here, as usual; they have probably gone home - continue to complain about the state Government giving money to the racing industry. It is important to remember, Mr Chairman, as you would know, why that is the case. It is the case because the Labor-Greens government gave the TOTE away. They basically gave it away.

If you want a perfect example of changing your policy more than six times, have a look at the Labor Party's policy on selling the TOTE. They promised not to sell the TOTE. It was a bit like their 'no deals with the Greens', but we all knew they were making that one up. They promised not to sell the TOTE, then they tried to sell the TOTE but they could not because they are incompetent and cannot do anything. So they walked away from that and said, 'Okay, we have learned our lesson, we won't sell the TOTE. Sorry, we lied, but we have learnt and we won't do it again - the TOTE is fine, nothing to see here, we promise we won't sell the TOTE'.

We go back to another election, this is the same election where they promised not to do a deal with the Greens and they did, and what happened? They sold the TOTE. The Premier at the time, Ms Giddings, kept going on about the state not wanting to be a bookmaker and the like, but at the end of the day Labor did not sell the TOTE, they gave it away. They gave away the funding model for the racing industry for a pittance to make their budget look a little better than it was. It was still bad. It was still a train wreck. It was still an outrageous budget. They could not even run a surplus when they stole the super fund and gave that away, the \$1.5 million super fund they ripped off the public service and they still could get their numbers to match.

They promised not to sell the TOTE, they backflipped on that promise and then said, 'Okay, we learned our lesson, we won't sell the TOTE.' Then they sold the TOTE and they wonder why -

Dr BROAD - Point of order, Mr Chairman. That is not a dot point. I was wondering what the process is here. I do not think I have been in this situation before. Is the sale of the TOTE -

Mr CHAIRMAN - The dot points are very broad - sorry for the pun, Dr Broad. He is talking about the racing industry.

Mr BROOKS - For all Dr Broad's experience and education - because we know he has only been here a few minutes but to his credit he did get elected this time round rather than needing a countback.

Quorum formed.

Mr BROOKS - I was just reminding Dr Broad that he does not know the rules. On here it says greyhound racing. The funding for greyhound racing is required because the Labor Party lied and sold the TOTE when they said they would not - twice. They actually gave it away, they did not sell it.

Mr Bacon - How did you go as racing minister?

Mr CHAIRMAN - Order.

Mr BROOKS - We then had to fund it into the future because the geniuses of the Labor-Greens party that promised not to sell the TOTE gave the TOTE away. The state then had to fund racing forever rather than allowing the TOTE to become a self-funding model that would work well for everyone. That is what happens when you put Greens in Cabinet. Then they whinge about putting money into the racing industry. The reason we need to put money into the racing industry is because they gave the TOTE away. The racing industry knows the Government backs it and will not sell its funding out from under it, in particular with the TOTE. That is one example of a policy platform from the Labor-Green opposition that got abandoned twice for their political gain.

There were also some interesting questions on what we are doing around Primary Industries and Water. I congratulate my friend and colleague, Ms Courtney, the minister, not only on her appointment to Cabinet, but also for making it easier for people to identify what is going on with the land, land zoning and land ownership. I asked a question of the minister in relation to that. It was great to see that their initiatives are continuing to provide more information, more openness for Tasmanians so they can understand not only zoning and mapping, but also the ownership of land across the state.

We have heard about our commitment to fish farms. Mr Hidding talked about the Greens' outrageous claims. They said you could fit a bus in the cages that were damaged in the fish farms. Must have been an underwater bus that you could fit through there. I have not heard of too many buses you can drive through a fish pen underwater. According to the Greens tinfoil hat agenda, that is what happened.

There are a few anglers out there that are quite happy about that.

Time expired.

[5.53 p.m.]

Ms COURTNEY - I thank the members of the House who have made a contribution this evening to last week's Estimates and my portfolios of Primary Industries and Water and Racing. The four weeks in parliament throughout the budget session have been another reminder about how important primary industries are to Tasmania and how comprehensively the Government is supporting primary industries.

I have noted over the past four months and even before that, during my meetings with farmers and fishers and industry groups, how well they are going, the confidence within the industry and how appreciative they are of the responsiveness of the Government.

I thank my predecessor, Jeremy Rockliff, for the suite of portfolios he took to the election.

The Hodgman Liberal Government has a clear vision to grow primary industries to \$10 billion by 2050. We have enormous belief in the quality of our produce and the potential of our industry, which is predicated on the amazing men and women within it. We have clear ambitions for the long-term future of our wild catch and farmed seafood sector.

I thank the secretary of DPIPW, John Whittington, and the many staff that supported the efforts leading up to the Budget and Estimates period and in the work they do every day, supporting primary industries and helping them thrive across Tasmania.

What was clear in the Estimates process is the Government is continuing to deliver. That has been demonstrated through our \$150 million agri-food plan for agriculture and our \$26 million policy for the world-class wild catch seafood and farmed seafood sector.

What has been clear over the past three-and-a-half weeks, and was highlighted last week within budget Estimates, is the Labor Party and Dr Broad are nowhere when it comes to primary industries. We were not able to see, throughout the budget session, throughout the budget reply, nor last week within the Estimates period, anything constructive Labor was able to offer. No dialogue, no constructive ideas - or any ideas - for the industry throughout the process. We saw last week Dr Broad instead chose to spend hours of the Budget Estimates trying to smear the reputation of

hardworking Crown Land Services employees, which I thought was particularly shameful. Also dragging the reputation of one of the upper House members through Estimates, where really it was an opportunity for him to articulate what his plans were for the agricultural sector. It was an opportunity for Dr Broad to explain what his plans were for our fisheries sector.

We have a range of initiatives in the Budget, over 40 new initiatives. It was an opportunity for Dr Board and Labor to understand those further, to scrutinise, to try to understand what was happening and offer an alternative. They did not. Even this evening, Dr Broad and then the member for Lyons have asked about TI. They had four hours of Estimates last week to ask the Government about its policy on water. They did not.

I am astonished that they had the opportunity and chose instead to politicise the Estimates period for their own shameful political gain. Yet they are here today trying to understand our commitment to TI, which is a comprehensive \$70 million to tranche 3. If they had read the budget papers, if they had asked questions, they would understand that a business case is being worked on by TI to secure the funding.

Dr Broad this evening made allegations about various schemes that are on the list for TI to investigate. He could have asked about that last week and we would have highlighted the fact there is a clear process TI is undergoing, as it has with previous irrigation schemes to understand them, to understand the technical detail of it, to understand the market demand for it. Shamefully, they did not. They did not use any of the opportunities last week. They chose to mudrake and smear reputations. I stand by my department, the decisions they make and the way they conduct themselves. It is disappointing that the politicisation of that department from last week has continued this week.

When Dr Broad finally did get onto something in the portfolio, which was biosecurity, he chose to try to smear the reputation of Biosecurity Tasmania regarding the work it does, collaborating with other jurisdictions on fruit fly. This evening he said, 'Lessons were not learned'. He calls on us to do preparedness work. That is what BT has been doing. This is what BT does when working with other jurisdictions to be able to understand threats, such as fruit fly, better. Yet he chose, last week in Estimates and then this week in his response to continue to verbal the staff within BT about their national fruit fly strategy and calling on them to do preparedness work when they already are substantially doing that and leading that nationally. As Dr Broad should know, this Budget confirms that \$5.6 million is being expended over four years from the new \$20 million Biosecurity Emergency Response and Research Fund to meet the costs associated with Queensland fruit fly.

Dr Broad during his contribution this evening talked about the capacity within BT. If he had taken the time to actually ask questions about it last week he would know there are three additional biosecurity inspectors to target high-risk fruit produce coming into the state, as well as a new specialist fruit fly adviser. He would also know there is a new industry collaboration role in Biosecurity Tasmania to work with farmers, growers and industry groups, and he would know that we have provided recurrent funding to participate in the sterile insight techniques should it be required.

Furthermore, if Dr Broad had taken the opportunity to ask substantive questions last week he would know that the other biosecurity initiatives included in the Budget are \$2 million for partnering with farmers, agribusiness and local government to build a network of truck and machinery washdown stations to improve biosecurity and farm hygiene by disposing of waste, potential spread of disease and weeds and improving road safety. He would also know that the

Budget included \$510 000 to expand Biosecurity Tasmania's collaboration with industry groups and farmers to plan for and manage post-border biosecurity risks and to support on-farm biosecurity strategies. He would also know we have committed \$480 000 to boost biosecurity on King and Flinders islands, which I might add is in addition to our last term of government when we increased funding year on year to Biosecurity Tasmania because we understand the importance of it.

Dr Broad chose in limited time last week to politicise the staff of Biosecurity Tasmania and he came in here this evening and did the same thing with regard to somehow being concerned when I answered a question around regaining our fruit fly-free status that I responded as soon as possible. What more do you want than our Government doing everything possible to restore our fruit fly-free status? I completely understand the challenging circumstances this is providing for businesses within the zone and I am working actively with stakeholders around the state, our federal counterparts and trading partners to ensure that our fruit fly-free status is regained as soon as possible. To come in here and dismiss the fact that I am doing that as soon as possible clearly shows that not only he is trying to politicise the issue but also that he has zero understanding of what needs to happen for fruit fly-free status to be regained by Tasmania.

We know that a strong agricultural sector delivers jobs and opportunities across every region of Tasmania. This Government continues to support our farmers on the land, while also recognising the importance of strong farming families, support programs and investing in the future. I mentioned our investments in biosecurity and irrigation already, but we are also investing in marketing, research and development, farm energy, Landcare, weeds, natural resource management, as well as supporting our rural financial support services and other community organisations.

Budget Estimates heard how we were getting on with the job of progressing our vision for Tasmanian agriculture, and through that we have committed \$4 million to industry development across agriculture through our industry development and farm extension program. The Government has also pledged to work with farmers, processors and industry groups on practical strategies to deliver productivity on-farm as well as profitability throughout the supply chain.

We have an ambitious target of \$10 billion by 2050, so that is why we are focusing on the breadth of our industries. We have \$1 million over four years for the red meat industry, \$900 000 for dairy, \$600 000 for the wine industry, \$550 000 for fruit and vegetables, \$230 000 for organics, \$750 000 for the honey sector, \$150 000 for the Hemp Association of Tasmania and \$400 000 over four years to continue the wool harvesting program, and I look forward to continuing our engagement with stakeholders to deliver these initiatives.

Furthermore, we are supporting farmers with an additional \$595 000 for rural financial counselling services and farm business mentoring to be delivered by Rural Business Tasmania. We understand that people are the heart of primary industries across Tasmania, which is also why we are increasing our funding to Rural Youth and Tasmanian Women in Agriculture. We also have a clear recognition that to achieve our target of \$10 billion we need to be focusing on research and innovation and investment into research development and extension is absolutely critical for the productivity gains we need to see the growth we want within this sector. To help us meet that objective we have increased core funding to TIA, but we have also established a new agricultural innovation fund and a \$7 million investment in modernising our crown and TIA research farm assets.

TIA is the Government's preferred supplier of publicly funded R&D and e-services, so being able to continue supporting them in their partnerships with the private sector and with industry will create really good outcomes in terms of both productivity but also economic gains on-farm for Tasmanian farmers across the state. This investment also allows us to be investing in the next generation of agricultural leaders. We want to build on the skills and the capacity that we have. We want to support those young people who are entering the industry, because we know they are going to be the farmers of tomorrow and by supporting them now we will ensure a productive future for Tasmania.

I want to touch briefly on land use and information because it is often not talked about in this place but is an important part of the department and the budget that helps underpin a lot of the other services we provide across government. We are working to ensure Land Tasmania continues to develop and release a range of innovative land-based and property-based products and services. We want to see the usage of information increased, not just for government - we want that across the industry and communities. Developments are being invested in that will deliver increased capacity that will allow Tasmanian businesses and individuals to work more effectively and efficiently.

There have been a number of enhancements to improve Land Information System Tasmania to provide convenient searching of historic land records, which were previously only accessible as physical records in the Lands building, which is great for Tasmanians who want to be able to access that information, particularly if they are not in Hobart. A total of 245 new layers have been added to the LIST map, including more than 120 ABS statistics and the 2016 Census database, as well as 12 map layers to support the department's fruit fly incursion response operations. Having the opportunity earlier in the year to visit one of the control centres during the fruit fly incursion, I was very pleased to see this work in action.

The real-time capability to have BT officers and other staff that had been seconded into the response out in the field, speaking with people, making real-time data logs onto iPads or iPhones, having these uploaded immediately into a central control zone, being able to map the response as it was unfolding and being able to plan for future responses, was incredibly powerful. I know that these are also used around flood coverage, planning for floods around the Mersey and Meander, which I know are very close to your heart, Mr Chairman, and the functionality that has been built into this system is really impressive and I commend those involved.

I want to touch broadly on some of the seafood industries in my limited time. Last week I was able to provide an update on our oyster industry in Tasmania. It has been in the news a lot in recent years and perhaps not for the most positive reasons with the outbreak of POMS, Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome. However, the oyster industry is an important part of our brand, our reputation and I see it being a very vibrant part of our future.

As a government we are supporting our shellfish industry and the many jobs it provides in regional areas so the Budget we delivered two to three weeks ago is providing \$400 000 over four years to assist a transition from the Tasmanian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program or TSQAP to the new Tasmanian Shellfish Market Access Program or ShellMAP. This is part of our commitment to work with the sector to improve the capacity of the oyster industry to manage market access, food safety and Tasmania's reputation for quality seafood.

We are also investing \$400 000 over four years for the sector to enhance the real-time monitoring sensor network, a vital initiative that will help protect oyster and shellfish farm biosecurity and ensure market access.

Earlier in my contribution, I touched on tranche 3 and my disappointment that both the member for Lyons and Dr Broad came in here and were concerned that we did not talk about it last week yet they failed to ask any questions on irrigation. For completeness, I was very pleased to outline during my response to the other place the business case for tranche 3. The pipeline to prosperity is being progressed by TI and this will be the business case for the federal funding to complement the \$70 million that has been committed by the state government. This initiative, the plan, the tranche 3 will see around 50 000 megalitres delivered to Tasmanian farmers.

Our election policy included investigating 13 potential projects statewide and despite some of Dr Broad's accusations in here earlier in his contribution, if he had asked the question during Estimates he would know that there has been a recent expression of interest process and TI is now progressing with the feasibility studies. The projects that ultimately proceed from feasibility to construction will be determined by TI's normal consultative project development and approvals process, involving local farmers.

As this process proceeds I expect the list will be refined; however I am very confident that we will have a strong suite of potential projects to move forward with.

Mr Hidding touched on recreational fishing and fisheries so I will leave that. I would like to echo Mr Bacon's thoughts that the racing industry is an incredibly important part of the Tasmanian community and economy and I look forward to continuing supporting it.

Time expired.

Estimates of the Minister for Racing and Minister for Primary Industries and Water agreed to.

DIVISIONS 1 and 9

(Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Women, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Disability Services and Community Development)

[6:14 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE - I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the examination of these Estimates again. I spent a fair bit of time going through *Hansard* because when I was considering what I would be raising in my consideration of detail I struggled to find anything that was Mrs Petrusma was doing that we could have a conversation around within her portfolio area. I am going to raise a couple of issues that I do not think were resolved.

It is clear that Mrs Petrusma has gone through a demotion. I am concerned that her demotion aligns with a view of government around the portfolios that she has. It is a change to put Aboriginal Affairs back into a community development portfolio, particularly when the Government is talking about resetting the relationship which clearly is not the case so far.

The minister made some of those things quite clear with questions around Australia Day and the desire of the community to not celebrate Australia Day on a day that reflects such pain for that community. The minister said she has spoken to a few people who do not agree in the community,

so therefore we do not have to do that. That is nice to know that a couple of people do not think it is as important, and therefore we do not do it, even though the vast majority of community members are saying that this is the day that causes them offence and pain. If we are resetting a relationship with the community, maybe not celebrating a day that hurts them might be a good way of doing that.

I want to talk about the Elders funding that was raised by my colleague, Ms Houston. She will raise this issue as well. It has been quite concerning in Launceston. Those of us who know the Elders facility in Launceston know the fantastic work they do, and have done, their availability to work with young people in the broader community. The outreach work and the cultural building work they do within community is a significant investment they put into community which pays great dividends. They used to receive funding from the federal government which was their core funding that allowed them to do that kind of work. They are very fortunate, they own their building. The only reason they are surviving at the moment is that they own their building. Mr Scullion, in his infinite wisdom, decided to remove their funding. That is bad enough. This situation will then sit with the responsibility of the Australian Government. The federal government removed their money; the federal government should be charged with the responsibility of bringing it back and doing something for them.

In steps the Premier and he has a meeting with the Elders. He agreed with the Elders that this is a significant concern. He is disappointed in the outcome. When the aunties he met with specifically put to him, 'what will you do if we don't get the money', he told them that if he could not get the money reinstated by the federal government, that he would fix it; he would pay for it. He would give them the money. That was the commitment that they got from him. I wrote to the Premier about that when it was raised with me. The organisation was saying we got this commitment from 'that boy Will' as some of the Aunties called him. I wrote to him saying 'minister, there is this very extremely concerning issue with the money that has gone from the federal government'. In my correspondence on 21 July I identified that he made this commitment to them. This was an opportunity for the Premier to say, 'I am sorry, they misunderstood', or 'That was not my intention', or 'I always meant that I would try to find other ways to support the organisation, not that I would cover the money that was lost'. The Premier did not deny that was the commitment he gave. He said he was aware of the issue and he was going to follow it up.

I wrote to him again on 22 September saying, 'still no resolution here. Where are you?' That has not changed since then.

At the successful tourism conference held in Launceston, one of the aunties gave the welcome to country, as they do, and raised it again, but we are still waiting for that commitment. The money has not come through; he has not resolved the issue for us. He said that is a very serious thing, I will follow that up. No following it up. What the Government did, instead of the \$260 000, he gave them \$15 000 to help with some of the overheads like the power bill, et cetera. That has not gone a long way in terms of the work they are doing.

When the minister was asked about it, she said we are doing something wonderful because there is a conversation at the moment around them taking on funding that has been previously been provided to Colony 47 to deliver a specific program around addressing trauma relating to family violence. That is great that there is conversation about them taking on that funding. That comes with an obligation, work and a responsibility to employ people. It does not deal with the significant funding shortfall that this Premier promised to them in a meeting to their faces that he would resolve. They feel very let down. They met with the Premier and they received that commitment

from him and then he walked away from it, particularly when we went into the election and there was almost no one this Government did not give money to.

Members of this House turned up to arts organisations saying, 'I know you didn't ask for money but I have this cheque so you had better have it'. That is the sort of behaviour we got in the lead-up to the election; that is the process we got.

This organisation had been given a commitment by the Premier that he would take up their funding. I admit that originally it was a federal government issue and had it remained so, it would be different. He promised them, to their faces, they could have it so they are very disappointed.

I want to know from Mrs Petrusma if she is going to honour, as the new minister, that commitment that was made to the Elders? I do not mean by giving them other money that goes to other things they have to fund, but it is their core funding that allows them to do the work in the community that has been so valuable for so long. It concerns me that we get promises to community, particularly when Mrs Petrusma said a couple of times that we are resetting the relationship. We are resetting it so well that the Premier has dumped the portfolio and I do not know what reason he has kept Mrs Petrusma because if you look at her history there is no reason you would keep her as a minister. Anyway, there is some kind of internal reason she is a minister and she has been given portfolios he clearly does not want to play with anymore, and that is disappointing because the portfolios she has matter.

Our relationship with our First Peoples absolutely matters, but this minister showed through her answers that there was nothing she was really across. Thank heavens the department was there to answer some of them but it was quite clear she was not across the detail of that portfolio. She has been very moved by stories and that is wonderful, I am pleased she is moved by stories. We have all been moved by stories, but we require a little more than just that.

Now we are into the area where there were questions I was particularly concerned about. Like every woman in this parliament, I was excited when we got to the point where we had a significant equity in women's numbers, and it was a point Labor Leader Rebecca White made earlier today. We may have more numbers of women in this parliament but the power does not reside with the number. The power still resides with the conservative right-wing men in this parliament. That is probably not everybody on the Government benches but a few of them still control all that power. That is really concerning because it means that in issues where we need to be making significant progress in order to ensure genuine gender equity, we are not getting that voice from Government.

The Premier can talk about being opposed to violence against women and throw some money at some programs and have some happy photo shots, but if his own actions do not add up to that, it is very hard to believe he is committed to any system that rules out violence against women because all those decisions government makes that undermine women's equity have an impact. We do not have gender equity in our pay. We do not have gender equity in our community engagements. We do not have gender equity in our board positions. We do not have gender equity in our safety. Violence against women is a gender issue, not a violence issue, because it is women who are predominantly beaten and assaulted, it is women who are raped, and it is women who are terrified walking home. It is a gender issue. Every conversation we have around women needs our parliament and our leaders to set a certain standard, but what is very clear is that we now have a Minister for Women who will not stand up for women unless she has been given permission by the right-wing men in her party.

That is how it works. We know that because when we asked the minister what action she took when she found out that the Premier's office was involved in cyberbullying, trolling and actively trying to get a woman sacked for having a view that differed to theirs, we asked her what she did and she did nothing. She said the matter was investigated by the Premier's office, the same office that actually conducted the bullying, harassment and intimidation.

Can you imagine what it is like to go to work one day and discover your boss has been sent a copy of a tweet she made in an attempt to get you sacked? Do you reckon it ends there? Do you reckon the boss just goes, 'Oh no, that's fine, everything's okay', or do you think that has a lasting impact on the capacity of that person to stay in their job? Do you reckon there might have been an implication from that? Do you reckon there might have been an outcome? I tell you what, members on the other side of the House know what the outcome is, don't they, because they were all part of it.

The fact that the Premier would like to say, 'Here is the sacrificial lamb, we'll give you one woman journalist who works for us and we are going to sacrifice her because she's the only one we've been able to track down', no-one for a moment believes she was the only one involved in this. It was impossible for her to be the only one involved in that. The bullying was so widespread and the trolling so systematic that it had to be a coordinated approach. An awful lot of people have left the Premier's office and none of them took any responsibility for it. You know who did not take responsibility for it? The Premier. You know who did not stand up for women when this issue happened? The person who should be the one who holds the Government to account, because she is the Minister for Women.

When Tony Abbott was minister for women, I must admit my expectations were not high, because after all, what the women of Australia really need to know when they do their ironing is what is going to happen with their power price increases. I was not expecting much from a man who says that women have abortions because that is the easy way out. I was not surprised when Tony Abbott as minister did not stand up for women, but I am more than horrified and shocked when this Minister for Women does not stand up for women. She did not stand up for women when she found out that the Premier's office was involved in this. I guess that begs the question, did they always know? Was it one of those things that was talked about but never addressed? If you were not horrified when it occurred, if you did not then race down to the Premier's office or pick up the phone and say, 'What the hell is going on?', then what the hell is the point in having you as the Minister for Women?

I can tell you what the point is, nothing, because we have seen it again with the issue of access to abortion. If I hear one more person on the Government side say, 'Well, it is the same policy,' you are not idiots; none of you are actually that dumb. You all know that the situation changed. None of you believe the line that it is the same policy position and that is the end of the matter, because every single one of you know the three services closed. Every single one of you know that the minister changed the vulnerability access. Every single one of you know that women are paying thousands upon thousands of dollars to access terminations, either at a private provider here, for whom there is a three-week waiting list, or they have to navigate a way through the system to get themselves to Melbourne where they have had an increase in Tasmanian women presenting.

If they are not going there and women are not getting into the private clinic, if they are not getting over to Melbourne, what do you reckon is happening to them? Do you reckon they are just going, 'Thank goodness, I'm so pleased, I'll just have the child because obviously my decision was wrong'? No. We know that you cannot block access to abortions, you can only block access to safe

abortions. There is not a person in this House who does not know what that means. There might be some younger members who have grown up in a system where they believe health services are provided, but those of us who have been around a little bit longer know what women used to do, what women were forced to do, and will be forced to do again. That is the legacy of this Minister for Women.

What did this Minister for Women do to represent women? Apparently, according to the minister's own words, nothing, because that is a matter for the Health minister. 'I know it is not going to help women and I know it is about gender and I know it is about denial of access, but it is not my problem, because I am just the Minister for Women. Why would I get involved when women are being persecuted? Why would I get involved when women are being locked out of health services? Why would I get involved when women are being discriminated against?' She should get involved because she is the Minister for Women. Women expect her to stand up and say something. We expect her to have a voice in this space. We do not expect her to trade away her personal views. We understand she wants to go and talk at Emily's Voice events, we understand she is on the speakers' list for that and we know she is going to that, but we still expect her to act for women, not because she necessarily believes in them, but because it is a matter of equity. If you have money you can get an abortion, if you do not, you cannot. That is what it means.

If she genuinely wants to be the Minister for Women and the voice of women in this state then she actually has to do something. The minister's own evidence in Estimates was basically throwing up her hands saying, 'Can I tell you about other things, like how well we are doing with women on boards?'. That matters, but those same women are also women who cannot get access to terminations. What does that do to their prospect for getting on boards? What does that do to their agency? What does that do to their independence? This minister does not really care. Frankly, this minister checked out some time ago. She checked out when she was minister for her previous portfolios. Her history in that portfolio shows that.

I tracked through and she was not very good at Aboriginal Affairs, she was appalling on Women, she was not particularly good on Sport - but I reckon we will be hearing about that; sport is not her big thing at all - and disability was fantastic, she was really good on that - 'It's not my problem but I tell you what, I can write to the federal government for you.' We can damn well do that ourselves. What we want is a minister who is actually going to do some work, provide some efficacy and some kind of outcome. Seriously, there are members sitting in this House who could be ministers and yet we have Mrs Petrusma, who has failed on every single one of her indicators.

She failed in her previous portfolios and she was an absolute disgrace during the Estimates process. I do not know why something is not done, so I do not know what the numbers are like. I do not know what Eric Abetz has said, because we all know he runs the Liberal Party. This minister gave a really low and appalling performance.

The only exciting thing she has is a new department. All the department has done is change the reporting mechanism and lifted some people up to deputy secretary, where they probably should have been anyway. It has not delivered a minister who is across her portfolios, who is going to stand up and be the voice for our First Peoples, for our original Tasmanians who are saying that there are matters that they want addressed. She is not going to make the Premier back up the promise that he made to the Tasmanian Elders, when he sat down with the Aunties over a cup of tea and promised that he would get their funding if the feds did not.

She is not going to stop the Premier's office from bullying and harassing women and trying to get them sacked. She is not going to make sure that women get access to terminations. I am not sure what she is planning to achieve in sport because it did not seem like she was across that at all. She will get to go to a few events and hope somebody else funds them. She will step in when hockey is in trouble again. That was not a policy position, that was another 'dragged kicking and screaming' process

Disability it is not really her responsibility, it is all the federal government, which is quite disturbing.

I miss being a minister. Being a minister is a fantastic job and a great responsibility. With it comes an expectation that you are going to make things better. This minister does not do that. This minister is not across her portfolio. She is not across the detail.

The other thing we did get that we asked Mrs Petrusma for, and I am sure Ms Houston will be raising it, was an interim thing that Education did. Instead of telling us how Indigenous students were doing each year - it was not looking so great - they aggregated them. It is concerning because what it shows is that in almost every indicator from 16 to 17 the educational outcomes for Indigenous students dropped. That is not the case for non-Aboriginal students although the number of them dropped as well. Things are not going so well in Education, which is probably why you want to aggregate the figures. It is concerning that the minister clearly did not know that. I am not sure what she does in Aboriginal Affairs if she does not understand what is happening across the portfolio. She does not understand what is going on across the disability service portfolio. She does not understand what is going on across sport and recreation. She is certainly not standing up for women.

I started my contribution saying that I was so excited about the number of women in parliament, but I also expect that at some stage the women in this parliament will stand up for women, all women, not just rich women, not just conservative women, not just women that they know, but those women who are begging for decent access to health services. Those women who are today, tomorrow, next week, the week after, for at least the next four months and maybe longer being forced to travel to Melbourne to access health services. Those women who are being denied their basic rights under the watch of this minister, who does nothing -

Time expired.

[6.33 p.m.]

Mr BROOKS - I am not going to engage with the previous member because I have other things to talk about.

Mrs Petrusma does an outstanding job. It is a privilege to be serving with her in Government. We are fortunate to have a nurse, business woman, mother, grandma and also someone that cares, and cares deeply. Some of the smears that happen in this place are part and parcel of what we do, but the work that Mrs Petrusma has done as part of the Government is outstanding. I will stand by her every day of the week. I have not seen the people march in the street in protest against this minister like I have another minister on that side when they were in government.

I would like to talk about sport. From what I understand, Mr O'Byrne was not a bad footballer. I was not a very good footballer as a kid. I absolutely love footy. The privilege of wearing a guernsey for an AFL club is something very few get to do, but that a lot of people would love to do. I had the privilege of being in the Hawthorn dressing room for a game as part of my private

membership. Again, nothing to do with the Government. Alastair Clarkson, the greatest coach of all time, of the greatest team of all time, talked to the players about -

Mr O'Byrne - Can I make a comment that that is an offensive comment. I seek a withdrawal on behalf of the Collingwood Football Club.

Mr BROOKS - You go for Collingwood?

Mr O'Byrne - Yes, that is right. We have won more flags than you, mate.

Mr BROOKS - I probably would not be talking about anything if I were you. Even your guernseys look like you are convicts.

Mr O'Byrne - Well, I am from convict stock - 1850s.

Mr BROOKS - I had the privilege of listening to Alastair Clarkson talk to his players about the privilege of wearing a Hawthorn guernsey, but any AFL guernsey at that level. A lot of kids play or support different teams and get drafted to other clubs. We have some wonderful talent in Tasmania. To reach the pinnacle of any sport is a privilege that is a great thing for some people.

I want to talk about AFL in Tasmania. We are at a crossroad in Tasmania. The AFL Commission and in general the AFL has neglected Tasmanian football. They have not stood up for the Tasmanian football community. I have the privilege of counting Matthew Richardson as a good friend of mine. I know his thoughts on where we sit as an AFL community in Tasmania. There is so much more that needs to be done.

It is not the Government's job to fund an AFL team. I had this debate with Ms O'Connor previously that the going rate for a competitive AFL team is around \$50 million to \$60 million a year. The AFL pumps a lot more than that into its expansion teams in Western Sydney and the Gold Coast. From an economic point of view that is their expansion opportunity and that is where the numbers are. The Government - and the AFL - should look beyond the numbers and what is going to be their best return on expansion that may not ever happen. Tasmania needs to be taken more seriously by the AFL in not only getting their own team, but also in better support from the AFL.

I am a Hawthorn supporter, that is very clear - it is on the record. I have even had a bet with Mr O'Byrne and about six or eight years ago he had to wear a Hawthorn tie for the afternoon. He did to his credit.

Mr O'Byrne - Still getting counselling.

Mr BROOKS - Still getting counselling. The deal that the Tasmanian Government has entered into with Hawthorn, on both sides, has been really good from an economic point of view and from a grassroots football point of view, including north. We see champions of those clubs come down and do the community work but that in no way diminishes our feeling and the community's feeling that we would love to see an AFL team in Tasmania. I will continue to support that. In Estimates, I heard Mr O'Byrne criticising the minister about what he felt was a lack of support for AFL in Tasmania and I disagree with that. Mrs Petrusma has been steadfast in her support of AFL in Tasmania, not just AFL as in the men's competition but also the AFL women's competition. It is an exciting opportunity for the women to be playing at that elite level as well.

This Government absolutely remains committed to wanting to see an AFL team in Tasmania. We do. We also know the reality of the economics of it that we are not going to be funding it to \$50 million or \$60 million a year. It is going to require the AFL and the AFL Commission to pull its weight and do something about it. It is a shame that in the north-west we could not get some statewide teams up this year again. Mr O'Byrne tried to blame the minister for that. That is my recollection and I do not think that is at all fair or accurate. It is a reflection not only of the reality of work and commitment but it is a lack of commitment from the AFL themselves. They put \$100 million a year into expansion teams in Western Sydney and the Gold Coast and they do not give Tasmania a cracker. That is a tragedy and it is unfair.

AFL in Tasmania is something that we as a parliament collectively should continue to strive for, continue to argue for and continue to pursue. There are some good initiatives coming with the Mariners looking at moving up again. Even if you look at getting our kids to that next level to help them see that opportunity and experience what it takes to get there - getting the team involved in the VFL is an exciting opportunity and a step forward but at the end of the day the organisation that can make this happen is the AFL and the AFL Commission. They have the resources, they have the ability, and they are just not doing it. I stand beside the minister who is steadfast in this and we should continue to fight for an AFL team in Tasmania -

Time expired.

[6.43 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE - Thank you for the opportunity to speak on the report from Estimates Committee B, particularly in relation to my shadow portfolio responsibility as the shadow minister for sport and recreation.

In relation to the member who has just resumed his seat, in terms of AFL football in Tasmania there is much that we agree on. The point I tried to make in the half hour opportunity I had to cross-examine and to ask questions of the minister about her portfolio responsibility in all of the areas - because it is not just about AFL football, it is not just about football, it is about sport and recreation in general. There is a whole range of codes in Tasmania that rely on the support and the leadership of the state government to ensure that not only do they thrive in participation levels but also they provide community and elite environments within which Tasmanians are able to partake in their sport.

It is not only about preparing and giving our young people the best chance to be the best they can in their chosen sport and to represent their region, to represent their state and represent their country. It is also about ensuring that people can be active and that there are appropriate environments and facilities to ensure that people can engage. I have been on the record on this for many years: clubs and sporting associations are the glue, in many cases, that hold communities together. Look at regional Tasmania. Where there is a football club, a netball club or where there are sporting associations that regularly bring their community together, they are stronger communities. Our community is stronger because of it.

That is an enormous responsibility for a minister and a government, ensuring those environments and those sports are the best they can be. Sadly, what we heard in Estimates questions last week, was a minister who clearly demonstrated she was not across what was required and effectively had gone missing and being dragged to the table on various things.

Most people in the sporting community - and this is not personally against the minister - were extraordinarily disappointed that the sport portfolio had been jettisoned by the Premier and member for Franklin, Mr Hodgman, and been handballed to a minister who has been embattled and rocked by controversy after controversy in the previous term.

We saw that in relation to hockey. Hockey Tasmania has been a source of great pride. Thousands of Tasmanians partake in that sport. At New Town we have one of the best facilities in the country and over a generation, we have had international and national representatives. In the men's team, currently we have the co-captain Eddie Ockenden. We have a proud tradition in terms of excellence and we have sports clamouring to get national teams represented. In hockey we have a male and a female team, the Tigers and the Van Demons, and they represent Tasmania well. That provides our men and women with a chance to play in a national league and demonstrate their ability to represent their country. It also shows young boys and girls, that is your pathway. You do not have to leave Tasmania to represent Tasmania. You do not have to leave Tasmania to try to represent your country.

We saw the very shabby treatment of Hockey Tasmania by this Government when they made it clear, to maintain their presence in the National Hockey League, they needed a financial commitment from their government. It is on the record and in the public domain that the new minister and the department had said no to the request. It was two minutes to midnight. Hockey Tasmania was saying they are out of the national league. Yes, things have developed since that moment. They said, we are out of the national league unless we get some financial commitment from government. It is indicative of the shabby treatment of Hockey Tasmania by this Government that they waited until there was a reception at the Hockey Centre on the Saturday night before the Monday when the decision had to be made. The day after they were told they were getting no money from the state Government, the minister turned up, basking in the reflected glory of our Commonwealth Games representatives, saying, by the way we have got \$75 000 to put on the table.

Hockey Tasmania welcomed that announcement and we welcomed that announcement. It should not have had to get to that point where Hockey Tasmania basically had to go public. The players and the administrators were very frustrated with the 'talk to the hand' attitude of the state Government.

Again, that is echoed in the conversation around football in Tasmania. The crisis in Tasmanian football is well known and acknowledged. It is not only at the elite level. It is at the grassroots level. The government plays a role in ensuring that associations, football clubs and leagues get the support. Under Labor we had a long history of working with AFL Tasmania to ensure that we have a statewide league for Tasmanians, young players, men and women, so that they can play at a semi-elite, semi-professional level within Tasmania. It has been in crisis. The disappointment that the AFL have ignored the role they have played in the downward spiral of Tasmanian football has been on the record. They have taken our best but they have not invested in us. Yesterday or the day before the CEO of the AFL, Gillon McLachlan, basically said, 'It's up to Tassie to get an AFL team; it's Tassie's responsibility to fix this.' It is not.

We are in a very good state, but it was the AFL that ignored us, the AFL who took our best and brightest and has not invested back into Tasmania. When they set up a steering committee to look at Tasmanian football, where was the Government? Where was the Tasmanian-based representative? Yes, we had legends of the game, icons of the game from Tasmania, on the board. We had a champion player in Riewoldt who has not lived in Tasmania for over 30 years. We had former coach and West Coaster Chris Fagan, who is in Brisbane trying to make sure he can get his

team off the bottom of the ladder. There was Brendon Bolton, who I played footy against when he played for North Launceston; he is based in Melbourne. You had all these Melbourne-based, AFL-based people, but the Government refused to demand a Tasmanian representative on that steering committee to leverage all the support we give to AFL football to demand that they respect the Tasmanian football code and support us to ensure that we can rebuild our code and eventually get an AFL team.

For the CEO of the AFL to say, 'If you do okay in the VFL we might give you an AFL team' is offensive. It is not a demand that they put on New South Wales or Queensland. They have put more money into the Gold Coast and the Greater Western Sydney than they have the Mars explorer and he has the audacity to tell us that it is about money and you do not have the money to support it. We know that we can sustain an AFL team, not only in terms of talent but also in terms of the finances being in a national competition. If you look at Geelong and around the world at the small towns in the English Premier League who can sustain teams in the richest league in the world, if you look at the Green Bay Packers in the United States NFL, we can support an AFL team.

What gets us grumpy is when the Premier and the Minister for Sport and Recreation are nowhere to be seen. We had the fireside chats with the CEO of the AFL, but where are they fighting for the Tasmanian football community demanding admission to the league? We know the statewide league is in crisis, so where was the Minister for Sport and Recreation? There was a meeting between the presidents and the Premier recently and the Minister for Sport and Recreation was not even in the room. That was the most galling thing about sitting in front of the Sport minister who was ambivalent about the hockey crisis and had to be dragged to fund that.

Ms O'Connor - Crisis?

Mr O'BYRNE - The hockey crisis about losing our national teams. In terms of the crisis in football, she was nowhere to be seen. We demand leadership from this. Then when we got the bad news the other day that Tasmania cannot even be short-listed to a list of 10 to be in a potential national soccer competition. Where is the minister coming out and demanding that Tasmania deserves to be in these leagues, not only in terms of being a genuinely national competition but for young boys and girls to see that there is a pathway? Stand up, minister.

Time expired.

[6.53 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR - Mr Chairman, it gives me pleasure to speak on the Estimates for the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Women, Sport and Recreation and Disability Services and Community Development. I acknowledge that in the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio it is actually been a blessing for the communities across Tasmania that it has shifted from a premier who over-promised and underdelivered to a minister who has clearly put her heart and soul into this portfolio.

You cannot be a Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and not be deeply affected by the history of the Aboriginal people of Tasmania, the history that you acknowledge, which is 40 000-plus years of human story on this island, the incredible struggle for survival, identity, land, recognition, the struggle for reconciliation, and it goes on, as we know, for the Aboriginal people of Tasmania, the palawa pakana. In fact I am just looking over at our palawa member of parliament, Jennifer Houston, and today we were at the Ida West Aboriginal Health Scholarships, and it gave me so much pleasure to talk about the fact you are in parliament and to be proud you are here and to acknowledge that for many years we have been having these debates and it has been a whole lot of

whiteys sitting around talking about the First Peoples and no-one who represents the actual First Peoples being in the Chamber. It has been very refreshing.

The minister and I talked about some of the critical issues confronting the Aboriginal people of Tasmania and any government who wants to advance reconciliation for the First Peoples. We talked about the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which is a very significant step forward for Aboriginal people who want that voice to parliament, who want that recognition and who want there to be progress towards treaty across the country.

We know the Prime Minister and his Liberal colleagues have no commitment to treaty and in fact pay lip-service to Aboriginal Australians, without a doubt, but I was somewhat reassured by the minister's response which acknowledged that, while it is not Government policy, she heard what the Uluru Statement is about, which is the three positions for constitutional reform, a voice in parliament and extra constitutional issues to establish a Makarrata commission as part of the treaty-making framework.

Unless we get serious about treaty, we will never as a nation move forward to the extent that we can because there is, in our national psyche and in our psyche here in Tasmania, a stain and a chapter in the beginning of the European history of Australia which caused enormous suffering, dispossession and that was imbedded in the framework of terra nullius, when the Europeans or the English when they first came lied and said this was unoccupied land. They did not take the land by a declaration of war. They did not negotiate the handover of the land or negotiate a treaty with the Aboriginal Australians, they just took the land and pretended there were no human beings on this land.

As we know, in Tasmania for at least 40 000 years, there have been people living on this country, at times in incredibly harsh conditions, particularly the people who lived along the west coast and down the south-west. You cannot imagine in the last ice age about 10 000 or 12 000 years ago how hard it must have been for people living on this island then.

We need to move towards treaty. Any government that does not acknowledge the increasing imperative to sit down with the First Peoples, acknowledge the country was taken from them and acknowledge that this caused multiple generational distress and dispossession, is a government that is in another century. We need to look to countries like New Zealand, who had the foresight to negotiate a treaty with the Maori people, and if you hold up the social and economic outcomes for Maori people against the social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal Australians, it is a profoundly different story and part of that is because there has been an erasure of the history, an unwillingness to confront it.

At the Ida West scholarships announcement today, I was talking to one of the previous recipients of the scholarship who said he was talking to an 18-year-old person recently who said, 'There are no Aboriginal people in Tasmania.' Ms Houston, I know how insulting and offensive that is, but it did point to a really significant cultural challenge here. For a very long time for any child who went through the Tasmanian education system that is what they heard. In fact it was only when Mr Groom was minister and we could not get really effective Aboriginal heritage legislation in for a whole range of reasons under a number of governments, but it was not until the relics act was updated that we removed the 1876 provision which said effectively that no heritage had been created after the death of Truganini.

The statute erased the First Peoples of Tasmania and the history that was taught erased the First Peoples of Tasmania. Yet here in Tasmania's parliament today we have the honourable member for Bass, Ms Houston, and behind you, Chair is the Aboriginal flag of Tasmania. The palawa pakana people of this island are proud people who fought for their identity, struggled after the arrival of the Europeans, and were almost wiped out, if you read the histories. The Aboriginal people of Tasmania have asserted their identity. They are a proud people and there is so much that we can learn from them about respect for country, about living in a place and not depleting it to the extent that it can no longer sustain life.

If we are to move forward as Tasmanians we need to negotiate a treaty, return some lands to the First Peoples and I acknowledge, minister, there are challenges potentially in the return of lands. There will be some groups for whom a particular land return does not sit well and they feel dispossessed as part of the legal framework. I acknowledge that but it cannot be an excuse not to return lands. This land was stolen and we need to take that courageous step forward as a parliament. I am absolutely certain, minister, that if you brought a substantive land returns bill into this place it would have tripartisan support and your legacy to the people and to the palawa pakana would be something extraordinary. There has been no significant return of lands to the palawa since Jim Bacon was the Premier.

Mrs Petrusma interjecting.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, small parcels. There has been a real stalling on land returns. We tried it in the last parliament and it had tripartisan support - the return of Irapuna and Rebecca Creek to the First Peoples - but it got knocked off upstairs. If we are very serious about extending that acknowledgement and respect to the Aboriginal people of Tasmania we must return lands.

There are two obvious contenders for the return of lands - takayna/Tarkine, wukalina/Mount William: these are the historical lands of the Aboriginal people of Tasmania and the longer we stall on this the more ashamed we should be. There are models here for the return of Aboriginal land. You could return the wukalina/Mount William national park under a very similar model to what is happening on Stradbroke Island - Minjerribah - where the Quandamooka people own the park, run the park, are able to earn a sustainable income from the number of visitors who come to the Minjerribah national park. None of this should be seen as too difficult to take on. It does take courage, it takes patience.

Thank you for your time but I do wish the minister well in her portfolio.

Time expired.

[7.04 p.m.]

Ms HOUSTON - Chair, I spoke to the minister about Aboriginal affairs in the Estimates committee B. I was concerned about the outcomes for resetting the relationship with the Aboriginal community. The 2016-17 key activities were posted on the DPAC website. However what was not clear - and what the minister spoke to at the Estimates - was that these key activities are intended to cover not just the 2016-17 period as displayed on the website but extend over a number of years.

Mrs Petrusma - I have the update here for you.

Ms HOUSTON - Very good. I will get that in minute. It would be beneficial if the key activities could be accurately depicted as long-term goals on the website with updates on progress

provided regularly. This would give interested parties the opportunity to monitor progress of these key activities because as it is, it looks like nothing has progressed. That is because there is nothing to read on the website.

Mrs Petrusma - There was a 2017-18 report from 30 June 2018, which has only just gone. It is on a calendar year so you will be getting the report within a couple of days.

Ms HOUSTON - Yes, feedback from stakeholders though they are looking to see -

Mrs Petrusma - It is a yearly report.

Ms HOUSTON - I look forward to reading the update. I have received the de-aggregated data for Aboriginal NAPLAN results and they raised a red flag. Aboriginal kids are starting to fall behind and that needs to be fixed. It is a significant issue because when we see reductions we know that is the start of something substantial and Aboriginal education has always been a challenge but there are mechanisms for addressing that and I am happy to help.

The funding in the forward Estimates was also a concern. I was concerned to learn of the reduction in funding to Aboriginal Affairs across the forward Estimates that was due in part to the end of funding after 2018-19 for the support for Aboriginal women affected by family violence. The minister tells me there is additional mainstream funding for family violence. I am doubtful this funding will result in services for the same cohort as the identified funding for Aboriginal women experiencing family violence does. If there is a plan to provide targeted services to Aboriginal women within the mainstream funding I would be very interested to hear about it.

Family violence is a significant problem in Aboriginal communities across Australia and Tasmania is no different. There is a great need for services to Aboriginal women affected by family violence and for programs to children who have been impacted. There is also a need for programs targeted at young people to break the cycle of violence. To be successful these programs need to be tailored to the community and ongoing. This is an ingrained problem and short-term funding interventions simply do not work.

To make any significant headway, programs need to be provided in existing entities such as schools where we have a captive audience. Previously, successful programs have been embedded in cultural arts-based programs that engage children and provide them with opportunities to learn about culture and history while challenging the negative stereotypes forced on Aboriginal people over generations. This gives children the opportunity to develop a positive sense of self and cultural identity. These are the foundations of respectful relationships and respectful relationships do not lend themselves to violence but rather they are supportive and safe.

These programs also improve school attendance and educational outcomes because children are engaging with education in a very meaningful and culturally appropriate way.

During Estimates I asked the minister about funding for the Elders. Specifically I asked whether the minister would honour the commitment made by the Premier to fund the Elders if the Commonwealth did not. The Elders sought and received an assurance about core funding from the Premier. While they have some program funding this will not keep their building open or pay operational costs. I hope the minister will enter into negotiations with the Elders to resolve their core funding issues. We value our Elders and we have long memories.

Land hand-backs were also a concern. I understand that the whole process halted years ago when it was blocked. The minister indicated there would be a review when Aboriginal Land Council elections were finalised and this occurred last week. I am not sure why this delayed the process because inevitably members will be elected and as I understand it the role of chairman remains the same. I hope to see this resolved and the process moved forward in the very near future. Stakeholders tell me they are waiting for action on land handbacks. I am keen to see the discussion paper on land returns the minister referred to in the Estimates committee and the promised review to start.

The dual naming policy was also of interest. I have read the consultation and stakeholder feedback report in the dual naming policy. It was good to see so many different organisations contributing to the consultation. I believe it is absolutely essential to undertake further consultations with stakeholders in reviewing this policy. Progress on this is slow and it needs to be made a priority.

I have some advice for the minister: engage with a range of Aboriginal community groups and organisations and take their views and perspectives seriously. Tasmanian Aboriginal people have never been one cohesive group. Prior to invasion and colonisation we were nine nations, different clans, and many language groups. Since then we have had a diverse range of historical and social experiences. These experiences have shaped the communities that exist today. We are a diverse community but we hold common values around land, family, Elders and culture. In some ways we are different. Listen to us, give groups a voice. It is the only productive way forward. Particularly, we are united over land and I call again on the minister to commence the process of reviewing land hand-backs immediately. We have waited long enough. We have waited for land and we have waited for treaty. We have waited for equality and we have waited long enough.

[7.10 p.m.]

Ms STANDEN - I am one of seven proud Labor women on this side of the House. I am part of a majority female Tasmanian parliament. I want to make a comment on the portfolio of Women but also Sport and Recreation, Disability Services and Community Development, the committees in which I participated in the Estimates last week.

The first observation I make is in relation to women. I note the Minister for Women has now left the Chamber. She has gone because of nature calling? We will forgive her that.

I will backtrack to the matter of the cost of establishing the Department of Communities Tasmania. I have made the point a couple of times. In Estimates I asked Mrs Petrusma about the cost of establishing the Department of Communities. I was gobsmacked to hear the minister's response that not one dollar had been allocated towards the cost of establishing the Department of Communities. I asked, not even for change of letterhead or business cards? I asked about the in-kind cost and the minister denied there was any direct cost. She was silent on the matter of indirect cost. As a former bureaucrat, I understand there would have been months of work in taking apart the former Department of Health and Human Services in order to create the Department of Communities Tasmania.

Then there would be the cost of creating a new organisational structure under a secretary and senior executive. There would be an accommodation and property services component to the establishment of a new department. Changing the name of a department is not something any department, any government should take frivolously. As a former bureaucrat I can say how significant and how disruptive it is to make such an undertaking. I hope the department, having

only formally been established this week under a number of ministerial responsibilities, is beginning to grapple with the task of delivering better outcomes for communities, for families, for children in this state.

For too long, kids, families and communities have been falling through the gaps through bureaucratic processes, ministers squabbling over portfolios and the like. I hope this marks the start of a new era for Tasmanian communities.

In respect of the portfolio for Women, I did not sit in on those committee hearings, but I add to the voice of Labor women in Opposition to protest against the Government's handling of the matter of safe, affordable access to legal surgical termination services in this state. As a former allied health professional, I am appalled that we have reached the situation where a private provider exited the state in December of last year, and we are now looking at not days or weeks, but months before services are going to be provided to breach this gap. It is unacceptable that the Minister for Women has been part of Cabinet deliberations and, judging by her response in Estimates committee hearings, has failed to stand up for those women and girls who are the most vulnerable and voiceless in our community. They need senior representatives in this place to stand up for their best interests, so we do not go back to those dark old days where we have illegal backyard operations offering unsafe options, where there is significant morbidity and even mortality and where women and children are forced into making unwise decisions because they are desperate.

The suggestion that these women have, at the moment, adequate choice in this service environment is simply an unacceptable mistruth. Bring on safe, affordable access to termination services and bring on a time where women in the Cabinet and across parliament stand up for women and affordable access to services that are a basic human right.

I move onto Sport and Recreation. It was a brief half hour with the Minister for Sport and Recreation. We ranged across the major sporting codes and commitments. The \$10.618 million allocated within this year's budget for regional and community election commitments represents 43 per cent of the Budget allocation in this year for sport and recreation. It will make a significant and ongoing contribution to communities and to organisations across this state. However, let us not forget that this funding appropriation ought to be intended for strategic investment in services across the community. I would like to know whether that \$10.6 million has a strategic basis in terms of investment in sport and recreation.

In relation to Disability Services and Community Development, we talked briefly about the transition of NDIA. I was pleased to hear the minister say the expansion of the NDIA, a federal Labor government initiative, partnered now with the state Government, seems to be progressing well. I know from my time in the community sector that it has not been without pain. One question is about transport services, where the minister talked about an interim arrangement to pick up gaps in service delivery for disability services through to the end of June 2019. It begs the question, what happens then?

I note that TasCOSS was funded \$350 000 over two years in terms of industry development. I just make the point that whilst that funding is welcome, the community sector in Tasmania has been overlooked for some time. Saul Eslake produced a graph showing that the level of investment of this state Government is around about 25 per cent to 30 per cent or so of the national average in terms of service provision for community services. That compares to \$5.8 million directly to the THA, \$3 million of which is for workforce development. Nobody is saying there is not a need in terms of tourism and hospitality, but goodness gracious, the disparity is stark, obvious and there for

all to see. I am sure that this money will be well spent because TasCOSS and the community sector are used to living off the crumbs from the table in the budget allocation process, but this graph is evidence that apart from the areas of school education and services to industry -

Time expired.

[7.21 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER - Mr Deputy Chairman, I want to talk about the Minister for Women's capacity in this committee area. I will start by reaffirming what my fellow colleague, Alison Standen, just said about the unacceptable situation at the moment in Tasmania with women having great difficulty in accessing safe and affordable terminations. It is just such a pity because we fought so hard to have the legal access to decriminalise terminations for them to be placed into a section of the Health portfolio and then to find that access to terminations became an issue.

I am from a long line of strong, feminist women from about the 1920s on when a woman in our family was put in a precarious situation by a procedure that damaged her body and was never able to have children after that. The women of my family from about the 1920s have been very much pro-choice and that it is down to choice and that those options should be made available to women in need.

I also note that in the Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2018-21 Consultation Report, in section 1 in the written submission summary under Health and well-being, the first dot point says -

Support women to be informed, supported and active decision-makers in their own health.

That is an indicator, and if we do not have accessible terminations that is really going against the information which is part of this Tasmanian Women's Strategy.

I will move on to talk about women on boards and women's representation across government boards. I will draw from minister Petrusma's announcement on 1 July 2015, which was about the five-year plan for improving gender equity on Tasmanian government boards and committees. It looks like we had 39 women on a board or committee in the 2015-16 financial year. We have made a massive improvement now, with 43 women in 2018-19 and that is not very good.

Mrs Petrusma - You're not looking at the right stats. We have gone from 33 per cent under Labor to 41.1 per cent. In regard to the SES, we have gone from 30 per cent to 39.19 per cent. You need to get the facts right.

Ms BUTLER - What I would like to see is how close are we to that 50 per cent.

Mrs Petrusma - A lot closer than under you.

Ms BUTLER - And of that percentage, are they paid board positions? We know there is usually a mass percentage of men who have the very well-paid board positions and women seem to have the unpaid board positions. I would appreciate it if you could forward me some of those statistics, minister, because it is important.

There was funding of \$450 000 to deliver family violence primary prevention and that is fantastic. There is a concentration there for the north-west coast. Any funding that is put into that

area I will always be appreciative of, and we really need it. From my reading and investigation of a lot of our state family violence prevention programs, they seem to be more after the fact and less about stopping the violence. They seem to be recovery programs after the violence has happened so I am pleased to see some investment into that prevention before the violence happens.

I was pleased to see that for Tasmanian Women in Agriculture, even though it is not your portfolio and technically comes under Primary Industries, there has been \$120 000 over four years, so \$30 000 a year for Tasmanian Women in Agriculture to build capacity and to take leadership roles. It is not much money but it is a good start.

I also want to talk about women being concentrated in the caring industries of health care and social assistance. At the same time, we are also seeing a change in the make-up of our economy where we have less full-time workers and more part-time workers and there is a large concentration of women in those part-time roles. Female-dominated organisations in Australia tend to be lower paid, particularly in those industries where workforce roles are gendered, such as health care and social assistance.

I recently attended the Women in Resources awards, which Ms Archer also attended, and I note that mining is the top-paying industry for women in Australia. It is the most male-dominated industry but also delivers the highest pay to women. I was pleased to attend that and pleased to see some Tasmanian women running their own power stations, which was fantastic, and another young woman who is a fabulous truck driver.

Pay gaps are very much a form of discrimination and in the Tasmanian Women's Strategy there is a section which talks about addressing discrimination for women and I hope we can start doing that. In the Labor Party we are very strong believers in affirmative action and have seen some amazing changes to the make-up of our own group through affirmative action. I strongly suggest, even though I do not think it is a Liberal Party policy, that if you want to see some real improvements with the make-up of your own Cabinet with gender gaps, maybe have a look into some affirmative action policies.

Persistent gender gaps not only weaken the financial position and the future economic security of women but also reveal differences in how society values the respective contributions of women and men in the workforce. Women earn 84 per cent of a man's pay on average, resulting in a full-time gender pay gap of 16 per cent. This is a point-in-time snapshot of a picture that has endured for decades, it is not changing and we need to do more to change it. The persistence of the pay gap in the Tasmanian labour market is a perplexing one. I would appreciate it, minister, if you could shake up your people, and bring in policies where we can have some change. We have 52 per cent of the population that are relying on you for pay equity, for affordable and safe access to terminations, it is a really important role you have.

[7.30 p.m.]

Ms WHITE - As the shadow minister for Aboriginal Affairs it gave me an opportunity to sit opposite the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and ask some questions around how the Government is progressing on their resetting of the relationship agenda.

Given that the key activities on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website have not been updated since 2016-17 I asked the minister about that. I remind the minister in that exchange you gave a commitment to the committee that you would provide a thorough update to the parliament this week. I look forward to that. You will be doing that in your contribution? Excellent.

We discussed some really important key priority areas throughout Estimates that deserve disclosure regarding how we are meeting some of those targets, particularly in the areas of education and health around the Closing the Gap data. The budget papers noted that the Government was not going to meet its targets on time and that they had been pushed out due to some changes nationally, but also due to impacts at a state level. We talked about land hand-backs during the Estimates process.

I was disappointed in a couple of areas in the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio in which the minister refused to reveal her own opinion, particularly matters that are of deep interest to the Aboriginal community, namely treaty and Australia Day. I respect that the Government might have a particular policy position on both of those things, but as the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, particularly new to the portfolio, I hope and continue to hope that the minister has an open mind. I hope she is willing to engage with the community and to listen to their views on both of those matters, to form her own opinion and then advocate as the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs for what is in the best interests of her constituency. Rather than that the minister, rather than share her own opinion or indicate that she would be willing to work on those two issues, gave the Government line, the standard response, and would not budge.

The minister either has no opinion of her own or she is too scared to voice it. That is a concerning theme given that the Uluru Statement From The Heart has a number of important elements to it that have been identified through a consultative process that require state leaders, particularly relevant ministers, to take them forward on behalf of the community and in consultation with the broader community. The minister is not willing to do that. The Premier has already handed over the portfolio. Who on the Liberal benches is going to? It is worth noting that the Premier has handed over the responsibilities for Aboriginal Affairs after taking it on. Now it is Mrs Petrusma's responsibility.

If you look at the transcripts from the Estimates committees from last week, there is some hefty work there. The smallest one by far is the output groups relating to Mrs Petrusma, mostly because there is just a hotchpotch of portfolios that have been assigned, including Sport and Recreation, Disability Services and Community Development, Women and Aboriginal Affairs. Areas that of themselves are really important, but clearly a demotion for the minister after her failures over the past four years.

The minister can write letters on our behalf to NDIS if there are problems. Thank you, but as members of parliament we can do that on behalf of our constituents.

Our Minister for Sport and Recreation did not seem to be across much of the detail. It is the Premier who is running the arguments on some of those key areas of concern, particularly AFL.

Minister for Women - the minister revealed she had not made a statement in support of women regarding their access to legal reproductive health services in this state. She had not spoken up on behalf of women who have been cyberbullied by members of the Premier's own staff. She revealed she had not used her position of influence and power as the Minister for Women to stand up on behalf of women who have been targeted, and has failed to make a single representation to the Premier or Cabinet in support of access to affordable, safe terminations and reproductive health services, in support of those women who were cyberbullied. As the Minister for Women, if she is not going to do something about that then what is the point of her holding that portfolio?

There were a number of issues we spoke about in the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio regarding the number of young Aboriginal youth in Ashley Youth Detention Centre that the minister would have been aware of from her time as the previous minister for human services. Given that model of detention is one the Government is going to cling to, what is the minister going to do to address that alarmingly high figure? How is she going to engage with the community to ensure that those young people do not end up at Ashley and do not then end up at Risdon Prison? It is an area we want the Government to focus more attention on. It comes back to closing the gap more generally, providing universal access to education, health services and family support services to provide early intervention. When those young people end up in the youth detention system the minister needs to be there as their advocate making sure there are resources provided and support provided to help them.

Two other issues we spoke about in the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio are land return and dual naming. The dual naming policy of this Government is under review. It is a process that has dragged on. It started last year and the Government is still considering submissions, still thinking about a draft report in response to those submissions that were received. There were lots of them. The minister revealed there would be targeted consultation undertaken next. The questions I had of the minister were regarding who would be consulted as part of that targeted consultation, how selective would it be and what input would there be for the community to have input into any final thinking before the Government made a decision? They remain concerns and questions that I have because they were not resolved during the Estimates questioning process.

Land return is one of the areas where the Government has stalled on meeting its targets under resetting the relationship, because it has not been able to progress land returns. Last year the Government process for land returns was stalled apparently by the Electoral Commission who informed the Government not to proceed because it could interfere with the election. That was interesting advice from the Electoral Commission. I would have thought it would have been above politics and therefore irrelevant to the political cycle. I encourage the minister to progress that with a matter of urgency, given the Government has not handed back a single piece of land to the Aboriginal community during its entire tenure.

The minister is ultimately responsible for progressing a treaty, to work with the Aboriginal community to identify the things we have talked about, whether it be youth in detention, resetting the relationship targets, Australia Day, closing the gap around education and health care, land return and dual naming. Pathway to treaty enables us to have objectives that we set as a community, and when I say community I mean Tasmanian community, that we can all work towards. Part of the Uluru Statement made it quite clear that there were a number of ways that governments could work with the Aboriginal community and the broader community to provide opportunities for reconciliation and to address the disadvantage that exists in our communities. There are a number of questions I still have from the Estimates process with Mrs Petrusma.

Time expired.

[7.40 p.m.]

Mrs PETRUSMA - The budget Estimates showed that in my portfolios of Aboriginal Affairs, Women, Sport and Recreation, Disability Services and Community Development, we have a great deal to be proud of in these areas.

Building on the gains we have made so far, the Hodgman Government is committed to continuing the reset of our relationship with the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. During Estimates I

was asked to provide an update on our 2017-18 key activities on our resetting the relationship with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, which I will now provide to the House as well as to table. Keeping in mind that this document is provided on an annual basis and it is the 2017-18 update and 30 June was only four days ago, I thank the department in being able to provide this update.

There have been a couple of comments in regard to funding. I want to note that across the forward Estimates \$20 million is provided in regard to all programs and services for Aboriginal Tasmanians. In regard to resetting the relationship with the Aboriginal community, key priority 1 is 'A new approach to Aboriginal eligibility'. A new approach to eligibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people-specific programs and services commenced on 1 July 2016. All Tasmanian government agencies are working collaboratively to ensure a streamlined approach for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Tasmania when accessing programs and services.

This work has included several operational improvements such as the introduction of agency guidelines, introduction of a more user-friendly eligibility form, changes to acceptable forms of communal recognition and the expansion of organisations that may provide communal recognition, and all relevant agencies are now accessing and using the Aboriginal Eligibility Register from early January 2018.

In regard to key priority 2, Focus on Tasmanian Aboriginal history and culture in the delivery of the Australian curriculum, the Department of Education is leading the development of the Tasmanian Aboriginal histories and cultures framework. The framework is underpinned by an online multimedia platform which will provide teachers with a bank of resources to deliver Aboriginal histories and cultures in Tasmania's classrooms.

This multimedia platform is known as the Orb and is a culturally safe resource that features Aboriginal voices sharing knowledge of people, community, identity, living culture, country and place. An official launch of the Orb is scheduled for mid-August 2018. Additional teaching resources for delivering the Tasmanian Aboriginal histories and cultures framework have also been developed and include classroom videos, a teaching and learning guide and a framework for culturally responsive practice. The multimedia curriculum resources, specifically ochre, stone, tools, muttonbirding and fibres, will also be released when the website is launched.

In regard to key priority 3, Constitutional recognition of Tasmanian Aboriginal people, an historic amendment to Tasmania's constitution to recognise Tasmanian Aboriginal people received royal assent on 15 December 2016. This involved recognition of the First Tasmanians and has also been consolidated by practical support for the Reconciliation Council of Tasmania. Now called Reconciliation Tasmania, the council was supported by the Tasmanian Government in its establishment in August 2017. Reconciliation Tasmania is working to bring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Tasmanians together in the spirit of reconciliation.

Key priority 4 is to explore joint land management arrangements and to review the current land return model. The review of the land return model was commenced in May 2017, but the release of the discussion paper to guide community consultations was put on hold in early 2018 on the advice of the Tasmanian Electoral Commissioner until the conclusion of the 2017-18 Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania, or ALCT, elections.

During this process, the Department of Premier and Cabinet has still continued to progress the review work, including a jurisdictional analysis on land return and management models in other

jurisdictions. With the ALCT elections concluding on 30 June 2018 the discussion paper is now intended for public release by September 2018.

The Tasmanian Government is also continuing to progress Aboriginal joint management of reserved lands in Tasmania. A key objective of this work is close collaboration with Aboriginal Tasmanians to ensure their ancestral knowledge and past and current cultural practices are integral to informing the contemporary management of the Tasmanian landscape. The Aboriginal Heritage Council also plays a key advisory role in this work.

We are also committed to exploring joint land management arrangements in parallel with the land return process. We will ensure full consultation with all stakeholders on any possible changes to land return process as we fully accept that a connection to country, land and sea is a most fundamental pillar of Aboriginal identity. This Government also believes that land return and joint land management options are an important step in the reconciliation process, as well as for creating economic, tourism and employment opportunities for Aboriginal Tasmanians.

As part of this priority area Working on Country Aboriginal trainee rangers are now working for the Parks and Wildlife Service and are undertaking six-monthly placements within Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania. The trainees are acquiring the technical skills required to identify and record Aboriginal heritage sites and to more fully participate in the joint management of reserves.

Key priority area 5 is Closing the Gap. The Government is continuing to invest in activities that support COAG's Closing the Gap agenda, including the following projects. The Aboriginal Family Safety initiative with family safety workers employed at the Bridgewater, Ravenswood and Burnie child and family centres is delivering support to Aboriginal families, including referrals to specialist services. The initiative will also see the delivery of a pre-employment training program in southern Tasmania that will equip participants with skills to gain employment in human services.

There is also the Aboriginal Employment Strategy for the Tasmanian State Service which is currently being finalised by the State Service Management Office and will be released later this year. The strategy will support improved recruitment and retention practices, including raising cultural competence across the service and working in partnership with the Aboriginal community to identify stronger pathways for young people to engage with employment opportunities.

An Indigenous or Aboriginal procurement policy is also being finalised that will take the distinctive nature of the Tasmanian economy into account and drive stronger awareness by suppliers of local benefits, including Aboriginal employment and community engagement, when tendering for government businesses. This policy is important because our reset agenda includes ensuring that more Tasmanian Aboriginal people benefit from and share in our booming economy.

Following the lead of the Australian Government with the Indigenous Procurement Policy, the Government is exploring options for a policy that will bring us into line with other jurisdictions and which is appropriate for the Tasmanian environment. We want a policy that will drive real outcomes for Tasmanian Aboriginal people and improve economic opportunities for businesses and for individuals.

In 2017-18 the Tasmanian Government also provided further financial support to the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania for the wukalina cultural walk from Mt William National Park to Eddystone Point. This signature tourism experience has completed its first season, showcasing the cultural natural valleys of north-eastern Tasmania and is delivering strong benefits

to the Tasmanian tourism sector and pathways to employment for Aboriginal people in the areas of hospitality, guiding, heritage and land management. The project also reflects the aspirations of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to develop the cultural tourism sector in recognition of the community's traditional and continuing custodianship of Tasmania.

Additional activities undertaken in 2017-18 included development of an issues paper on the review of the Aboriginal and dual naming policy. The consultation and stakeholder feedback report is now available and the review is currently progressing to a second round of targeted consultation. One of the fundamental commitments of the Hodgman Government in this term of parliament is to complete this review of the Aboriginal dual naming policy. The further round of stakeholder consultations will form the basis of the final recommendations to be put forward to me and the minister, Ms Courtney.

We also commence the new amendments to the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1975. The rich Aboriginal history of Tasmania stretches back more than 40 000 years and our Government is aware of the role we play in partnership with the Aboriginal people in recognising the significance of this heritage and ensure that measures are in place to value its significance and to protect it. During our first term the Government will work with the Aboriginal community to introduce several significant amendments to the Aboriginal Relics Act 1975. The 1975 act is an unfortunate example of exactly how Aboriginal people, their culture and their history has been treated for far too long in this state. The change of name to the Aboriginal Heritage Act, removal of the offensive cut-off date for the creation of Aboriginal heritage and a significant increase in penalties for unlawful interference or damage to Aboriginal heritage were important first steps in Tasmania as a whole moving forward by seeking to reduce wilful, reckless or negligent impacts on Tasmania's Aboriginal heritage.

The Aboriginal Heritage Act 1975 provides for statutory guidelines to encourage people to exercise due diligence in minimising the risk of impacting Aboriginal heritage. Under the act, a statutory Aboriginal Heritage Council has been established to provide advice to myself as minister in this important area. To support the amendments, Aboriginal heritage standards and procedures were developed to assist proponents to navigate the Aboriginal heritage assessment processes. Two new facilities, the Aboriginal Heritage Property Search website and the Dial Before You Dig referral service, have been established. These provide the first step for land managers and developers to determine whether there is a need to seek further advice about the presence of Aboriginal relics in an area.

Increased Aboriginal heritage awareness presentations to key stakeholders have also been undertaken as part of raising awareness across all sectors in the community. Supporting the work in this area is a dedicated branch of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment - or DPIPWE - in Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania. Within Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, the cultural management group is responsible for the delivery of the key desired outcomes of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area - TWWHA - Management Plan 2016. Major achievements include the Assessment of Aboriginal Cultural Values Project, which is a multi-year project commissioned by DPIPWE. This project aims to fulfil the Tasmanian and Australian governments' commitments to provide the World Heritage Committee with more detailed information on the Aboriginal cultural values of the TWWHA and their relationship to its outstanding universal values.

Two components of this project have been completed, resulting in the Aboriginal heritage of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area literature review and synthesis report and a detailed plan for a comprehensive cultural assessment of the TWWHA. The final component of this project,

the cultural values assessment of the 2013 extension of the TWWHA project, is scheduled for completion in December this year.

As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Women, I am delighted that this week's NAIDOC theme recognises and celebrates the invaluable contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have made and continue to make to their communities, families and our history. NAIDOC Week is the week for all Australians to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and is a great opportunity to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

This year's theme, Because of Her, We Can, acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are pillars of our society. They have played, and continue to play, active and significant roles in the community at local, state and national levels as leaders, trailblazers, politicians, activists and social change advocates. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women continue to influence as doctors, lawyers, teachers, electricians, chefs, nurses, architects, rangers, emergency and defence personnel, writers, volunteers, chief executive officers, actors, singers, song writers, journalists, entrepreneurs, media personalities, board members, accountants, academics, sporting icons and Olympians. The list goes on.

For over 40 000 years in Tasmania, Aboriginal women have carried their dreaming stories, songlines, languages and knowledge that have kept their cultures strong and enriched us as the oldest continuing culture on the planet. The Tasmanian Aboriginal community celebrates NAIDOC Week through numerous community activities and events around the state. Events include flag raisings, arts exhibitions, community lunches, cultural activities and on country excursions to recognise, thank, congratulate and acknowledge our outstanding Tasmanian Aboriginal women and girls for their invaluable contributions and achievements that they have made and continue to make.

This includes young women like Mackenzie Adams, Melissa Smith and Amelia Tulip, who were acknowledged today by being the successful recipients of the 2018 Ida West Aboriginal Health Scholarships, which are an ongoing tribute to the life and work of Auntie Ida West, a respected Aboriginal Elder who made a significant contribution to social justice and reconciliation in both Tasmania and at a national level during her lifetime.

We are seeing some progress but I know Aboriginal women still face additional barriers and the Hodgman Liberal Government will continue to work hard so Aboriginal women have equal opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, Tasmania's social, political, economic and cultural life through an increase in Aboriginal women's representation in the State Service through the Aboriginal employment strategy.

We know Aboriginal women are between two and five times more likely than non-Aboriginal people to experience some form of family violence as victims or as offenders. When children are exposed to family violence it can be very detrimental to their emotional, psychological and social development and can affect their ability to form healthy relationships. This is why we are funding culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal women and children affected by family violence through the Aboriginal Family Safe initiative, which I briefly mentioned earlier, which is an action under our nation-leading Safe Homes, Safe Families plan.

Due to the Hodgman Government's more inclusive approach to eligibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services, more Aboriginal women can now access this vital service and get the help and support they need during such a challenging time in their life. This

initiative aims to deliver stronger pathways for Aboriginal women affected by or experiencing family violence to supports including the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service.

To help benefit more in the Aboriginal community, our initiative has resulted in more employment for Tasmanian Aboriginals within the State Service with the creation of three identified positions for Aboriginal family safety workers. The positions commenced in July 2017 and have supported nearly 500 Aboriginal parents and children. Their roles are to act as conduits between Aboriginal community organisations and child and family centres to ensure Aboriginal women and children who are affected by, or are experiencing, family violence are supported as they navigate the service system, including the Child Safety Service, Safe at Home and the Safe Families Coordination Unit.

Our Government has been working in partnership with the Aboriginal community to achieve and deliver these outcomes. However, we recognise there is a lot more to be done. To this end, I would like to express my deep appreciation and thanks to all the members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal communities for their time and patience in answering my endless questions and who continue to work with us and to entrust our Government to work in partnership with them in ensuring we do reset the relationship.

The Hodgman Liberal Government has a vision for a more inclusive Tasmania and our recently launched Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2018-21 is a critical step in this process, especially in leadership and participation.

In the State Service the heads of departments have established a goal to achieve gender equity in the senior executives with a target of at least 40 per cent of senior executives to be women by 2020. As at March 2018, I am delighted to report women make up approximately 39.19 per cent or 58 of the 148 senior executive service officers. This is an increase of nearly 10 per cent from 2014. In 2013-14, women comprised 30 per cent of senior executive staff in the Tasmanian State Service, 34 per cent in 2015-16 and 36.91 per cent in 2016-17, and we now have 39.19 per cent at March 2018.

Likewise, I am delighted to say women's representation on all government boards and committees has increased from 33 per cent in July 2015 to 41.1 per cent in June 2018. As of 6 June 2018, 53 per cent of government business enterprise directors are women and 43 per cent of state-owned company directors are women. These figures represent a significant increase in the number of positions held by women since the Liberal Government was elected in 2014. The Government will continue to move towards a target of 50 per cent representation of women on government boards and committees by July 2020.

In regard to women and girls, the increased funding to Cricket Tasmania is a commitment that I am extremely proud of. Over 2018-19 we will provide \$800 000 to Cricket Tasmania and this funding is in due recognition of the effort Cricket Tasmania have put in to rebranding their women's high performance program under the Tigers' banner. With the two teams, one club culture, Cricket Tasmania is now striving to implement cricket for all Tasmanians no matter what their gender. Funding for increased participation for women and girls in both AFL and cricket is the major objective under our Levelling the Playing Field program to upgrade new women's sports facilities with the expressions of interest stage of this program now closed. I thank everyone who applied for this EOI process and we look forward to confirming successful applicants for stage 2 in the near future.

In April this year the Hodgman Government made a \$75 000 commitment to Hockey Tasmania in order to secure Tasmania's place in the AHL for the coming season. We are delighted that we have been able to support the Tigers and Van Demons for the coming season. We are also excited that through our support of hockey we have been able to secure Hobart as one of three host cities along with Sydney and Melbourne for next year's debut of the Hockey Pro League. Tasmanians will have the opportunity to see Australia's men's and women's team play Pakistan, Germany and China thanks to this Government's support of hockey -

Time expired.

Estimates of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Women, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Disability Services and Community Development agreed to.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT

[8.02 p.m.]

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

That the House do now adjourn.

Ida West Aboriginal Health Scholarships

[8.02 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Health) - Madam Speaker, I would like to say what a privilege it was for me today to be joined in the Long Room by yourself and a large number of members of this House and members of the other place for the announcement of the annual allocation of the Aunty Ida West health scholarships. This is an important area for us to acknowledge achievement. This has been the fifth opportunity for me as Minister for Health to announce the winners of these important scholarships but the first time we have seen such a big turnout, and that is testimony to the interest of my parliamentary colleagues from this House and the other House. It is also a tribute to Tasmania's chief nursing and midwifery officer, Francine Douce, and her team who brought us together, but most importantly it is a tribute to the family members and past scholarship recipients who attended today. It was fantastic to see the support around the room.

Three outstanding indigenous students have been awarded scholarships today to help them to complete studies that will equip them to improve Tasmanian Aboriginal health and wellbeing. These scholarships were set up to address the under-representation of Aboriginal people in health or human services occupations.

The scholarships are named after the late Aunty Ida West, who made a massive contribution to social justice and reconciliation in Tasmania and nationally. This year the scholarships were awarded to three University of Tasmania students, all young women, and they are Mackenzie Adams and Melissa Smith, who are both studying nursing, and Amelia Tulip, who is studying health

and community care. Madam Speaker, wasn't it delightful to meet with Amelia afterwards and to hear her new developments in her career ambitions, which we will be following with interest?

The three students are all very excited about their studies and are dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of Tasmania's Aboriginal community. The scholarships provide financial support sponsored by the Tasmanian Government valued at up to \$5000 each to students who are studying in health-related courses which can be either at university or TAFE. The Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services set up the scholarships program to honour the late Auntie Ida West's life and work following her passing in 2003, I think at the time through Jim Bacon.

I am pleased to be able to let you know that at this point 19 students have now been provided with scholarships since they were first awarded in 2004. In closing, I would like to also thank the grandson of Auntie Ida West, Mark West, who has been very involved in the program from a family level - there is the connection - but also in helping Francine Douce and her team to make the selections, and Auntie Ida West's great-grandson Tim West, who today provided the Welcome to Country.

As Minister for Health I thank all those people but most importantly congratulate Mackenzie, Melissa and Amelia. We wish them all the very best for their future studies and careers.

Minister for Housing - Comments on Ms Standen's Qualifications and Experience

[8.06 p.m.]

Ms STANDEN (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I rise to provide some information to the House further to comments made by Mr Roger Jaensch, minister for Housing, Human Services and Planning in his summary comments following Estimates.

I raised in my comments in Estimates my concern about the 8 per cent vacancy in FTEs for child safety officers despite the department's best attempts. I provided a measured overview of my concerns about workforce and retention issues, which is obviously in an overburdened system. I noted that we need to start from a point of honesty and understanding of the real problems that we have. In reply, Mr Jaensch patronised me and said, 'Please do not listen to Ms Standen', and said I was still learning the politics of this one and overreaching sometimes.

In indicating my inexperience, Madam Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to outline my experience and perhaps an overview of his.

Mr O'Byrne - Then we can compare and contrast.

Ms STANDEN - Yes, compare and contrast if you will.

Without wishing to denigrate the experience of the member, information on his website indicates that he comes from a background in science at Monash University. I have that background as a Bachelor of Science myself from the University of Tasmania. On top of that, I have two postgraduate Masters degrees, one in nutrition and dietetics and one in business administration. The minister's background speaks of work in the remote Gascoyne area in Western Australia in tourism, horticulture and a range of things in relation to local economic development, including creating new exports, and then moving to the north-west coast where indeed I grew up, and he talks of some 14 years of his experience as chair and CEO of the Cradle Coast Authority since 2000 in planning

economic and community development across the region. I well remember his contributions as a community leader in that regard.

I wish to contrast my experience in relation to human services, health and community development and my credentials in regard to those portfolios in order to make a contribution in this place. I claim 10 years' experience in health and some 11 years in community services, including human services. I have a background commencing from the early 1990s in a range of health areas including clinical, community and public health nutrition, rising to the status of acting State Nutrition Officer, the most senior position in public health nutrition in this state, as well as being on the board of my professional organisation, the Dietitians Association of Australia.

I then spent some five years from 1999 to 2004 as assistant state manager of health programs, managing a range of programs and services in Aboriginal health, primary care and rural health. Then I spent a year as head of office for the minister for community development in the former government.

After the birth of my son, I spent some two years as deputy director in the Community Development Division for the Department of Premier and Cabinet where I was lead government official for the COAG Working Group on Indigenous Reform. I had responsibility for some 50 staff across Women Tasmania, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, the Seniors Bureau, Disability Bureau, Multicultural Tasmania and the Office of Children and Youth Affairs.

Then for the six-and-a-half years to 2016 I was general manager of the Smith Family in Tasmania, growing and establishing the presence in Tasmania to support over 3000 kids statewide, including more than 500 on an educational scholarship, leading the largest education-related children's charity in the country in this state, supporting children from low-income backgrounds through education, including two years as co-chair of Anti-Poverty Week within that term.

For the past one-and-a-half years before being elected to this place, I was Tasmanian state manager for the Department of Social Services for the Australian Government, managing some 60 people and a multimillion dollar budget in relation to settlement and multicultural affairs, families and children services, disability and carers.

I end on the point that I will not be lectured by the Minister for Human Services in relation to my experience and background in that regard.

Opposition members - Hear, hear.

Penguin Viewing Platforms

[8.12 p.m.]

Mr BROOKS (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, I want to briefly discuss an issue I raised during Estimates last week. It relates to the death of a number of penguins that were recently before the courts that has caused distress for many in the community. While the sentencing is a matter for the courts, and an appeal is entirely a matter for the prosecuting authority, as the local MP I share the concerns of the community on this and similar matters.

It is hard for most reasonable people to comprehend why and how an individual could be so violent towards defenceless wildlife. It is terrible behaviour and fair to say that each and every one

of us here would agree that violence like that should be condemned. The Government takes all allegations of animal cruelty very seriously. That is why in 2015 we strengthened and modernised the Animal Welfare Act. We increased the penalty for aggravated cruelty to up to five years' imprisonment and strengthened other penalties across the board.

Mr Bacon - Do you reckon there needs to be another tranche to the animal welfare legislation updates?

Mr BROOKS - If you wait you might learn something. I doubt it, but you might.

Mr Bacon - I doubt it too.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, gentlemen.

Mr BROOKS - We increased the penalty for aggravated cruelty to up to five years' imprisonment and strengthened other penalties across the board to send a strong message and increase deterrents against acts of animal cruelty, and for threatened species we are strengthening penalties for those who deliberately kill them in Tasmania. The community's expressed collective outrage at this act and the Government's moves to significantly increase penalties will make any would-be offenders think again and control themselves. This type of violence is completely unacceptable and I hope it never happens again.

I was privileged to be in Stanley recently with our federal candidate for the by-election, Mr Whiteley, where we announced some significant funding for the Circular Head area that also includes a penguin viewing platform. For these amazing, wonderful animals you use red lights because it does not affect their sight so you can see them a lot more easily and it does not interfere with their ability to see where they are going. The viewing platform on Lillico Beach in Braddon in the north-west - for the Leader of the Opposition that is north of Campbell Town -

Mr O'Byrne - Are these your greatest hits?

Mr BROOKS - Something like that. There is a line-up of tourists every day to see these amazing animals -

Dr Broad - Every night.

Mr BROOKS - Every night, thank you, Dr Broad. We would all agree that the senseless killing of those animals has caused outrage in the community. I was proud to announce on the weekend that we will be improving the viewing platform at Stanley for those tourists who want to see penguins. Certainly it is a tragedy and I share the outrage of the community about that senseless act and hopefully people do not do it again, because it is offensive and outrageous.

Love Our Streets - West Hobart Street Party

[8.17 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Denison) - Madam Speaker, I want to tell the House about a wonderful event that I attended on Sunday. It was called the Love Our Streets West Hobart street party and was held on the corner of Pine and Hill streets in West Hobart on Sunday afternoon as part of a project to make communities more connected, friendly and safe. There was a really great turnout with locals

and visitors of all ages bustling into the street to enjoy the day. It was really cold weather, but despite that they had huge crowds and the weather held out until the last 30 minutes of the afternoon. There was a range of stalls, including plants and herbs for sale, clothes, bric-a-brac swaps, a council stall on urban sustainability and free blood pressure check-ups.

I wanted to alert the House to how important these kinds of events are in building community connection and say well done to Amanda Midgley from the Hobart City Council, Sheree Martin and all the other local residents who formed the committee, meeting for weeks on end to plan the day and to make sure it all went off without a hitch. I also make special mention of Lansdowne Crescent Primary School and their principal, Monique Carter, who was there working all day alongside just about every Lansdowne Crescent family and student, I dare say. I know my kids who came with me to the party, in particular, enjoyed the cupcakes made by the Lansdowne Crescent students and families.

The West Hobart branch of the Labor Party also ran a stall. We had a book and CD music swap and thanks to Scott, Nigel and Stuart who organised the stall and all the West Hobart Labor Party branch members who attended throughout the day to help on the stall, donating books and prizes for the raffle, which was won by Hill Street resident, Louisa.

One of the real highlights was the buskers' corner, which was organised by high school student Georgia Gillies. We were treated to lots of young people performing with really impressive musical talent. I was proud to sponsor the busking competition and support the event and congratulate Georgia for pulling the event together, the winner of the competition, Alex, and all the young people who gave such great performances.

The street party was a lot of fun, but it is about something a bit more than having fun. It is about an ongoing project to encourage locals to explore their local area, connect with their neighbours and have fun together. I commend those at the Hobart City Council who support these community events. They have been happening for quite some time. There was one in my area where I live in Lenah Valley about four years ago where the community got together to enjoy a street party similar to the one in West Hobart on Sunday, but also to discuss changes needed in our local streets. We are now in the midst of exciting road works in Lenah Valley, with wider footpaths being installed along with seating and planting boxes. New Town had one too around about that time and they are next on the list for a streetscape upgrade.

They are lovely events and not just as a method of highlighting a need for street upgrades, but also to bring communities together to make new friendships and refresh old ones, and that is what we saw on Sunday at the West Hobart street party, with lovely stalls, fire pits for kids toasting marshmallows, a really beautiful chalk mural along the whole outside wall of Smolt Kitchen, great music, great conversation and great fun.

Minister for Energy - Comments about Mr O'Byrne

[8.20 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I refer to a robust exchange that occurred across the House earlier today where the member for Lyons and Minister for Energy referred to me as a 'gadfly'. At the time I did not seek to have it withdrawn. It was a robust reference and exchange, and it was good. I thought, he has had a crack at me and I will have a crack back and away we move on.

It got me thinking, what does 'gadfly' actually mean? I thought I knew what it meant so I thought I would undertake some research. For the benefit of the House, the contemporary definition of a gadfly: in modern politics a gadfly is someone who persistently challenges people in positions of power, the status quo or a popular position. For example, Morris Kline wrote -

There is a function for the gadfly who poses questions that many specialists would like to overlook. Polemics is healthy. The word may be uttered in a pejorative sense -

And I did get the hint from the minister that he was using it in the pejorative manner.

or be accepted as a description of honourable work or civic duty.

This is what I seek to lean on. That it was my civic duty to raise these issues with the good minister.

Then I thought that the member for Lyons is a considered man. He does not use these references just off the cuff. He does not just throw it in. He has actually thought about this. I reckon he has done some research so I undertook the same level of research, perhaps a little bit deeper than the member for Lyons.

There is a biblical reference to gadfly and I thought that is where the good member for Lyons has done his work. It is the Book of Jeremiah that uses a similar analogy as a political metaphor -

Egypt is a very fair heifer; the gad-fly cometh, it cometh from the north.

Members laughing.

Mr O'BYRNE - He knows I was born in Launceston and that I have come south.

Members laughing.

Mr O'BYRNE - So the gadfly reference, he has done his research and he has used it deliberately. I fear his research stopped there but, Madam Speaker, mine did not. I continued. I dug deeper on this gadfly reference. The term is originally associated with the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates in his defence when on trial for his life. The term gadfly was used by Plato in the Apology to describe Socrates' relationship of uncomfortable goad to the Athenian political scene which he compared, and I quote -

to a slow and dimwitted horse.

I repeat, a slow and dimwitted horse. What an appalling reference and reflection on the member for Lyons.

Members laughing.

Mr O'BYRNE - During his defence when on trial for his life, Socrates, according to Plato's writings, pointed out that dissent like the gadfly was easy to swat but the cost to society of silencing individuals who are irritating could be very high.

'If you kill a man like me you will injure yourselves more than you will injure me' because his role was that of a gadfly, 'to sting people and whip them into a fury, all in the service of truth'.

As a gadfly, as I refer to the slow and dimwitted horse, a gadfly I may be, but a goose he shall remain.

The House adjourned at 8.23 p.m.