

Tuesday 19 March 2019

SECOND SESSION OF THE FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT

The House met at 11 a.m. pursuant to the proclamation of Her Excellency the Governor.

The Clerk read the proclamation.

The Speaker, **Ms Hickey**, acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

Attendance of Members - Opening of Parliament

The Usher of the Black Rod was admitted and delivered a message from Her Excellency the Governor requesting the attendance of members in the Legislative Council Chamber. Members accordingly proceeded to that Chamber and, having heard Her Excellency's Commission for the opening of Parliament, returned to the House of Assembly.

Sitting suspended from 11.05 a.m. to 11.09 a.m.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Resignation of Mr Adam Brooks and Mr Rene Hidding

[11.10 a.m.]

Madam Speaker informed the House that Her Excellency the Governor had advised that she had received a letter from Mr Adam Brooks tendering his resignation as a member for Braddon in the House of Assembly effective from 12 February 2019.

Madam Speaker further informed the House that Her Excellency the Governor had advised that she had received a letter from Mr Rene Hidding tendering his resignation as a member for Lyons in the House of Assembly effective from 25 February 2019.

MEMBERS SWORN

Mrs Joan Rylah and Mr John Tucker

Madam Speaker informed the House that Her Excellency the Governor had advised of the election upon a recount of the following members for the House of Assembly:

Joan Flora Rylah (Braddon)
John Tucker (Lyons)

Mrs Rylah and Mr Tucker were sworn and declared that they had read and subscribed to codes of ethical conduct.

MOTION

Christchurch, New Zealand - Shooting Tragedy

[11.16 a.m.]

Mr HODGMAN (Franklin - Premier) (by leave) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as to prevent a motion concerning the Christchurch shootings from being debated forthwith, and that the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Greens and the mover speak to the motion for a period of time not exceeding 10 minutes.

Motion agreed to.

Mr HODGMAN - Madam Speaker, I move -

That this House:

- (1) condemns the shocking act of terrorism in Christchurch, New Zealand, on Friday 15 March, that resulted in the death of 50 innocent people, and injured at least 50 more;
- (2) extends our deepest condolences to the families of those killed, and all impacted by this hateful act;
- (3) extends our support to the Government and the people of New Zealand in dealing with the tragic aftermath of this act of terror; and
- (4) affirms our resolve to unite against intolerance, racism and violence and instead promote harmony, multiculturalism and peace in our community.

Madam Speaker, there are no words that can explain the vile attack on the innocent in New Zealand last week, and there is little we can say to lessen the trauma and the suffering caused by a coward who terrorised places of peace, taking 50 lives and injuring at least 50 more. We can, however, as a state that understands, extend our deepest condolences to all of those who have lost loved ones and have been affected by the evil act of terror in Christchurch last Friday.

We offer our full support to Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, her government, and the people of New Zealand, who are now dealing with the tragic aftermath of terror. We strongly affirm our resolve to unite against intolerance, racism and violence, and instead promote harmony, multiculturalism and peace in our community.

We condemn the actions of this evil coward, who is not Australian. We must condemn all forms of violence, persecution, racism and intolerance. An attack on one faith is an attack on all faiths, and we condemn it entirely. We can stand bedside Muslim Tasmanians in our rich multicultural community, those who are now fearful in the place they have made their home and love as much as any of us, as hundreds have done in vigils across our state. Our thanks to the organisers in bringing us together at a time when we have felt ripped apart.

I have written to the Prime Minister of New Zealand to offer our deepest condolences to the people of New Zealand, to support the Prime Minister's strong leadership and the strength of her community and to offer whatever assistance our state can lend to their country as it heals, including our medical and support personnel.

Already our chief medical officer, Professor Anthony Lawler, has been in contact with his colleagues in the emergency department of the Christchurch Hospital. Christchurch's first responders and medical professionals acted swiftly and bravely to save lives and preserve the safety of their community. Our clinical director of surgical and perioperative services at the Royal Hobart Hospital, Clinical Associate Professor Marcus Skinner, has also reached out to senior staff at the Christchurch Hospital. Staff at the Royal Hobart Hospital will remain in touch with their colleagues in Christchurch and stand ready to provide any support they can offer.

Tasmania Police is also reaching out to our local Muslim leaders and reviewing all relevant security arrangements and providing support to ensure the safety and security of all members of our community.

A meeting of the National Crisis Committee, including senior members of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Tasmania Police, was held last Friday. While there is no specific threat to any mosque or place of worship in Tasmania, the sudden, shocking events in Christchurch are a reminder to remain vigilant, but everyone has the right to feel safe at home, on the street or in their place of worship.

This week we celebrate harmony. It is a time to celebrate Australian multiculturalism and the successful integration of migrants into our community. As Australians, we should celebrate this and work to maintain it. Harmony Week is about inclusiveness, respect and belonging for all Australians regardless of cultural or linguistic background and united by a set of core Australian values. Our Parliament unites to promote an inclusive, cohesive and open community where differences in backgrounds, cultures and religion are valued and respected.

In times of great darkness, the spirit of human kindness can often shine brightest. Amidst the carnage we learned of great acts of courage, sacrifice, support and great acts of strength. That is New Zealand; a beautiful country of wonderful people, a free land with every creed and race, who 'Gather here before Thy face, Asking Thee to bless this place'. God defend their free land from dissension, envy, hate, and corruption; guard your state, make your country good and great. God defend New Zealand.

I commend the motion to the House.

[11.21 a.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, the unspeakable horror that unfolded in Christchurch has shaken us all to the core. The deep sense of sorrow and the intense sense of helplessness at this wretched act has stopped the international community in its tracks and forced us all to face up to a profound evil. It is an evil that has targeted innocent men, women and children going about their daily lives and, in this case, tragically and unforgivably targeting a community going about its daily ritual of silent prayer.

As the nearest neighbour of New Zealand, Tasmanians share the grief and disbelief at this act of unprecedented brutality unleashed last Friday afternoon. We praise the swift reaction of the first responders and those heroes who supported people in their gravest hour. It is at times like this we

come together as a community and we show the best versions of ourselves to one another. We show our support, we show our love, we share the grief and we share the disbelief.

On behalf of the Tasmanian parliamentary Labor Party I want all New Zealanders to understand and know our condolences are genuine, they are heartfelt, and our very deepest sympathies are with them, the victims of this attack and their families. Our heart is heavy for the people of New Zealand. We mourn with the people of New Zealand. We share their devastation and we stand in solidarity with them and with the people of all and various faiths and religions and especially with the Muslim community, which was deliberately and horrifically targeted in this appalling tragedy. Together, we weep with them and at the senseless loss of the loved ones at the hands of a terrorist.

We understand that for us as Tasmanians this event has reopened the deep wounds that still affect us as a community, one which has experienced a similar horror. While we stand together I am also deeply troubled it takes horrific and tragic events for us to become united in defence of diversity and humanity.

Now is the time for understanding, for grieving and reflection. It is not a time for politics, provocation or woefully misguided and offensive armchair commentary. Since last Friday's brutal atrocity, commentators have attempted to leverage political mileage and agitate division in our community. We should all condemn this behaviour. This Parliament must denounce it in the strongest possible terms. It is not what the Labor Party stands for, it is not what Australia stands for, it is not what any of us should tolerate and we should reject it now and forever.

As Australians, Tasmanians and an international community, our shared humanity should guide us always and not only in times of tragedy. Common decency to one another, acceptance, inclusion, care, love, support and compassion should be extended to one another always and not only when we are reminded of our fragility as humans.

I watched with admiration the beacon of hope for New Zealand that is their Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, as she adorns a head scarf and joins the Muslim community to grieve their loss, New Zealand's loss, our loss, humanity's loss. They are us. That is what she has told her country. We are the 50 people who have died; we are the 50 people who were injured, including the 31 who remain in hospital, nine of them in critical condition and the youngest victim aged two. They are us. They are 50 people who will not be coming home again. These are 50 people, the senseless loss of whom will forever scar the lives of those loved ones and families left behind to grieve and to remember their lives and the brutality of their deaths every day. They were people killed in an unprecedented act of violence while they were in silent prayer, people who were unarmed, non-violent, peaceful and in a place of worship.

My personal and heartfelt sympathy goes to each of these families, each of their loved ones and to each of the lives they touched. The events of last Friday need to be lesson for each of us. It should remind us we need to cast away narrow-mindedness and unkindness.

On behalf of my colleagues I extend a warm welcome to people of all faiths, races and backgrounds and to tell them they will find a home in Tasmania, just as I see the Prime Minister of New Zealand offer that same warm welcome to all people as she reminds them they are a kind nation and they will not be defined as a country by this tragedy.

There are so many generous and thoughtful people across the world who have reached out to support New Zealanders to heal after their darkest of days. A fund has been established to support

the families of those victims of the terrorist attack. When I checked last night, over \$NZ5.8 million was available to support them, with 75 000 individual people donating. They are us, we are them, and together we mourn, together we will heal and forever remember those lost.

Members - Hear, hear.

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, on behalf of Dr Woodruff and I and all Tasmanian Greens, I strongly support this motion and extend our love and our empathy and our support to our cousins in New Zealand.

Members of Parliament met in St David's Cathedral this morning for the ecumenical service that marks the start of this session of the Parliament. As we sat there in introspection and quiet reflection, it really struck me that at 1.45 p.m. last Friday, there were people gathered in worship in two mosques in Christchurch at their most vulnerable, at their most introspective and their most defenceless.

As Tasmanians, as the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have remarked, we have a uniquely tragic understanding of what the people of New Zealand are going through now. We understand the pall of grief and disbelief hanging over that country and we share it.

It is important we acknowledge we are talking about mothers, fathers, sons, daughters and children and I take the opportunity to name of the victims of last Friday's shooting.

Naeem Rashid was one of the 50 victims of the Christchurch massacre. After he witnessed his son, Talha, shot and killed and men and women slain around him, he lunged at the terrorist with his bare hands. He was courageous until the very end and he died a hero.

Mucad Ibrahim was only three years old and he was the youngest of the victims. He had his whole life before him.

The scholar, Hafiz Musa Vali Patel, memorised the entire Koran and was a respected scholar and community leader. He lived much of his life in the Fiji Islands but had moved to New Zealand weeks ago to be part of the Christchurch Muslim community.

The beautiful smiling face of Tariq Omar is before me now. He was 24. His mother dropped him off and pulled around the back. She heard the first round and then the next two and fled, seeing bodies on the ground and people running. She waited for her son to come out but he never did. A natural athlete, Tariq Omar was known for his humility. He excelled in sports and was intellectually curious. He was a favourite among his classmates and took great pride in being both a Muslim and a New Zealander. He loved the outdoors.

There is the smiling surgeon, Amjad Hamid, 57, who had emigrated to New Zealand for a better life with his family 23 years ago. He was a heart doctor, always smiling and beloved by his patients. His wife, Hanan, and two sons, knew the mosque on Friday was his sanctuary. His sons say their mum is really struggling because she loved him so much.

Grandpa Haji-Daoud Nabi, 71, loved his little granddaughter. He always stood with her at the door of the Christchurch mosque, her locked to his leg as he greeted people inside. He was the first identified victim on Friday.

There is the founder of the Christchurch mosque, a Palestinian refugee. He raised the funds to create a community space for New Zealand's Muslims. Here he is smiling with his son. He was killed on Friday inside the mosque he built.

Proud son Talha Rashid, 21, was shot and killed in front of his father, Naeem. He was in college and attended Christchurch mosque with his dad. They prayed together and were slain alongside each other.

Madam Speaker, there is story after story. The bravery of the woman, Husne Ara Parvin, who threw herself over her husband who was in a wheelchair. Linda Armstrong, born in New Zealand, converted to Islam, was a warm soul who adopted a boy from Bangladesh. She had grandchildren and fought Islamophobia in Christchurch. Every one of these stories is utterly heartbreaking.

It is very difficult at times like this to find the right words. I did want to say something about language and Ms White has touched on it. It is a shock to us all that the murderer was an Australian. We all feel gutted and sick about that, but it is a very important opportunity for us to reflect on the kind of language that has been part of our political discourse for the past 10 or 15 years that has contaminated our politics and has whipped up fear, racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia.

There is a reason that Tasmania's Muslim community and people of the Islamic faith in Australia have felt afraid in recent years, because of the contamination of our political discourse. It is very important that we challenge this every time we hear it. I am proud to say that I look around this Tasmanian Parliament and there is no-one I could judge in that way for using racist, xenophobic, Islamophobic language. We are an inclusive and tolerant community and it is reflected in this Parliament, and perhaps it is partly because we are an island community and there is a sense that we are all in this together.

But the purveyors of fear and hate in this country, right to the top of our body politic, must take time to reflect, and it is not appropriate to say this is not the time to talk about the language we use. Now is exactly the time to challenge that language, because words have power. They have power for good and they have power for enormous evil, and I do not mean evil in the sense of the Christian construct, although others may see it that way. Human evil and vile language that legitimises racism, fear and xenophobia is evil at its core.

Madam Speaker, it is Harmony Week and a really important opportunity for us to reflect on our shared humanity. As the bishop said this morning at the service, religions are different but as human beings, we are not different. We want peace, we want to be loved, we want to feel safe in our community, and on behalf of the Tasmanian Greens I want to say to Tasmania's Muslim community, you are loved and you are valued and we want you to feel safe here. You are us and we are all in this together.

I want to close with some words from the Islamic leaders of New Zealand. Mustafa Farouk, the president of the Federation of Islamic Association of New Zealand, has said that the community is in shock and mourning but is resilient. I hope that resilience is strengthened by the enormous outpouring of love from the people of New Zealand - and for anyone who has not seen the schoolchildren doing the haka, please watch it.

Mustafa Farouk said:

The message for those who peddled hatred was that they have failed woefully because what they have done, if anything, is to increase the love and the feeling

we have for our own country. We have also seen the tremendous outpouring of love, what we call aroha, here in New Zealand.

Madam Speaker, from this Tasmanian Parliament today there is an outpouring of love for the people of New Zealand. We stand with you, we love you, we want to give you strength and we will never forget the victims of the New Zealand shootings.

Members stood in their place and observed one minute's silence.

Motion agreed to nemine contradicente.

TABLED PAPER

Government Businesses Scrutiny Committee

Mr Shelton tabled the Report of Government Businesses Scrutiny Committee 2018.

SPEAKER'S WARRANT

Deputy Chairs of Committees - Appointment

Madam SPEAKER - Pursuant to standing order 14 I hereby nominate Mrs Joan Rylah MP and Mr John Tucker MP to act as Deputy Chairs of Committees in the absence of, or when requested so to do, by the Chair of Committees.

ACTS ENUMERATION BILL 2019 (No. 1) (pro forma)

First Reading

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

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Opening of the Second Session of the Forty-Ninth Parliament

Madam SPEAKER - I have to report to the House that the House has this day been to the Legislative Council Chamber when Her Excellency the Governor's Commissioners declared the Second Session of the Forty-Ninth Parliament open.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Senate Vacancy - Resignation of Senator David Bushby

Madam SPEAKER - I further advise the House of the following further communication I have received from Her Excellency the Governor:

Dear Madam Speaker,

I enclose a copy of the letter I have received from the Governor-General notifying me that, pursuant to provisions of Section 21 of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution, a vacancy has occurred on 21 January 2019 in the representation of the State of Tasmania as a result of the resignation of Senator David Bushby.

I have also written to the Premier and the President of the Legislative Council to advise them of the vacancy.

Yours Sincerely,
C.A. Warner, Governor.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Senate Vacancy - Appointment of Wendy Anne Askew

Madam SPEAKER - I have also received from Government House, Tasmania, on 6 March 2019, the following communication -

Dear Madam Speaker,

I write to inform you that, pursuant to Section 15 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia, I have today, on the advice of my Executive Council, appointed Wendy Anne Askew to fill the vacancy in the representation of the State of Tasmania in the Senate that arose from the resignation of Senator David Bushby.

As you are aware, this appointment will expire fourteen days from the commencement of the next session of Parliament.

A copy of the Instrument of Appointment is attached.

Yours Sincerely,
C.A. Warner, Governor.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Standing Orders - Amendments agreed to by Governor

Madam SPEAKER - I further advise the House that, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution Act 1934, I attended Government House on 24 December 2018 to present for approval the amendments to the Standing Orders agreed to by the House on 29 November 2018 and advise that Her Excellency the Governor gave her approval of the same.

MOTION

Resumption of Proceedings on Bills

[11.44 a.m.]

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

(1) That in accordance with Standing Order 248, the proceedings of the -

Sentencing Amendment (Mandatory Sentencing for Serious Sexual Offences Against Children) (Bill No. 5 of 2018);
Sentencing Amendment (Assaults on Off-Duty Police) (Bill No. 6 of 2018);
Animal Welfare Reformation (Bill No. 38 of 2018);
House of Assembly Restoration (Bill No. 55 of 2018);
Land Acquisition Amendment (Bill No. 59 of 2018);
Litter Amendment (Bill No. 60 of 2018);
Forest Practices Amendment (Bill No. 61 of 2018);
Criminal Code and Related Legislation Amendment (Child Abuse) (Bill No. 63 of 2018);
Electricity Supply Industry Restructuring (Savings and Transitional Provisions) Amendment (Bill No. 64 of 2018);
Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Amendment (Bill No. 65 of 2018);
and
Short Stay Accommodation (Bill No. 66 of 2018)

which were interrupted by the prorogation of Parliament on 26 February 2019, be resumed at stage at which they were so interrupted.

(2) That in accordance with Standing Order 248, a Message be transmitted to the Legislative Council requesting that the proceedings of the -

Corrections Amendment (Prisoner Remission) (Bill No. 15 of 2018);
Gas Industry (Bill No. 40 of 2018);
Gas Safety (Bill No. 41 of 2018);
Gas (Consequential Amendments) (Bill No. 42 of 2018);
Mental Health Amendment (Bill No. 43 of 2018);
Justice and Related Legislation (Marriage Amendments) (Bill No. 47 of 2018);
Security and Investigations Agents Amendment (Bill No. 51 of 2018);
Supreme Court Civil Procedure Amendment (Bill No. 52 of 2018);
Energy Co-ordination and Planning Amendment (Bill No. 57 of 2018); and
Community, Health, Human Services and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Bill No. 58 of 2018)

which were interrupted by the prorogation of Parliament on 26 February 2019, be resumed at stage at which they were so interrupted.

As members are aware, the Government made clear its commitment to restore all bills before our Parliament at the time of prorogation. This motion puts this into effect and will restore all bills to the stage they were held prior to prorogation. All bills can then continue as though uninterrupted. I am advised that this is provided for in standing order 248 and I commend this motion to the House.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Premier's Address

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

- (1) The Premier make an Address to the House pursuant to Standing Order 351 at 3 o'clock p.m. this day.
- (2) The House of Assembly requests Members of the Legislative Council to attend in the House of Assembly Chamber at 3 o'clock p.m. this day for the purpose of hearing the Premier give the Premier's Address 2019.

As has been the custom of our House since 2008, the Premier will make an address to Parliament at the opening each parliamentary year other than an election year. This is being reflected in our Standing Orders and the Premier will give his address at 3 p.m. today. The Premier's Address will set out the Government's second-year agenda. The Government will look forward to contributions from every member of our House, including our new members. I commend this motion to the House.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Sessional Orders

[11.47 a.m.]

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

That for the remainder of this Session:-

- (1) After Standing Order 18, insert the following Sessional Order:-
 - 18A Extension of Day's Sitting
 - (1) A Minister may, at any time, but not so as to interrupt another Member while speaking, move without leave and without notice - 'That for this day's sitting, the House shall not stand adjourned at Six o'clock p.m. and that the House continue to sit past Six o'clock p.m.'
 - (2) Such motion supersedes the Main Question, if any, before the Chair.
 - (3) The Question of the extension of the day's sitting may not be amended and debate thereon shall not be allowed for more than twenty minutes, and in speaking thereon, no Member may exceed five minutes.
 - (4) Upon the resolution of the Question of the extension of the day's sitting, Debate on the Main Question, if any, shall resume as if uninterrupted.
- (2) In Standing Order 42, leave out all the words after 'ordered:-' and insert instead -

- (a) Private Members Business will have priority from 2.30 p.m. till 6.00 p.m. on Wednesdays.
- (b) Private Members Business which has been on the Notice Paper for the period required by the Standing Orders may be called on by a Member of the group which has been allocated time pursuant to the following weekly rotations:-

WEEK ONE

2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.	Government Private Members
3.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.	Opposition Members
5.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.	Other Members

WEEK TWO

2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.	Other Members
3.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.	Opposition Members
5.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.	Government Private Members

- (c) the Member calling on an item in Private Members' Business may, in doing so, state that at the conclusion of that time for the debate on that day, the matter be voted upon.
- (d) at the commencement of the time allocated for a group's Private Members' Business, the Whip or any other Member of that group, may indicate to the Speaker that its time be waived, in which case, the House shall immediately proceed with Government Business for that allocation of time.'
- (3) After Standing Order 48, insert the following Sessional Order:-
- '48A Minimum number of Questions
Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 47, the Speaker shall ensure that a minimum of questions without notice to be asked shall be seven by the Opposition, four by the Government Private Members and two by other members.'
- (4) In Standing Order 76, after paragraph (3), by adding the following new paragraph:-
- '(4) On Tuesdays and Wednesdays priority shall be given to the Opposition to raise a Matter of Public Importance and on Thursdays priority shall be given to Members other than the Opposition. Government Private Members shall only be given priority on every third sitting week.'
- (5) In Standing Order 129, by adding the following new paragraph:-
- '(2) A Member who has moved a substantive motion, or has moved an Order of the Day, may move the adjournment of the debate pursuant to paragraph

(1), but such motion shall not be taken to be the 'reply' prescribed by Standing Order 128.'

I also move the following addition -

That in Standing Order number 22 leave out the words 'past and present' and instead insert 'past, present and emerging'.

As part of the Government's commitment to restoring Parliament following prorogation, we undertook to reinstate the Sessional Orders previously in place. The sessional orders largely provide improved management of the business of our House and adopt longstanding other arrangements with regard to questions, private members' time and matters of public importance.

The Government proposes three small changes to the Sessional Orders. Concerns have been raised with the Government about the regular truncation of Greens' private members' time or, at least, a delayed start each week with the time taken for divisions on previous matters running over the expected commencement time of 5 p.m. To address this, the Government has agreed to a rotation of private members' time, as circulated, between the Government members and Greens members. This proposal has no effect on Opposition private members' time.

The second change is the allocation of MPI debates each week, whereby the Government has the priority of the debate each third week with priority given to other members, Greens members, on other weeks. Again, this change has no effect on the allocation of MPI debates that belong to the Opposition on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

The third amendment is to the acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners. Last year, our House adopted a daily recognition of Traditional Owners. The wording of the acknowledgement was not revisited. Instead, the longstanding acknowledgement made three times a year was accepted on a daily basis. Contemporary practice is to acknowledge emerging leaders with past and present. I acknowledge you, Madam Speaker, identifying that we could improve the way this is incorporated in our daily practice. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for bringing that to our attention. As I have already noted, the Sessional Orders largely provide for the improved management of the business of the House. I thank members for their contributions to this and I commend this motion to the House.

MOTION

Sessional and Select Committees - Appointment

[11.45 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Health)(by leave) - Madam Speaker, I now move the motion as circulated to appoint members to sessional committees and to re-establish select committees of the previous session, with the following insertions to the printed program. I draw members' attention to some additional words at the end of paragraph 3, where I will identify Government nominees to the House of Assembly Restoration Bill Committee.

The following insertions to the printed program are that:

Mrs Rylah and Mr Tucker be appointed to the Library Committee;

Mr Tucker be appointed to the Firearms Legislation and Policy Select Committee; and

that the House of Assembly Restoration Bill Committee report by 3 September next and that Mr Shelton and Mrs Rylah be appointed to that committee.

Madam Speaker, as part of our commitment to restoring business that had already been commenced prior to prorogation, we move this way:

the Firearms Legislation and Policy Select Committee has the support of the Government and, indeed, tripartisan support to continue. The committee commenced its work last year and it is important that all stakeholders in the community continue to have the opportunity to contribute to this work. Given the recent international events and the contributions that have already been made, I do not intend to speak on the substance or basis of that committee and I encourage others to follow suit. This committee must continue its work and the amended reporting date of 3 September provides sufficient time for committee proceedings after factoring in future sitting weeks in the budget session.

Similarly, the House of Assembly Restoration Bill Committee has important work to continue, also has tripartisan support and, given the loss of time, an extended reporting date. I note that the reporting date for each committee has been extended to provide enough time for members of those committees to do their work and, of course, they are entitled to report earlier if they are in a position to do so.

Madam Speaker, I move -

1. That the following members of this House be appointed to serve on the Joint Committee of both Houses to manage the Library -

The Speaker;
The Chair of Committees;
Dr Broad;
Ms Dow;
Mrs Rylah; and
Mr Tucker.
(S.O. No. 323)

2. That the following members of this House be appointed to serve on the Joint Committee of both Houses (known as the House Committee) to control Parliament House and grounds, including catering for Parliament -

The Speaker;
The Chair of Committees; and
Mr O'Byrne.
(S.O. No. 323)

3. Firearms Legislation and Policy

- (1) That a Select Committee be re-appointed with power to send for persons and papers to inquire into and report upon current firearms laws, with the following terms of reference -
 - (a) current and future firearms licensing regimes, including training and testing, licence renewal, licence infringements and licence categories;
 - (b) compliance with the provisions of the National Firearms Agreement;
 - (c) the roles of Tasmania Police, Firearms Services (FAS) and creation of a broad-based consultative group;
 - (d) consideration of public submissions to the Legislative Council firearms laws inquiry in relation to (a), (b), and (c) above; and
 - (e) any other matters incidental thereto.
- (2) That the following Members of this House be appointed to serve on the committee -
 - (a) Mr Shelton (Chair);
 - (b) Dr Broad (Deputy Chair);
 - (c) Mr Tucker; and
 - (d) One Member nominated by the Leader of the Tasmanian Greens.
- (3) The Chair of the Committee has a deliberative and a casting vote.
- (4) A quorum for any meeting of a committee shall be three of whom one is the Chair of the Committee or Deputy Chair.
- (5) That the committee report by 3 September 2019.
- (6) That should the House not be sitting, a report may be presented to the Speaker of the House, or in their absence, the Clerk of the House, and any report so presented is taken to have been published by order of the House of Assembly.

and the Minutes of proceedings of and the evidence taken by the Committee appointed for this purpose in the previous Session be referred to the Committee.

4. House of Assembly Restoration Bill

- (1) That a Select Committee be re-appointed, with power to send for persons and papers and records, to inquire into and report upon -
 - (a) the House of Assembly Restoration Bill 2018 (No.55);
 - (b) Other matters incidental thereto.
- (2) The Committee shall consist of six (6) Members, being: three (3) from the Government nominated by the Leader of the House, one of whom shall be the Speaker of the House; two (2) from the Opposition nominated by the Leader

of the Opposition; and one (1) from the Tasmanian Greens nominated by the Leader of the Tasmanian Greens, whom shall be the Chair.

(3) The Committee report by 3 September 2019

and the Minutes of proceedings of and the evidence taken by the Committee appointed for this purpose in the previous Session be referred to the Committee.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Standing Committees - Re-establishment and Membership

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

That the vacancies to the standing committees be filled as follows -

- (1) Mrs Rylah be appointed to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works.
- (2) Mr Tucker be appointed to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation.
- (3) Mrs Rylah and Mr Tucker be appointed to the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts.
- (4) The Minister for Health be appointed to the Joint Standing Committee on Integrity.
- (5) The Deputy Premier be appointed to the Standing Committee of Privileges.

This motion is straightforward in making appointments of Government members to these committees. It is to be read in conjunction with the printed program and I commend the motion to the House.

Motion agreed to.

ELECTORAL AMENDMENT BILL 2019 (No. 3)

MOTOR ACCIDENTS (LIABILITIES AND COMPENSATION) AMENDMENT BILL 2019 (No. 4)

First Reading

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

MESSAGES FROM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Committee Appointments

Messages received from the Legislative Council -

The Legislative Council has this day made the following appointments to the Joint Committee of both Houses to control Parliament House and grounds and other matters - The President, Ms Forrest and Mrs Hiscutt.

The Legislative Council has made the following appointments to the Joint Committee of both Houses to manage the Library - the President, Mr Farrell, Mr Finch, Ms Forrest, Ms Rattray and Mr Valentine.

Senate Vacancy - Joint Sitting

The Legislative Council, having agreed to the following resolution, now transmits the same to the House of Assembly and requests its concurrence therein.

That on Wednesday 20 March 2019 at 9.30 a.m. the Legislative Council meet the House of Assembly in the House of Assembly Chamber for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose a person to hold a place in the Senate of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia rendered vacant by the resignation of Senator David Bushby.

Further, the Legislative Council proposes the following rules for the joint sitting.

Such rules have been distributed to each member.

MOTION

Senate Vacancy - Joint Sitting

[11.55 a.m.]

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

That the last mentioned message be considered forthwith.

Motion agreed to.

Resolution agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 11.56 a.m. until 3 p.m.

PREMIER'S ADDRESS

[3.02 p.m.]

Madam SPEAKER - In accordance with the resolution of the House passed this day, I now invite members of the Legislative Council to enter the Chamber to listen to the Premier's Address.

Mr HODGMAN (Franklin - Premier) - Madam Speaker, it is an exciting time to be in Tasmania. Our state is growing like never before. For only the fifth time in a quarter of a century, Tasmania's economic growth for the last financial year was higher than the nation's, and per capita we are growing at our fastest rate in a decade, nearly double the national average.

In many key indicators, Tasmania is ranked number one, and it is not just in the economic indicators. Tasmania has captured the attention of the world with an envied reputation for our unrivalled natural environment, our premium-grade products, and excellence in education, science and research. We are now more culturally confident than ever before, with a thriving arts sector, captivating events and festivals.

Our population is growing, and last year interstate migration reached its highest level in nearly 15 years, with a net inflow of 2382 people from interstate, as more people choose to live in our great state. More people are wanting to visit here too, with international tourism growing at the fastest rate of any Australian state. The world also wants more of our produce and services, as our exports have grown at a faster rate than any Australian state.

This is Tasmania's time to shine. But with such strong growth, inevitably comes challenges. My Government will grasp the challenges, as we do the opportunities, as we plan for strategic growth so more Tasmanians, across every region, can share in our state's prosperity.

One of the most powerful opportunities before us now comes from the strength of our economy. Without it we simply could not invest more into health, education and the essential services Tasmanians need, or take action to keep cost of living pressures down, which we have done, or to build the infrastructure our growing state needs, which we are doing. It is only with a strong economy that our local businesses will remain confident, continue to invest and give more Tasmanians the opportunity of a job.

A strong economy is the key to more Tasmanians enjoying a better quality of life. Our plan has always been to build a strong economy, and it is working. It doesn't just happen by good luck. We opened the state for business from day one. We have created a more attractive business environment, and improved business conditions, which are ranked the most positive in the country, as is local business support for our policies.

We have the highest business success rate in the country and the highest rate of business investment in new capital - in buildings, machinery and equipment - as they gear up, confident of further growth.

This Government has taken action to reduce business costs. We have lowered payroll tax, so Tasmania now has the most competitive payroll tax regime in the country for small to medium enterprises with payrolls up to \$4 million.

We have capped power prices to protect our small businesses from the volatility in the national electricity grid and from the massive price hikes that have stung mainland states.

More Tasmanian business are winning tenders for more Tasmanian government work. We have backed our competitive strengths.

Our agriculture, seafood and food sectors are booming. Our irrigation investments are delivering a pipeline to prosperity for our farmers. We are committed to a sustainable industry growth plan for our world-class salmon industry. We are on track to double the value of our forest industry, and we are lifting the prospects for our mining sector, with new exploration incentives.

We are continuing to strongly back our tourism industry to ensure that our visitors stay longer, see more of our state, and spend more while they are here, supporting local businesses and jobs right across our state.

We have pump-primed our building and construction sector, with a layer of incentives for people to buy or build a home, creating many new jobs in this sector, and adding much-needed supply to our housing market.

In fact, respected economists have reported that for the first time in 27 years economic growth in Tasmania is now based broadly across all industry sectors. Importantly, we are investing more into vital social infrastructure - into schools, hospitals, housing, roads and rail - to improve the liveability and the productivity of our state.

We have developed the state's first 10-year infrastructure pipeline, which maps \$13.9 billion of infrastructure investments for government and the non-government sector. We have secured strong support from the federal Coalition Government for nation-leading and state-building projects, including the extension of the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme for our exporters; funding for our new irrigation schemes; to progress the Battery of the Nation project; and funding for the Midland Highway Action Plan and the Freight Rail Revitalisation program.

Also we are the only state in the country to have snared not one but two City Deals. Combined with the Devonport Living Cities Project, it amounts to a forward investment schedule approaching \$2 billion to transform our cities right across the state. These deals will deliver a \$576 million Bridgewater bridge; a true Hobart international airport to support our tourism and export sectors; cement our status as Australia's gateway to the Antarctic; and pump more into the hearts of Launceston and Burnie in partnership with the University of Tasmania to build new education campuses in these cities.

Our state is growing, and with it comes immense opportunity. It is my Government's vision, and our mission, to grasp those opportunities with both hands. But with growth comes challenges, and we will take them on too. One of our biggest challenges for 2019 and beyond is ensuring this growth is shared across the state, delivering a better quality of life for all Tasmanians, regardless of where they live. We must find ways to ensure all Tasmanians are feeling the benefits of a strong economy, and that no-one is left behind.

We need to keep our regions strong and our regional communities growing. We must continue to break down the barriers to the greatest enabler of social inclusion - education, training and the opportunity of a good job. Our plan for 2019 - across the whole of government, and by working with those outside of government - is to ensure Tasmanians are skilled up for the jobs of the future and they have the first opportunity to fill those jobs. This is why my Government is pursuing an agenda for strategic growth and developing policies and programs to achieve these objectives.

We will work in partnership with local communities, local industry and local government to find innovative local solutions to increase inclusion and participation in our growing economy. It will capture long-term demand projections, spatial mapping, demographic profiling and economic modelling to forecast jobs and social opportunity at a local government level.

We will work closely with key stakeholders including industry, local government, the TCCI, TasCOSS, and the University of Tasmania to deliver a strategy that will, as TasCOSS has aptly described, unlock the potential in our regional communities. This is strategic growth.

Our Jobs Action Plan partnership with the TCCI and TasCOSS that identifies barriers to participation and how to remove them through improved access to public transport, is an exciting example of this approach. Today I am pleased to announce we will invest an additional \$300 000 into another valued partnership with the Cradle Coast Authority to deliver a raft of strategic local economic projects to retain population share in the region, improve educational outcomes and unemployment rates, and leverage the strengths on the coast to create local investment and more jobs. This is a plan for local, strategic growth on the north-west coast.

As I have always said, no government has all the answers, so our vision is to work more closely with the all sectors of our communities to ensure more Tasmanians are participating in our strong economy and living a better life.

Madam Speaker, always central to our plan is to manage the state's finances - our budget - well, and we have. This Government remains committed to strong, disciplined financial management, spending less than we earn, keeping the budget in surplus and achieving our fiscal strategy targets, all the while keeping our economy strong and investing in areas that matter to Tasmanians.

This year we will once again balance the budget, which will remain in surplus across the forward Estimates while at the same time responding to the needs of Tasmanians, for instance by investing more into health and human services, protecting our children and supporting our justice system, as well as delivering on the commitments we took to the 2018 election, which we certainly think is important.

On public sector wages, we have now indicated our willingness to revise the Government's policy, where we can agree appropriate offsets to pay for increased wage offers. I again invite union leaders to work with us to reach an agreement that is fair and, most importantly, affordable, so we can get on with delivering the services Tasmanians need and deserve, but the outcome must be affordable and sustainable, as we will not go into debt to fund wage increases.

My Government values our public sector workforce. We are making significant commitments to recruit more staff into essential public services and we will also provide improved conditions and entitlements for our state servants. Notably, this week we are tabling nation-leading legislation to provide a presumptive provision for State Service workers suffering post-traumatic stress disorder.

We are the first government in Australia to have taken this action. It definitively acknowledges the incredibly difficult situations that many of our emergency responders, in particular, face in the line of work and the impact it can have on their health. This ground-breaking reform will have a profound impact for our frontline workers who put their lives at risk to protect us, and importantly it will de-stigmatise mental health issues in our community.

As I have acknowledged, with a growing economy comes challenges. One of those is increased congestion on our roads. In greater Hobart we are progressing a range of initiatives to reduce congestion - more traffic lanes on major highways and priority for public transport; improved passenger interchanges; improved traffic management systems; and new public transport options, notably a River Derwent ferry service. We are now planning for the landside infrastructure for a Bellerive to Sullivan's Cove ferry, delivering a seven day a week service, supported by investments in park-and-ride facilities, linkages with bus services, cycleways and walking paths. The new City Deal we secured will also deliver the Kingston bus interchange, and the activation of the northern suburbs transport corridor.

There is no simple, single solution to reducing traffic congestion, so we must consider all sensible options. That is why we are bringing forward \$1 million in this year's Budget to allow investigations to commence on alternative traffic routes through Hobart. This work will consider all possible options, whether they be bypass roads, tunnels or a mix of both.

These are long-term intergenerational infrastructure projects which recognise that in the future Hobart's existing traffic network in the CBD will reach its practical limits. The signs of this are already being felt by Hobart commuters. That is why we will be starting the early work now to ensure we are in a position to find the best possible solution, consult with the community and all stakeholders, and be ready to make a start as soon as practical.

We are also right now delivering a massive investment in state roads right across the state. The Bass Highway is our most important route through the north and to the north-west, so continued works to maintain and upgrade this road network are crucial. We have delivered important junction upgrades on the highway at Wynyard to make this crash hot-spot safer, and our next focus is on the highway west of Wynyard, with a commitment of \$100 million which is the largest investment ever along this section of road. It will provide for more safe overtaking opportunities between Wynyard and Marawah, and the planning for these projects is underway.

We are five years into the 10-year, \$500 million Midland Highway upgrade project, with 13 projects now completed totalling well in excess of \$130 million. Work is now well advanced on the largest single project, the \$92.3 million Perth Link Roads project, which will sustain hundreds of local jobs and provide a massive economic boost to northern Tasmania. This important project will deliver the final link in a dual carriageway along the Midland Highway from Launceston to the south of Perth.

We continue to improve our road infrastructure to cater for the increasing number of tourists visiting our beautiful state. Improving our roads to make them safer and more efficient for all those who travel on them is important. It is a priority for this Government and vital to our strategic growth.

The Government has undertaken a massive program to building the infrastructure our growing state needs - not only our roads, but also into rail, schools, hospitals, housing and renewable energy. This investment is critical for delivering essential services, while creating jobs and leveraging private sector investment. We have developed the state's first infrastructure pipeline, laying out the state's priorities for the next 10 years. We are working alongside industry to ensure this massive rollout can be delivered by a Tasmanian workforce with the skills needed for the job.

This year we will also release the state's first-ever 30-year infrastructure strategy which will look beyond the horizon to predict what our state could look like based on current and expected future trends. This is planning for strategic growth.

Another of the issues that comes with a surging economy is more demand for housing, and housing affordability. Again, there is no single, simple solution. This is why my Government has acted swiftly to extend the First Home Builder Boost, provide stamp duty relief for first home purchasers and pensioners downsizing, remove red tape to make it easier and quicker to build homes; and rezone surplus government-owned land to enable more homes to be built faster.

Each day in Tasmania we provide subsidised social housing for around 12 000 households and each month, on average, over 200 additional households are assisted into the private rental market

through the Private Rental Assistance Program. Our first Affordable Housing Action Plan is delivering new homes and support for even more households in need. Soon we will be releasing our second Affordable Housing Action Plan, with \$125 million in additional funding committed. That, combined with our first Action Plan, will bring this Government's total investment in affordable housing to almost \$200 million over eight years, an unprecedented level of investment in response to this major challenge.

The Greater Hobart City Deal we secured also delivered another \$30 million investment into affordable housing. I can inform the House that our second Action Plan will provide an additional 1500 new affordable homes and assist around 2000 householders, increasing the number of new affordable homes to 2400 over eight years.

Action Plan 2 will also focus on better outcomes for young people. Young people at risk of homelessness is a horrifying thought and a particularly complex problem, so our new Action Plan will include a number of important initiatives to help support our young people in need of housing. It will include building a new purpose-built youth foyer on the north-west coast at Burnie. At a cost of around \$10 million, it will provide around 25 units for young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and give them the prospect of a much brighter future. A youth foyer is a safe environment which will give young people experiencing homelessness not only supported accommodation but also a pathway to education and the opportunity to participate with a job in our growing economy.

My Government is tackling the housing challenge head-on. To further speed up the supply of houses we will make it easier to build apartments and townhouses. This will provide greater choice for Tasmanians looking for an urban lifestyle whilst still retaining the character of existing neighbourhoods. We will, for the first time, develop new planning rules that focus on medium-rise developments and gentle in-fill projects that provide attractive options for people looking to live close to work and enjoy more of what city living has to offer. This can be achieved through good urban planning and design that addresses the need for more affordable housing whilst protecting and adding to the Tasmanian way of life.

The health care of Tasmanians has always been a top priority for the Government I lead. Since we were elected in 2014, we have opened more than 130 additional beds in our health system across the state. There are more than 800 additional full-time equivalent staff in our health system compared to when we came to government five years ago. Over the next five years we will recruit the staff we need to allow us to open almost 300 new hospital beds and offer a range of new services to provide better care for all Tasmanians.

An important new service we have delivered is Tasmania's first integrated aeromedical helicopter service connected to all our major hospitals to provide faster response times to get seriously ill patients treated sooner.

One of the major challenges we have undertaken as a government was to rescue the Royal Hobart Hospital. Immediately following last year's election, we established a clinical planning task force to provide expert clinical advice on health planning in Tasmania, chaired by Professor Tony Lawler, Tasmania's Chief Medical Officer. A key priority for the task force has been to develop a new Royal Hobart Hospital masterplan to update and replace the 2011 plan.

That plan, which is being released today, provides both a long-term vision to guide future development of the Royal Hobart Hospital at the city site and the repatriation site over the next 30

years, and also to address more immediate demand pressures. The Government accepts all the recommendations made by the task force and I will now table the report of the task force.

The first stage of the masterplan is the current Royal Hobart Hospital Redevelopment, K Block, which is approaching completion. The Government will now get on with delivery of stage 2 of the new masterplan. This includes a range of improvements across the Royal to be delivered over the next three years, including:

- an immediate improvement to lift infrastructure with a new dedicated patient lift to connect the ED, medical imaging and J Block;
- an expansion of the emergency department to meet growing patient demand;
- a comprehensive refurbishment of A Block which will provide contemporary space for additional beds;
- expansion of the ICU in its current location, providing space for another 10 beds on the same floor by 2024, and retaining close physical linkage to medical imaging; and
- a refit of the soon to be vacated J Block to meet additional demand and provide for new clinical uses.

It is estimated that these works will cost approximately \$91 million. An amount of \$28 million is already included in the budget and the remaining funding will be included in the 2019-20 Budget across the forward Estimates.

While the master plan spans a 30-year horizon, following the stage 2 works we have committed to, stage 3 will be the redevelopment of the Repatriation Hospital as a dedicated sub-acute and mental health campus of the Royal Hobart Hospital, with the demolition and rebuilding of the Statton building following further clinical and community consultation. This provides the opportunity to build a best-practice dedicated mental health facility with more privacy and outdoor space.

This plan complements significant investments in our statewide health system. The Clinical Planning Taskforce is leading the development of a master plan for the LGH, which will help inform the \$87 million upgrade there. We will also progress assessment of the \$100 million proposed private hospital in the LGH health precinct. Having secured the future of the Mersey Community Hospital campus of the North West Regional Hospital, we have commenced a \$35 million redevelopment alongside improvements to facilities and services at the North West Regional Hospital such as new training facilities and improved antenatal care facilities. We are also delivering a range of upgrades to rural hospitals and ambulance stations across the state. Our track record is to prioritise Health. We will continue to do more as we face growing demand to ensure Tasmanians receive the care they need. It is only possible because we have managed the state's Budget well.

The education of Tasmanians is also a priority for this Government. We want all Tasmanians to live their best life and that starts with a great education. Every student, no matter where they live or their financial circumstances, should have easy access to high-quality education from the early years through to senior secondary education. Under this Government, Tasmania will become the first state in the nation to offer free preschool with wraparound care for vulnerable three-year-olds.

The Minister for Education announced 11 sites around the state that will pilot our Working Together for 3 Year Olds initiative to give an equitable start for all children and prepare them for a bright future. It will deliver state government funded places for children in early learning centres to provide holistic support for families, carers and service partners, with new approaches to best engage and support children with high needs. We will roll out this opportunity to all eligible three-year-olds from 2020.

At the other end of the school journey, in years 11 and 12, we are delivering another major reform to our education system that is changing lives. The latest data shows that more students are staying at school and the attainment rate for the Tasmanian Certificate of Education has improved by nearly 10 per cent since we came to Government. Forty-three schools have extended to years 11 and 12 and we are on track for all high schools to extend by 2022. This is giving young Tasmanians the skills they need to participate in a modern economy, wherever they live, to reach their potential and determine their own futures.

The education of young Tasmanians is the most significant and strategic investment we can make in the growth of our state. We are also undertaking major investment into our school buildings across the state to improve the learning environment. We are taking action to prevent the harmful impacts of cyber-bullying, which pervades our classrooms, homes, and communities and often with devastatingly damaging impact. Combatting bullying requires a whole-of-government and a whole-of-community response.

We are delivering on that, including by partnering with the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, involve 121 schools in the eSmart Schools program -

Ms O'Byrne - You could run it out in your own office as well, couldn't you? You'll make your own staff go through that, won't you?

Ms White - Is it going to be retrospective? Can people bring claims against people who were bullying from your office?

Ms Butler - Will you tell them what you did to us during our campaign?

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I will issue a first warning to Ms O'Byrne, the Leader of the Opposition and Ms Butler.

Mr HODGMAN - the development of the Department of Education Bullying Stops Here! Website, which will provide comprehensive resources to teachers and principals; and enact the Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy and a new Mental Wellbeing Action Plan. The Attorney-General is bringing legislation to this parliament to deal with the most serious cases of bullying, where a criminal response is warranted.

Tasmania is now the energised state. Renewable energy is one of our greatest advantages. When other states are struggling with double-digit price increases and blackouts, Tasmania has a ready supply of low-cost, reliable, clean energy. We have kept power prices down and Tasmania today has the lowest regulated prices of any Australian jurisdiction for business customers. Our regulated residential standing offer electricity prices are among the lowest in the country. Through our Tasmanian First Energy Policy we also have energy security. We are on track to be 100 per cent self-sufficient in clean energy by 2022.

We have played a critical role in helping Victorians keep the lights on over a summer when more than 200,000 of their homes and businesses had their power cut or limited as their electricity supply buckled under extreme heat. We have the ability to supply mainland Australia with our low-cost, reliable, clean energy. This represents an enormous opportunity for our state, but we are currently constrained by the limited size of our single Bass Strait interconnector. Together with the Australian Government, we are investing up to \$86 million to progress the plans for a second interconnector and pumped hydro storage, which will unlock massive renewable energy development in Tasmania. Combined, these generational initiatives will deliver on Tasmania's potential to be the Battery of the Nation, boosting our economy with thousands of jobs and billions in investment in regional areas as we deliver our low-cost, reliable and clean energy to mainland Australia. It will also put downward pressure on power prices and improve energy security. It is, without doubt, one of the most powerful opportunities our state has and we are grabbing it with both hands.

Tasmania's brand is another of our state's greatest assets and we are taking strong action to better promote and protect it. Our new Brand Tasmania, to be chaired by esteemed industry leader, Nick Haddow, is a national first. It is the first place-branding authority in Australia and one of few in the world. We are leading the way to ensure Tasmania continues to stand out from the pack. It complements another important reform we have undertaken in delivering Tasmania's first trade strategy. Our beautiful island has what the world wants. Last year, our exports were the highest on record and grew at the fastest rate of any state. Our strategy will build trade in key sectors, showcase what we offer in priority markets, enhance trade logistics and market access and build the export capabilities of Tasmanian businesses.

As we have been number one with exports, so too have we been with inbound business. Tasmania has had the highest rate of growth in international tourists of any state. Our plan is to welcome more tourists here and for them to stay longer, see more of the state and spend more while they are here and it is working. New data released confirms our visitors spent a record \$2.46 billion in Tasmania last year, a 43.5 per cent increase from when we first came to Government. The number of nights stayed is up and, increasingly, the nights spent out of Hobart and in all our regions.

We have more flights to our state and more passengers on our Spirits. Hotel room construction in Tasmania is now outstripping Sydney's. My Government will continue to strongly support our visitor economy because it supports business and jobs across the state. We do it as well as anyone else. Our yield and dispersal strategy is our plan for strategic growth, aimed to ensure our regions see more of the benefits of a booming visitor economy. We will be targeting new visitor segments - travellers more likely to travel further and spend more. We will be encouraging visitors to travel further around the state by growing the number of flights to Launceston and improving visitation through Burnie and Devonport airports. We are trialling flights between Hobart and Strahan and looking at ways to grow cruise visits to regional ports and develop onshore activities that take cruise passengers further afield.

We have launched the Western Wilds drive journey to encourage more people to explore between the Derwent Valley and the north-west. Following the recent bushfires, we are prioritising a southern drive journey and are now developing a route and concept theme. We are also committed to developing two new drive journeys in the north and north-west to build on the success of the Great Eastern Drive. Our new Event Attraction Fund is already successfully securing events around the state. We will soon be implementing a Reimagining Our Regions project in north-west Tasmania to identify opportunities for tourism development, infrastructure and investment in areas where visitor numbers are low. Renewing the visitor experience on offer in these areas will boost

visitors and underpin local investment and new jobs. We are designing new marketing strategies to promote special interest experiences, like our world-class golf, fishing, walking, mountain-biking and wine tasting, which will also encourage regional dispersal.

The Three Capes Track, together with the Overland Track, have helped put Tasmania on the trekking map and we will develop our next iconic multi-day, hut-based walk. We are delivering on our commitment to elevate Cradle Mountain to a world-class destination and sustainable eco-tourism experience. This year, the proponent for the spectacular new gateway precinct will be selected, and stage 1 of the new \$30 million visitor centre will be completed early next year.

Tasmania has an unrivalled and spectacular natural environment, which people from all over the world, as well as many Tasmanians, want to experience and which we all deeply respect and want to preserve. We are able to do so while allowing for sensible, sustainable tourism experiences in our wilderness areas. We have done so for many years at Cradle Mountain, on the Overland Track, the Three Capes Track, Freycinet Lodge or at Pumphouse Point, which are world-class experiences provided by world-class Tasmanian tourism people who are as passionate as anyone about protecting and showcasing our environment. They keep our tourism industry as one of the best in the world, which supports many other local businesses and jobs across our state.

When, on coming to Government, we implemented our innovative policy to seek and rigorously assess proposals for appropriate tourism enterprises in our national parks, reserves and Crown land that involve or benefit local communities, it was to find best practice environmental tourism ideas that are compatible with the natural and cultural values of these areas. We stand by that policy and that process that has delivered; successful mountain biking, walking, and eco-accommodation such as at the Blue Derby Pods Ride, the Narawntapu Adventures Precinct, the Moulting Lagoon Eco Tours, Maydena Mountain Bike Park and the Freycinet Lodge expansion. All of them are sensitive and appropriate to their locations and the surrounding environment.

Today, I reaffirm my Government's strong commitment to our EOI process. We understand not everybody agrees with every project but we should not allow opposition to any one particular project to lead to assaults on the very idea of nature-based tourism in Tasmania. Tasmania's world-class parks and reserves are protected by state and Commonwealth legislation, which together provide some of the strongest protections in the world. The EOI puts a new level of transparency on what existed as well as opening up these new opportunities for all Tasmanians. The latest project to gain approval under the EOI process is the Mt Roland Cableway and Adventure Precinct, a 13-cabin gondola system providing direct access to the summit of Mt Roland and an all-mountain circumnavigation descent to be designed, constructed and managed by Tasmania's internationally renowned and world-leading Dirt Art company. This is yet another tourism experience that fits perfectly with nature-based tourism, stimulating regional economies, encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more, creating jobs and providing new and new and exciting ways for visitors to engage with our incredible environment.

All proposals put through the EOI process undergo a rigorous assessment and, if recommended to proceed, are required to go through the requisite Commonwealth, state and local council planning and approval processes.

Last year our national parks attracted more than 1.3 million visitors and support more than 200 nature-based tourism operators. They are a cornerstone of our tourism sector and a unique and treasured environmental asset of our state. That is why we have committed the biggest ever

investment into our national parks to keep them protected for generations to come and ensure the visitor experience meets expectations of visitors and locals.

In 2018 my Government committed an additional \$31 million into our national parks and reserves. That included \$6.6 million to boost rangers and frontline staff, \$8 million for asset maintenance in Parks, and funding to fix key infrastructure on the Overland Track, Maria Island, Bruny Island, Freycinet National Park and at the Tasman National Park Gateway.

Madam Speaker, I conclude by acknowledging the fantastic job Tasmanians have done in responding to the current fire season. In terms of fire area, these were the largest fires in Tasmania since 1967. The incredible efforts to fight these fires is well demonstrated by the ability to protect life, property and wilderness values in the face of very difficult and trying circumstances. Over the two months, we had a combined total of 3000 firefighters actively fighting fires on the ground. Tasmania has also been supported by an impressive contingent of fire agency personnel and aircraft from interstate and New Zealand.

There is no doubt that the Government's nation-leading \$55 million targeted fuel reduction program has significantly reduced the fire risk across our state. We have also invested \$4 million to improve bushfire management in wilderness areas, including innovative sprinkler systems that helped protect sensitive high value and iconic natural value assets.

This has been a challenging time for many residents of the Huon Valley, Central Highlands, the west coast and the Derwent Valley. That is why the Government established the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce led by Michael Stevens, which will continue to support fire-affected communities. We have provided support to affected individuals and businesses, with the support of the federal government under the joint disaster recovery funding arrangements, with over 9000 financial assistance grants being paid to date at an estimated cost of \$6.9 million.

We are also encouraging tourists and locals to visit these regions and support local businesses, including through a new Love Autumn in the South campaign. It is backed by a \$150 000 investment to hold a special 10 Days on the Island event in the Huon Valley during the festival in March.

The fire threat is not totally gone, so we will continue to ensure our communities are safe. There are always lessons to be learned after major fire events, and the best way for that to occur is through a robust, independent review, with input from experts. I can today announce that this will be undertaken by the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council, the peak body responsible for representing fire, emergency services and land management agencies.

The review will be led by Western Australian Mal Cronstedt AFSM, who has more than 40 years of experience in fire and emergency services, and will examine the causes, chronology and response of the 2018-19 bushfires in Tasmania with terms of reference to inquire into timeliness, impact and effectiveness of strategies, programs, resourcing and agencies. The Cronstedt review will provide a means for members of the public and other interested parties to make submissions. The terms of reference for the review will be released later this month, along with details of the consultation process, with the final review expected to be delivered to government by July this year.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Parliament and all Tasmanians, I formally thank our firefighting agencies - the Tasmania Fire Service, the Parks and Wildlife Service, Sustainable Timber Tasmania, our other emergency services, and all our volunteers - for their extraordinary and

tireless efforts. I also thank those firefighters who joined us from interstate and New Zealand. The Government will host community functions in affected areas in the coming weeks to thank those involved in the response, and all Tasmanians are invited to attend those events.

This majority Liberal Government has a strong and clear plan that we are delivering for Tasmanians, and it is delivering results. Today I have outlined just some of the things we are doing to deliver on our promise to grow the economy, invest more into schools, hospitals, the essential services Tasmanians needs and the infrastructure our growing state needs, and to protect the Tasmanian way of life.

I take the opportunity to table our work plan for the year ahead, our agenda for 2019. It is our commitment to the people of Tasmania that we will continue to invest record amounts into health, education, and the essential services that Tasmanians need and deserve. There are always challenges in politics, but our focus is on the people of Tasmania, not ourselves. Our focus is on delivering the plan we have promised, and our focus is firmly on seizing the enormous opportunities that are now before our state.

Debate adjourned.

Members of the Legislative Council withdrew.

The House adjourned at 3.47 p.m.