

Tuesday 20 November 2018

The President, **Mr Wilkinson**, took the Chair at 11 a.m. and read Prayers.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

The following answers were given to questions upon notice:

7. TASMANIAN BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY BOARD HERITAGE SKILLS REPORT

Mr DEAN asked the Leader of Government Business in the Legislative Council -

Will the Leader advise -

- (1) Does the Government accept the findings of the report, in particular the need for well-trained heritage tradespeople and the economic value to the state of our heritage buildings and structures?
- (2) What is the current number of 'well-trained' heritage tradespeople in the state?
- (3) Do we have sufficient tradespeople in this area?
- (4) If not, what is being done to increase the number of tradespeople in the state with the required skills to undertake heritage maintenance?
- (5) Has the Government considered the report?
- (6) If so, will the Government response/report be made public?
- (7) If not yet considered, when will the Government sign off on the report?

Mrs HISCUTT replied -

- (1) The report has not yet been formally provided to government. However, the Government recognises the important work the Tasmanian Building and Construction Training Industry Board - TBCITB - undertakes and the advice it provides on workforce development and training in the building and construction industry. Building and construction is a priority industry in the Ministerial Priorities for Training and Workforce Development 2018-2021.
- (2) There is no data classification for 'well-trained' heritage tradespeople. These skills are often shared informally on the job among tradespeople. From standard construction training data -
 - Since 2014, there have been 1265 enrolments at TasTAFE in the pre-apprenticeship program Certificate II in Building and Construction (Bricklaying, Carpentry, Painting and Decorating, Wall and Ceiling Lining, Wall and Floor Tiling, Solid Plastering and Stonemasonry).

Some students enrolled in this course may have gone on to work on heritage buildings and structures; others may have gone on to general construction work.

- In 2018, there were five enrolments in the Certificate III in Stonemasonry (Monumental/Installation) apprenticeship delivered by the Holmesglen Institute.
 - The report mentions the qualification CPC40611 Certificate IV in Building and Construction (Specialist Trades), which includes a heritage restoration stream. Skills Tasmania data shows no record of this qualification being delivered in Tasmania from 2009 onwards. However, two students were enrolled in the unit, 'Undertake the Heritage Restoration Process' in 2012 and 2013.
- (3) Tasmania is experiencing a boom in building and construction, and all sections of the industry are working at capacity. There has always been a need for heritage tradespeople but not necessarily the demand.
- (4) Government works closely with the TBCITB to ensure adequate training of skilled tradespeople as needed. Government initiatives to encourage more apprentices and trainees include the Targeted Apprentice and Trainee Grant for Small Business and the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme available to building and construction businesses.
- (5) to (7)

The report has not yet formally been provided to government. The TBCITB intends to provide the report to government at the next of its six-monthly meetings with the minister.

8. FUTURE GAMING MARKETS COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr GAFFNEY asked the Leader of Government Business in the Legislative Council -

As detailed in correspondence from the Estimates process and notices of questions processes, the Government has stated that further consideration was given to all recommendations and findings outlined in the Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets - FGM - final report tabled in September 2017.

Recommendation 4 of the future gaming markets committee report reads -

The Government work actively with communities that are concerned with the density of EGMs in their local area to enable voluntary mechanisms to reduce the number of EGMs.

Since the tabling of the future gaming markets committee report, can the Leader advise -

- (1) In its consideration of the recommendations, did the Government agree or disagree with recommendation 4?
- (2) Since the tabling of the inquiry report, which communities, if any, has the Government had discussions with to reduce the EGMs in their local area?

- (3) When, where and who was present at these meetings, to consider recommendation 4?
- (4) What were the outcomes of those deliberations?
- (5) What further processes need to be undertaken to address recommendation 4?
- (6) What is the Government's strategy to decrease the number of EGMs in areas where there is a disproportionate proliferation?

Mrs HISCUTT replied -

As you are aware, the Government has released a comprehensive policy which provides its position on issues considered by the Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets. The Government's future gaming market policy, released in January 2018, responds positively to the final report of the joint select committee. While the policy may not respond to every recommendation individually, in developing its policy the Government took account of the findings of the committee and input from the community.

In relation to your specific inquiry, I can advise that there have been no meetings to date in relation to the location of electronic gaming machines - EGMs. However, the Government's policy supports the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission continuing to be responsible for regulating the gaming industry, including the mandatory code of practice and the community interest test for the location of new EGMs.

A project team has been established within the Department of Treasury and Finance to manage the significant and complex restructure of the gambling industry, including the legislative amendments. The parliament will have a role in considering any legislative changes required to implement the Government's future gaming market policy.

TABLED PAPERS

Government Administration Committee 'A' - Acute Health Services in Tasmania

Mr Valentine presented the report of the Legislative Council Government Administration Committee 'A' on Acute Health Services in Tasmania

Report received and printed.

Joint Standing Committee on Integrity - Code of Conduct

Mr Valentine presented the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Integrity into a Code of Conduct for Members of the Parliament of Tasmania Report No. 3.

Report received and printed.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Legislative Assembly of Samoa - Staff

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, I extend a warm welcome to the two research officers from the Legislative Assembly in Samoa, Tele and Shona, who are with us in the Chamber this morning.

Tele and Shona are here for a week to look at the Tasmanian Parliament's research service, systems, practices and research methodology. The placement is sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme and is a great opportunity for us to further our relationship with our Pacific twin under the CPA twinning arrangements.

Dr Bryan Stait in conjunction with the Deputy Clerks of both Houses has prepared a program for Tele and Shona that includes observing proceedings and briefings, and sharing best practice techniques in preparing parliamentary research papers and briefings for members.

We wish them well for their studies, and welcome them to the House and hope they enjoy their time with us.

Members - Hear, hear.

SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS

Glenorchy Youth Task Force

[11.13 a.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Elwick) - Mr President, I welcome representatives from the Glenorchy Youth Task Force to the Chamber.

When a young person is given the opportunity to add their voice to an issue, a valuable perspective is gained.

The Glenorchy Youth Task Force provides a platform to ensure young voices in my community are being heard. The Youth Task Force was established in 1994 as a special committee of the Glenorchy City Council. It is the longest continuously operating council-supported youth committee in Australia.

The Youth Task Force identifies and takes action on issues affecting Glenorchy youth. The task force does this through regular meetings, forums and events aimed at promoting a positive image of young people in our community.

The task force tackles the big issues affecting the Glenorchy community. School attendance is an area of concern. Positive relationships and mental health are other major focuses of the task force. These matters have inspired many initiatives, including the establishment of yearly events such as the Glenorchy R U OK? Day expo and the Glenorchy Gig in the Gardens, which last year celebrated its twentieth anniversary. Both events attract hundreds of attendees, which makes it more impressive to know that every aspect of the event from start to finish is undertaken and executed by members of the task force.

Another highly successful initiative of the task force is the Seriously Smashed resource for young people, parents and carers. As the name suggests, Seriously Smashed explores the risks of drinking too much and highlights such issues as reckless behaviour, sex under the influence, breaking the law, bullying and violence. All elements of the project objectives were developed by the Glenorchy task force and through consultation with young people in the community and youth services sector.

While issues and dangers relating to binge drinking have been topical for a long time, Seriously Smashed was developed specifically for delivery over social media networks. Again, this was

determined through the task force consultation with young people in the community. Such was the innovation of the concept that the Australian Government provided funding to develop the resource. If any of my colleagues are interested in seeing the resource for themselves, I can provide that for them afterwards.

Right now, the Glenorchy task force has some exciting projects in the works, including the development of a new magazine targeted directly to young people in the municipality. The magazine will focus on promoting the youth services in our region, as well as featuring community stories, local store discounts and entertainment. Planning is also under way for the 2019 Youth Week Tasmania celebration.

The task force has organised Youth Week events for several years. They are always well planned and are enthusiastically embraced by the community. The member for Derwent will recall that we participated in the 2017 National Youth Week Alive in the Park expo at Tolosa Park, which was a brilliant day, organised from start to finish by the task force. I am really looking forward to seeing what next year's celebration brings and would love to be involved again.

Mr President, these are just a few of the initiatives the task force has undertaken in its 20 years, indeed a small snapshot of its current projects. They show that task force members are smart, dedicated and truly committed to the betterment of the community. It is no surprise that the task force has proven to be a platform for aspiring future leaders of our state. The task force is 100 per cent a team effort. While I do not want to single out particular members, I must make mention of Dakota Leary and Mitchell Woolley. Dakota is here today. Dakota and Mitchell are inspiring and invaluable members of the Glenorchy community, and both of them have been recognised for their contributions and achievements, having been named Glenorchy young citizens of the year in recent years.

I would not be at all surprised if we saw Dakota or Mitchell back in this Chamber, sitting in one of our seats, probably mine. Mitchell already spent time downstairs at the Youth Parliament last year. I believe he was elected deputy opposition leader. Mitchell will at times contact me to give me his thoughts on legislation we are debating or on topical issues of the day.

Ms Rattray - And myself.

Mr WILLIE - And other members. While we do not always agree, I genuinely appreciate the time he takes to provide his perspective, while accepting that we can at times have differing views. You will agree that its members are great representatives of young Tasmanian people, full of enthusiasm, delivering for our community.

Mr President, I recognise Elisa Ryan, former youth development officer at the Glenorchy City Council, and Willie Joseph, who is currently in the role and with us today. I jokingly call Willie 'the unofficial mayor of Glenorchy' because everybody knows him. Task force members present will agree that Elisa and Willie are absolutely dedicated to improving the opportunities for young people in our community. Their passion for the Youth Task Force is admirable. They are wonderful role models for the task force members.

Again, I welcome you to the House today. I hope you find the experience informative and enjoyable.

Members - Hear, hear

Recognition of Visitors

Country Women's Association of Tasmania - Bellerive

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, I also welcome to this Chamber some ladies from the CWA.

Members - Hear, hear.

Country Women's Association of Tasmania - Bellerive

[11.19 a.m.]

Ms SIEJKA (Pembroke) - Mr President, I agree with the member for Elwick's speech. I know a number of the members from the Glenorchy Youth Task Force. They have also been volunteers for me for a long time. I really agree with the member's speech.

I also welcome the ladies from the Country Women's Association. The CWA has a long history of contributing to the Tasmanian community and are well known for their work in improving conditions for women and children and making life better for families, especially those living in rural and remote communities.

The CWA involves women from all walks of life, who work together to improve the lives of women and children. I had the pleasure of attending my local branch of the CWA - the Bellerive branch. This branch has 19 members who meet monthly to discuss a broad range of issues, participate in crafts, hear from speakers and support one another and the community in their endeavours. The governance is exceptional, and all aspects pertaining to that are taken very seriously at all meetings. Much larger organisations could learn a thing or two from the CWA Bellerive branch's adherence to governance practices.

The current branch president is Kath Chipman. Kath has also been the state editor and is an enthusiastic leader of the group. The current treasurer is Ann Dobell. Ann has also held the position of state handcraft and home industries secretary and treasurer. Until recently, the current secretary was Sally Tane. Unfortunately, Sally had to resign due to ill health. Long-serving branch member Shirley Morrisby has again taken over the position of secretary. Shirley is a CWA life member in recognition of her long service and contribution. She first joined in 1972, encouraged by her mother-in-law, Peg. Shirley has also held the position of southern group president and vice-president, as well as state vice-president and state president.

The Bellerive branch has been fortunate to have had three state presidents. In addition to Shirley, Alison Leigh from 1976 to 1978 and Bessie Knowles from 1978 to 1980 have also held the position. These three women have also become life members. Along with other Bellerive branch members, Shirley regularly spends time in the CWA Hobart gift shop, and contributes items for sale, as well as holding positions on the gift shop committee. Many members of the Bellerive branch have held numerous leadership positions in the CWA, including the State Exhibition Committee. There are also a number of qualified judges among the group.

At my first meeting, which happened to be the annual general meeting, I was very warmly welcomed. Right from this first meeting I was inspired by the camaraderie, respect and friendship CWA members share for each other. This includes helping each other with transport to meetings and other events, checking on one another and including members from other branches in their activities and social outings. I was so impressed by the women in the group I became a member shortly thereafter, after reassurance my lack of crafting and cooking skills were irrelevant. They have not improved either since I have joined. I just enjoy the food, which is excellent.

In addition to the official branch business, each meeting includes a crafting activity, judging the bloom of the month, a guest speaker and, of course, afternoon tea and some treats - which is quite a drawcard.

Ms Forrest - All your speeches mention afternoon tea.

Ms SIEJKA - Yes, I know. It is a bit of a problem for me. The crafts are diverse, with birthday cards, upcycled vases, felt koalas and poppies for the anniversary of World War I being just some of the recent work. The annual winners of the best book competition are presented with beautiful needleworks donated by former president Bessie Knowles and late member Enid Alomes. Outside the meetings, women also meet regularly for social walking and lunch outings. There is also an interest in learning about the world at large, with an international focus on a country chosen each year known as the country of study. The country of study is voted on by all members and allows branches to learn about the culture, food, national dress, language and way of life of a country. Bellerive plans to have a guest speaker from current country Bhutan, and may try food or local handcraft.

The Bellerive branch members also share their skills with the wider community. Recently members have taught crafts to children from Bellerive Primary School and have spent time with Regis Aged Care residents making Christmas decorations and Easter baskets. Fundraising and giving are regular practices of the Bellerive branch. The group donates regularly to the state administration and many groups and charities, including Baby Box, which involves either knitting or crocheting garments for cash; rural and nursing scholarship funds; Associated Country Women of the World; the Royal Flying Doctor Service and many more. Each meeting starts with the collect and finishes with the motto. I hope I have that in the right order.

With 82 years of history and presence of the CWA in Tasmania, there is considerable tradition that forms their backbone. Many are familiar with delicious cakes, jams and other items at the CWA shops. However, it is interesting to note that the CWA is a changing organisation. The primary product of last year was hemp for use in cooking, sewing, craft and agriculture.

Across the state, CWA membership has grown and diversified with women from many backgrounds, interests and abilities joining in the past year. The CWA has become recognised for its advocacy on issues it feels are important for families, such as electronic gaming machines. As Tasmanian President Lindy Cleeland wrote in the annual report -

The CWA in Tasmania holds a unique position in the community. We are acknowledged as having influence and the determination to use that influence for good.

It has been my absolute pleasure to have met these women. I wish the Bellerive CWA branch all the very best. They are a group of dedicated women quietly achieving much for the community and they deserve considerable recognition and appreciation for their contribution.

Members - Hear, hear.

Wynyard Tulip Festival

[11.26 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, the Wynyard Tulip Festival is held annually to celebrate spring, and the amazing colour of our Wynyard landscape continues to go from strength to strength. This bold display of colour is the highlight for people travelling to and from Wynyard airport as they fly over Table Cape and see the amazing display from the air. The success and growth of this festival is in no small part pretty much down to one person - Chantelle French, the Community and Events Officer at Waratah-Wynyard Council.

Chantelle does an incredible job organising and coordinating this event and is supported by almost 50 volunteers on the day. I know and commend all these volunteers, many of whom work for the Waratah-Wynyard Council and local service clubs, because a festival such as this could not continue without their selfless contribution.

The Wynyard Tulip Festival is now in its twenty-eighth year. It is held in Gutteridge Gardens on the banks of the Inglis River, a truly beautiful location. In recent years, the festival has grown and spilled further onto the surrounding streets and wharf areas. Wynyard comes alive in the weeks leading up to the festival with visitors from around the state, interstate and overseas coming to see the fields of tulips and experience the festival.

I live on the road to the tulip farm on Table Cape and on festival day there was a constant stream of traffic that did not stop all day. In fact, to get out the driveway you had to have someone let you in. This is a little narrow road leading up to the cape. It is also very busy on days before and after the festival. It was quite amazing to see the number of cars going up and down the hill.

I also acknowledge the hard work done by the Roberts-Thomson family who run the tulip farm. They host a number of events during the festival and during this period, supporting the arts and the festival.

The festival remains a fun-filled day for everyone. Keeping this a free event has seen the festival grow over the last eight years. This aspect is seen as a major drawcard.

This year the festival attracted at least 20 000 people; it had 38 food stalls, 25 craft stalls, eight beer and wine stalls, four roving acts and 14 entertainment events for children. Eight corporate and community groups were involved. The crowd was entertained all day, with seven talented performances on the main stage, finishing with fireworks at 9 p.m. Local radio station 7BU broadcast live from the festival, promoting what was happening all day. I am not sure if they provided traffic updates but the number of cars turning off the Bass Highway into Wynyard in both directions was amazing and something that people were commenting on for days.

Another benefit of Wynyard having a flat rather than hilly streetscape is that the festival is very accessible. Wynyard has possibly one of the highest mobility scooter - affectionally known as a gopher - use per population, if not in the whole state, then certainly in the region.

Mrs Hiscutt - Did they have the gopher race?

Ms FORREST - The festival runs a gopher race down the main street each year. It is always hotly contested, a real highlight of the day and a favourite with the crowds. Sometimes they run out of puff on the way down. It is slightly downhill, so that does assist. There is very fierce competition. There was even a concern expressed by some of the competitors this year that some were not perhaps compliant. It is a really great event.

Another highlight was the very popular offering of helicopter rides over Table Cape and Boat Harbour. Tasmanian Helicopters provided scenic flights which were in such high demand that this year they brought in an extra helicopter.

The Colour Run attracted over 200 participants from around the state, and you could easily identify the participants following this fun event.

The economic benefit to the town is significant, over \$1 million, with all accommodation booked out around the town and businesses reporting an increase in spending. This has created a real benefit for local businesses and brings a vibrancy and pride into this beautiful town.

This festival has grown significantly and it was great to see so many people out enjoying themselves, with many food and beverage options. The activities for children were spread right across the area; there was great entertainment and stalls selling local produce.

The festival design, in spreading activities and food stalls across more than one area, also made it easy for access and for people to get around with not everything being crowded into one location.

Mr President, I sincerely commend Chantelle French for the incredible job she has done, and is doing, in creating this great event and economic driver for Wynyard. I also acknowledge and thank the Waratah-Wynyard Council and all those who served as volunteers. The success of this event would not be possible without such a great combined effort.

Mr PRESIDENT - Missing out on all medals this morning and just into fourth place, the member for Rosevears.

Able Australia

[11.31 a.m.]

Mr FINCH (Rosevears) - Mr President, today I want to talk about disability. As you know, from visiting the Tasmanian leaders program with the Tasmanian Community Fund yesterday at Dowsing Point -

Ms Forrest - The Emerging Community Leaders program.

Mr FINCH - Thank you. I just wanted your involvement in my presentation today. Thanks very much for that correction. Also, at Parliament House last night, many people were talking about disability. All of those 24 who graduated were from disability programs. We were there to support

Belinda Kitto from New Horizons, the sporting club for people with disability. We hear more and more about disability. I suppose that is partly because communities understand it as never before. This is where I also get some other audience participation because when I look around this Chamber I see colleagues with fully functioning minds and bodies. There is a slight chuckle from over this side but that will suffice. Of course, that could change in an instant. It only takes a road accident, a fall or a stroke and suddenly we cannot function as we did before. We could be in need of a great deal of help, usually for the rest of our lives.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme - NDIS - is a great idea, but the transition for many providers is very challenging and drawn out.

One program I want to talk about today is Able Australia. It is a diverse, not-for-profit organisation that started more than 50 years ago providing services to people with deafblindness. It has grown to provide quite a range of services across Australia, including in-home support, community-based services and support coordination. Able Australia will transition all its services to the NDIS, but in the meantime it has a three-year strategic priorities plan that includes -

- to improve the quality of our services, including compliance to safeguard our clients
- to retain and strengthen our knowledge and practices supporting deafblind clients
- to build better engagement with all clients, their families, their staff and the broader community
- to expand services to more individuals within a financially sustainable model.

Able Australia operates from two main hubs in Tasmania. One is in Hobart and one is in Launceston. In Hobart, Able Australia has eight residential houses, two lifestyle facilities, over 70 clients, the equivalent of 125 000 employment hours per annum and, unbelievably, over 135 employees.

In Launceston, it has six residential houses, one lifestyle facility, one younger persons' program, over 70 clients, the equivalent of 90 000 employment hours per annum and over 85 employees. So, in many ways very little is heard of an organisation that is doing much good work in our communities. They are planning a major expansion in Tasmania in the near future.

Its Tasmanian profile might be helped by a former colleague of ours in this House, former president Don Wing, who is on the board. He joined the board in 2011 when he concluded his services here. He says that it has an excellent Tasmanian workforce and a top administration team. He sees huge potential to provide services to even more people in the Tasmanian community. He also is impressed with the organisation's very dedicated staff.

I offer congratulations to the national CEO, Kate MacRae, who has just been appointed. She is based in Melbourne. Able Australia along with other non-profit, well-managed disability services combined with the National Disability Insurance Scheme is by far the best way to manage an increasing and more visible Australian problem.

Cataract Gorge - Gorgeous Walks and Talks

[11.36 a.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, I speak today about a special tourist destination on Launceston's doorstep -

Ms Rattray - Tamar River Cruises.

Ms ARMITAGE - Cataract Gorge, and in particular a series of talks that provide participants with an insight into the many features and the history surrounding this stunning Tasmanian icon.

Entitled 'Gorgeous Walks and Talks', the specially designed guided tours, which depart from the Basin Cottage within the gorge, are held on the first Wednesday of each month. They are hosted by 15 volunteers from the Launceston community who have a passion for, and extensive knowledge of, this area.

These volunteers impart to participants stories of significant events and people, the history of the gorge and its unique geological features and connections with the Aboriginal culture, as well as identifying to them the abundance of flora and fauna that can be found there.

The Gorgeous Walks and Talks tour includes a visit to the site of the first hydro-electric power station in Australia, the Duck Reach turbine-driven power station. The Launceston City Council originally commissioned the power station in 1893. This amazing feat of construction was completed in 1895, giving Launceston the distinction of being the first city south of the equator to be lit by electricity generated by water power.

Mr Valentine - Bright idea.

Ms ARMITAGE - It was the provider of electrical power to Launceston for 40 years in addition to running the municipal tramways, pumping water and wastewater services.

After the great flood of 1929 the power station was rebuilt and became the hydro-electric Trevallyn power scheme in 1955, over 25 years later. It was then suggested that the power station become a museum. In March 1957, it was offered to the Launceston City Council to avoid it falling into a state of disrepair, but it was not until some 20 years later that a national estate conservation study suggested that the building could be used as a museum.

In 1995, the centenary of its first opening, the power station was made weatherproof, the suspension bridge was restored and the building was reopened as a museum. The site is now an interpretation centre.

Another aspect of the built environment within the gorge is the Basin Cottage, previously named the First Basin Caretakers Cottage, which is situated on the western side of the gorge reserve with access from Basin Road.

Within the cottage you will find a pictorial history of the gorge reserve as well as some of the developments and events that have shaped Launceston's history. An exhibition space is also provided for use by artists or associated groups relevant to the gorge.

Cataract Gorge comprises first and second basins, large bowls with cliff surfaces that boast vertical and horizontal fractures housing natural waterfalls, pools and cascades. It is truly a beautiful place to visit.

The pathway along the cliff face was constructed in the 1890s, taking eight years to complete. It has views of the South Esk River. The Kings Bridge, which crosses the gorge, was floated into position in 1867.

The First Basin boasts walking trails through gardens, lookouts and the swimming pool with restaurant and café facilities. Spanning the gorge is a scenic chairlift built in 1972. It is 457 metres long. The central span at 308 metres is believed to be the longest single chairlift span in the world. Located in the First Basin near the café is the stone shelter where the Gorgeous Walk and Talk native plant tour begins. Many members may remember the famous basin concerts, when the stone shelter was used as a stage. The tour is a very popular annual spring walk conducted by Roy and Louise Skabo. Over 200 native species feature within the gorge. During the walk Roy and Louise identify many of these native species, as well as many of the species of fauna, including wallabies, potoroos, bandicoots, quolls, snakes and over 70 different species of birds, including nine that are endemic to Tasmania.

Other Gorgeous Walk and Talk tours include the study of the geographical attractions that make it one of the most unique landscapes in Australia, and the Mini Beasts of the Gorge tour, which features early evening walks. Tamar NRM Program Coordinator, Greg Lundstrum's Mini Beasts of the Gorge tour also includes an interactive hands-on session, using macroinvertebrates to assess river health and quality. He talks about where they like to hide and what they like to eat. The City of Launceston is not only fortunate to have such a unique asset, which is also a tourist mecca, but dedicated volunteer community members who are willing to extol its virtues to those who visit.

In conclusion I acknowledge these volunteers and the time and energy they put into educating the community and visitors about the gorge, a Tasmanian icon.

Mr Finch - And a special feature of the Rosevears electorate, thank you.

Briseis Bridge and Mine Hole Bike Trails

[11.41 a.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Mr President, I add my welcome to the CWA ladies and let the House know I attended a CWA event last week in the north-east. It was high tea to celebrate Prince Charles' birthday, so more food. The company was excellent and it is lovely to see you here today.

This morning I intend to share with the House another exciting event that took place over the recent northern Tasmanian long weekend in the McIntyre electorate. I know some of you are most probably thinking SteamFest Tasmania or the Tasmanian Craft Fair at Deloraine. Yes, they are both exciting and longstanding annual long weekend events that yet again receive great community support through high levels of attendance. I can attest, as I was a volunteer on the main gate on the final day of the craft fair at Deloraine, that scatterings of rain did not seem to deter those who were doing the rounds of the nine venues across Deloraine showcasing a huge array of arts and crafts. As an aside, the member for Hobart's fine lady would have been in her element at the craft fair. I hope she goes there next year.

Mr Valentine - Deloraine?

Ms RATTRAY - Deloraine.

Mr Valentine - She went there.

Ms RATTRAY - Not on Monday obviously, I did not see her.

Mr Valentine - No.

Ms RATTRAY - I am pleased she went. I know she would have been in her element, as would the member for Derwent, AKA the member for trains, who would have been at SteamFest among all those beautiful old steam trains.

Mr President, I am certain you will be interested in this experience. The next stage of the Blue Derby Mountain Bike Trails experience officially opened on Saturday, 3 November on the banks of the Ringarooma River, where the new suspension bridge was part of the opening. The 63-metre bridge is the access to the 15 kilometres of new track. The jewel in the crown is the Briseis hole, now with its own beach, seating and a fire pit for non-bike riders to enjoy.

Adding to the experience at Derby is the new asphalt pump track. It has been referred to as a warm-up track for serious riders. The flowing track is connected by a wave-like design with different heights for all different skill levels. The state Government has certainly been a huge supporter of the mountain bike experiences at Derby in Dorset, stumping up \$800 000 for this project, which was matched by Dorset Council. At the opening, Mr Gutwein, the Treasurer, did the honours and informed those who attended that this experience would help take tourism to the next level and provide an all-year-round experience in Derby. It is well known that during the winter months the original Blue Derby tracks need to be closed during times of heavy rainfall, for the safety of riders. This new 15 kilometres of track is designed for novice riders and will potentially be more accessible for riders in all weather conditions.

Those at the opening also learned that over the coming weeks a further 20 kilometres of track will progressively be opened, ranging in difficulty from the novice to the more experienced rider, such as yourself, Mr President.

The new tracks wind around what we locals affectionately call the Derby mine hole. More recently, it has been referred to by some as Lake Derby, but it is now officially referred to as the Briseis mine hole. It will be opened up for water sports. What those water sports look like is anybody's guess - waterskiing, jetboat races and paddleboarding. The list could be extensive. One thing I do know is that the sleepy town of Derby has certainly been given a significant makeover in many ways and is no longer a quiet place on weekends. Homes are now mostly very smart looking and well-renovated accommodation places with good real estate values to match.

Perhaps one of the downsides to this development is that it has led to the loss of people living in Derby permanently, which has been hard for some of the long-term locals to come to terms with. We can only hope that the sense of community that has always been strong in Derby remains in some way, albeit a little bit differently from what we have known.

The trail designer, Glen Jacobs of World Trail, said that the project's completion saw an end of four years in the community and now it is time to move on to St Helens after securing the contract to build the stacked loop network.

It looks like McIntyre is going to be known as the mountain bike capital of the world as Derby will again host the Enduro World Series for mountain bikers in March 2019. So, members, if you

and your friends and family have not experienced the Blue Derby tracks yet, I encourage you to make your way to the north-east and do so. You will have a great time. Thank you.

MOTION

Consideration and Noting - Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority - Annual Report and Financial Statements 2017-18

[11.48 a.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Mr President, I move -

That the Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority Annual Report and Financial Statements 2017-18 be considered and noted.

Mr President, when we had private members' day, it was suggested we need to look at more of the annual reports that come through this place, so I took the opportunity to pick up the annual report of the Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority.

I want to highlight some of the aspects of this authority and give other members the opportunity to have an input. As we know, the dairy industry is certainly a significant player in Tasmania's agriculture landscape. In 2017-18, 913 million litres of milk were produced in Tasmania. There was a shift from reduced numbers of farms milking fewer than 150 cows to an increase in those milking more than 700. The smaller farm is no longer as significant as it was in the past. The average herd now is about 400 - I will get to that; I will not go over the page yet. There are a number of changes in the dairy industry.

I will talk a little about the authority itself. I believe membership of the authority is paid by fees that come from milk producers and from licence fees for milk production. Although the fees are linked to the Fee Units Act 1997, they are affected by increases in the consumer price index. The board has the ability to waive fees and, as a result, the Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority has chosen to continue to manage income carefully. There have been no increases since the 2012-13 financial year. For 2018-19, the board has decided to hold the fees at the current rate, because dairy farmers have experienced some tough times. We still have \$1 per litre milk in our supermarkets and that affects the amount of money a dairy farm can make.

In regard to administration, an ongoing service level agreement is maintained with the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment - DPIPWE - to provide human resource management and work health and safety incident management for employees at no expense to the authority.

During 2017-18, the number of licensed dairy farms showed a significant decrease of 4.3 per cent, or 21 farms, on the previous year. However, some of that decrease was due to an upgrade in the database of dairy farmers where duplicate or obsolete entries were deleted. At least seven of the 21 farms were removed due to consolidation or the growth of the business. These farms are still held by dairy farmers but no longer have operational dairies.

The milk intake continues to increase in the state, with Dairy Australia noting 913 million litres for the year ending June 2018 - an increase of 9.3 per cent on 2016-17. It is interesting that we are getting more product from fewer farms. The farms are getting bigger; we have some large farms around our state now. I know Clovelly - now you drive through Bridport but there will be a western

access road that the heavy vehicles will take to bypass the township of Bridport. At Clovelly farm they milk about 2000 head a day - that is a lot of cattle to milk. They have three dairies because it is not possible to milk 2000 dairy cattle in one facility.

The factory licence numbers overall remained constant for the year, with at least two factories expected to receive licences before the end of December 2018, which is good news. Several other interested parties are working with TDIA to progress their business plans, so vendor licences have decreased slightly from the year ended 30 June 2018 as vendors retired or sold their businesses. We have a static number there but, interestingly, a couple of people are looking at processing. We like to think that might happen. It is particularly my interest, given I represent a northern part of the state. I have mentioned this in the past: there is still significant milk production in the Pyengana area. The member for Derwent will know all about that. Milk tankers travel to Pyengana and often come back to Scottsdale to unload to the mothership then take a long trek to Spreyton. If there were a northern - or preferably a north-eastern - facility, it would make a big difference to the cost to collect.

Mr Farrell - There used to be a good factory there.

Ms RATTRAY - The UMT facility started off as a co-op in the very productive and successful co-op days. Now we do not have a co-op situation, which was explored through the dairy inquiry. We found through the inquiry that the rules and regulations regarding co-ops are not simple to navigate and actually having a co-op up and running again would not be easy.

There have to be willing participants. There is still opportunity for some processing to be undertaken in the north-east, not only to reduce costs of travel, but also to reduce the travel time frame. It is not an easy journey to Pyengana with a winding road over Weldborough Pass and down and across a little plain. It certainly makes for hard work when you have a milk tanker behind you.

In the way of compliance, Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority has the support of the DPIW and the arrangement works well. All licensed factories are audited in line with TDIA's policy and frequency of visits is determined partly by compliance with an approved food safety program. No factories were suspended during the financial year for breaches of food safety requirements.

The clean green tick is certainly supported in this area. Several farms were visited by TDIA staff for possible breaches of the Farm Dairy Premises Effluent Management Code of Practice. In each case, TDIA staff work with the farmer and local council officers to ensure the problems with effluent management are addressed. That is one of the biggest issues but there are advances in technology when it comes to effluent and waste, and how farmers use that will continue to grow and build on the knowledge and research being undertaken.

The dairy discussion group held in each particular area is very proactive and when one farmer comes up with a solution that might well suit their farm, they are happy to share and work towards a common goal. Those discussion groups are a real positive for the dairy industry and they meet at various farms through the course of the year. They probably meet more when production is on full scale, as often some take the opportunity to put their cows out as they have in the past and some of them milk them right through. It is still continual and a big lifestyle change when you are milking your herd, even though some of them get a break. It is pretty hard yakka.

I was interested in the production annual report tabled a month ago now. I was interested in the fact that in 2007-08, 10 years ago, the milk production level was around 662 million litres.

There was a record year in 2014-15 when it increased to 891 million litres in Tasmania, then it dropped back a little in 2015-16 and 2016-17. We all know the challenges for the dairy industry during that time. As I have already indicated, 2017-18 experienced a 9.3 per cent growth of 913 million litres. The record in 2014-15 was on an upward trajectory, but pulled back a bit in 2015-16 and 2016-17, when it became pretty tight for some farmers.

I refer to a couple of the findings from the dairy industry inquiry. Number 8 was -

Tasmania has the capacity to significantly increase its milk production, which would ensure the economies of scale for processors to invest.

When I look at the increased number of millions of litres being produced in Tasmania, it tells me, and it should tell the rest of the state and anyone else wanting to invest, that there is a huge capacity to increase milk production.

Having a processor come into the state and potentially setting up in another area where you have significant increased opportunity for production supports the findings of the dairy inquiry. I would be happy to work with anyone who is inclined to explore the opportunities. It is a growing industry. Tasmania does it so well.

Findings number 11 says -

To facilitate industry growth, the Tasmanian road and freight network needs improvement.

I hark back to the fact that when the appropriate infrastructure is not in place, particularly to cater for the heavy vehicles we need to transport the product from production to processing, it is always going to be difficult. There is an opportunity for this Government, future governments, to be able to drill down into some of those areas where there is growth. The development of the western access from Bridport to the Flinders Highway to enable B-double milk tankers not to have to go through the township of Bridport is one initiative that has been taken up. We have a number of other initiatives that need to be carefully planned to make the most of the increasing production. We have some dairy farms now being established in Waterhouse Road. Waterhouse was once predominantly sheep production - I know the member for Derwent will know this well - and cattle to a lesser degree now. Cattle are pretty important there as well. The road network there continually needs maintenance and upgrading to cater for the heavy vehicles moving product from production to processing.

I hark back to the Pyengana scenario, a beautiful fertile valley. It does milk production really well. We need to be able to get product to market. It is a great opportunity to sort that.

Always the concern for any business is labour. We continue to have an issue in finding suitable labour for dairy farms. I spoke to Jonathan Price, CEO of DairyTas. We had a conversation and he gave me some details about their discussion groups and get-togethers. They had the annual general meeting only last week in Dorset; unfortunately, I was committed elsewhere and could not attend. He said that three years ago, 8 per cent of the farmers they contacted expressed concern about being able to find appropriate labour to hire. This year, 20 per cent of those farmers are expressing concerns about whether they would be able to find suitable labour to hire. It is an issue, and we have some way to go in projecting the fact that working on a dairy farm is a good job, one you can see has a future.

Many young people take up the opportunity but not as a long-term commitment. Sometimes I feel they do not see that type of job as a long-term future. I would really like to see that turn around and change. Some very good traineeships are now being picked up by people who want to get into that industry and make it a career, and to make sure that it is something where they are confident to say, 'I work on a dairy farm' or 'I work in the dairy industry', not 'Oh, I just milk cows'. There is more to it - milking cows is just one part of being in the dairy industry; it is a key part, but it is only one part. The way that the dairy industry now uses grain, for instance, to supplement the grass feed is so technical that it is not just 'bang a bit of grain in here' or 'throw it out in the paddock' or anything like that. It is all measured and there is a recipe for the grain, so the grain companies go around and speak to individual farmers to look at what their individual needs are. It is very technical. Milking cows is just one very small part of being a successful dairy farmer now.

There will be growing opportunities for people to become involved in the industry. I trust that with this technical expertise that is required, they will see an opportunity to make a career out of this. Dairy farm managers now are very highly sought after. Often they come from New Zealand - and have done so in the past - but I would like to think we are developing our own experienced people who are able to go from maybe a farm-based apprenticeship up to the management level that we need and have seen is required.

Farmers are using a lot more grain. The average allocation is about 1.2 tonnes per cow, which shows how reliant they are on grain. While they supplement it with grass, they are looking at other crops, including summer crops. Obviously, turnips have always been a big one because cows strip graze them. Jonathan informed me that farmers are looking at more readily accessible feed such as palm kernels and almond hulls as a summer crop because they are able to mix those with other things.

There is general confidence in the dairy industry. Are there always challenges in any industry? Absolutely, yes. As a community, we need to support our dairy farmers.

The farm level investment is significant and if you are lucky or fortunate enough to be able to be on a dairy farm where there is a transition from one generation to the next, that obviously makes a big difference. Quite a number of New Zealand people come to Tasmania and other parts of Australia. We learned in the dairy inquiry that the pathway is not quite so clear in buying a dairy farm in New Zealand. On average, you have to stump up \$1 million to start. That was one of the things we heard to be able to use the processing. That is a lot of money to find on top of actually buying a farm. You can see why New Zealanders who potentially want to be in the industry often start off as a sharefarmer in Tasmania and build their herd up and, hopefully, eventually are able to buy their own farm or some land and continue to build their asset until they can have their own dairy farm. It seems there is more opportunity in Tasmania than in their home country.

Tasmania is on the global radar, but we are also mindful of the aspects of the environment, meeting the environmental compliance requirements for effluent and all the other things required. Milk production is always a constant challenge. There is some government support for an initiative called Cows Out of Creeks, where in the past it would be quite normal to see cows going through a creek that might supply water to a township.

Mr Farrell - I can remember some years ago at Benalia where we would have a shower of a morning and we smelled like Jack Smith's cows. There was a pleasant odour on the school bus.

Ms RATTRAY - That is exactly right. Through the creek that supplied water to the Winnaleah township - you should not have left Winnaleah by the look of your hair. I mean that with the greatest respect to the member. I know how fond he is of Winnaleah and the trains.

They were past days; those activities are no longer acceptable - nor should they be -but it is great to see the Government is supporting initiatives to keep the cows out of the creek - that just says it how it is. When your average herd is now 700, you do not want 700 cows walking from the dairy through the creek to their paddock for the day and then walking back again to be milked later in the afternoon - that is 1400 in one day and they have four feet, so that is a lot of hooves.

We need that enthusiasm of the younger generation coming on who, I hope, are going to see it as a genuine career opportunity. It is a lifestyle. Those who are dairy farmers or who work on dairy farms, generating the 913 million litres per annum to go into our economy, certainly do it with the greatest of passion; they are so dedicated. You think about it: in your younger days when you went to the footy and you had a night out, it was still a 5 o'clock start the next morning to get up and get the cows in and milk them. I hope I have not offended the member for Derwent because that was never my intention.

I look forward to the continuing growth of the dairy industry. I want to congratulate the Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority, being a small organisation, on its annual report. It is very detailed. It is a small but such an important organisation. It received a tick from the Auditor-General, which tells me that the governance structures are in place. It certainly has the interests of the dairy industry in Tasmania at heart. It is very proactive in its work and it supports those who work in the dairy industry. We should be very pleased we have the Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority keeping those checks and balances in place and looking at those initiatives.

I do not think I have anything more to add. I have told you about the number of litres and that the average size of a dairy herd has increased considerably. We are getting a slight reduction in the number of dairy farms, but the ones left are getting bigger. The challenge over the next six months and beyond is the milk price, and I expect there will be some heavy negotiation in regard to that.

Climate is also on the industry challenges list. As we know, we do not have the ability to control the climate, we just have to work with what we have.

Input costs, including the cost of grain: I heard on *Landline* on Sunday that there have been some issues with grain in northern New South Wales. I am not sure where that will put the price of grain. There have been some pretty successful grain crops in Victoria, in the Shepparton and the Nathalia areas, which I know are really important to the grain industry.

I have some friends who own a grain supply business in Nathalia, Rex James and his family - terrific family and terrific people. They keep me abreast of what is going on in the grain industry. It is always a challenge because the season as we know can dictate what level of grain is able to be produced at any given year.

We know there are some significant labour challenges; the cost of labour is gradually going up and up. You now have to give people a minimum of three hours work, I think, in the morning. Then there is a minimum of so many hours in the afternoon as well. What do you do in the meantime? There is a lot of work to be done on the farm but you cannot pay somebody from 5 a.m. until possibly 6 or 7 p.m. without asking them to take a significant break between one milking and the other.

It is a challenging industry when it comes to the workforce. I hope we see the growth continue and those in the industry continue to work with the technical expertise. I look forward to the continuation of a very successful industry which supports our communities so well, particularly the rural communities I represent. I acknowledge and note the report.

[12.22 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I thank the member for McIntyre for bringing on the motion and her interest in the dairy industry. I know that she has always been a strong supporter of the agricultural sector in general.

It was a bit of a race to get this annual report onto the Notice Paper. As soon as I saw it come through I thought I would not mind having a closer look at it, but the member for McIntyre beat me just by a whisker. I am very pleased it is there.

As the member for McIntyre said, hiring the labour workforce is a very technical job. Nowadays they even talk about virtual fencing. That is an electronic beam that keeps the cows in. You have to be quite technical to be across that sort of thing.

The chairman's report from Ms Rae Burrows was very good. It was good to see that the TDIA is fully funded. It has its new strategic plan in order until 2021. It has its website up and running. It is good to see that it attended Agfest as it is making itself available to stakeholders and interested community members. TDIA appears to be doing the right thing.

This motion provides us with the opportunity not to only highlight the importance of the dairy industry to Tasmania but also to acknowledge the very good work of TDIA, the Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority.

I took the report home because we agist dairy cattle on our farm. I asked a dairyman who was having a cup of tea with me, 'What do you think of the TDIA?' He said that they are pretty good so I thought, 'So they do a good job'.

The Tasmanian Dairy Industry Association is the largest contributor to farmgate value in Tasmania. It is worth around \$350 million dollars per annum, which is a large amount of money.

This Government has been a strong and consistent supporter of the dairy industry. Our dairy farmers have rebounded strongly from difficulties experienced in 2016, as was previously noted, with an increase of 9.3 per cent on the previous year and well above the national growth of 3.1 per cent, to set a new production record of over 910 million litres in 2017-18.

The processors continue to show a considerable amount of confidence in Tasmania's dairy farms with major processor Fonterra announcing \$12 million in new investment in its Tasmania's plant earlier this year and Saputo expanding its potential supply pool to the north-east, so that might help things in the north-east.

Ms Rattray - They haven't increased their milk price yet, though.

Mrs HISCUTT - No, we are all waiting for that, aren't we?

TDIA has also received inquiries from an organic milk broker to establish a business to purchase Tasmanian milk. Competition for Tasmania's excellent milk is expected to increase, which will benefit all Tasmanian dairy farmers. The Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority licenses all dairy factories, farms and vendors in Tasmania and audits to ensure compliance with relevant state and national dairy food safety regulations and standards.

As such it plays a critical role in maintaining the Tasmanian dairy brand for safe and quality dairy products. We all know how important it is that our dairy products are safe. The authority facilitates overseas market access through the application of export legislation and certification services via an agreement with the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, thereby saving Tasmanian producers time and significant cost.

It also conducts effluent system audits for farms to ensure compliance with the Farm Dairy Premises Effluent Management Code of Practice. It is good to keep that effluent out of our waterways.

TDIA is fully funded by licence fees and continues to operate in a cost-effective and efficient manner. That comment was backed up by the dairy farmer I spoke to, who was quite happy to pay the fees. Consequently, the authority has again elected to waive fee increases that could have been applied under the Fee Units Act 1997 for the 2018-19 financial year while maintaining the capacity to ensure dairy food safety for consumers and market confidence in the quality of Tasmanian dairy products.

The board of TDIA has recently approved its corporate plan to the end of June 2021, which will continue to focus on the three pillars of safe, sustainable and supportive. TDIA will continue to protect and uphold the integrity and reputation of the Tasmanian brand in respect of dairy products, and promote and encourage a positive food safety culture with a focus on continuous improvement.

Business plans include the addition of new auditing staff. Budgets for expenditure again include funds for training of licensees to improve knowledge.

A newly launched TDIA website has been well received by licensees and those interested in the dairy industry, and it offers information on licensing and technical matters.

The Government has been a strong supporter of the dairy industry, which is the largest contributor to farmgate value in Tasmania. The industry is therefore a major beneficiary of the broadly based \$150 million-plus investment now underway through the Government's AgriFood Plan 2018-2023. This includes an additional \$70 million into Tasmanian irrigation tranche 3 schemes, which will continue the transformation of Tasmanian agriculture that has already strongly benefited the state's dairy industry.

Among the very specific agricultural industry development initiatives in the 2018-19 Budget, the Government has allocated \$900 000 over four years for the dairy extension 'grow more, milk more and make more' initiative working with dairy farmers on productivity, farm business and value-adding strategies.

A package of \$2.25 million has been offered to the new owner of the Edith Creek milk processing factory to address identified capacity constraints and assist with workforce development and training. The Government has provided additional funding for the Stock Underpass Program

and increased the maximum grants available. This is a very good initiative because moving stock across roads, especially major roads, can be very disruptive and dirty because they certainly leave a lot of dirt on the road. This program is a template for putting in underpasses, which saves a lot of money and time for the farmer trying to do it.

The Government has also provided \$200 000 for the second round of DairyTas's Cows Out of Creeks project the member for McIntyre talked about earlier. This follows the successful first round of the project. The Tasmanian dairy industry is well regulated by TDIA and has a very bright future. DairyTas has been workshopping with farmers around the feed options because the grain price is on the up and some farmers are looking at alternative feeds, fodder crops like turnips, and, as the member mentioned, palm kernels and almond hulls.

Before I finish, I have to tell members cows are now the most important word in our house as my 18-month-old grandson only says 'cow, cow, cow' when he comes to our place and looks out the window and over the fence for the cows. We certainly know about cows at our place. The Government now notes the report.

[12.31 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Mr President, I am not surprised there were not many contributions to my notice of motion, but it is an opportunity for me to put on the record some of the good aspects of the industry. It is such an important industry to my electorate and more broadly to Tasmania and it is important to note that we have an increased share of the national production.

I thank the Leader for her contribution; highlighting a couple of other initiatives the Government has supported is important. The fact is that TDIA has a strong corporate plan in place and continues to look at compliance and industry standards and supporting dairy farmers.

I want to say another thank you to Jonathan Price; I said he was the CEO of DairyTas but he is actually the executive officer. CEO has a nice ring to it, so he probably will be quite pleased. I am very appreciative of the information Jonathan sent through and the conversation we had, and I appreciate the input from a number of dairy farmers, who love to talk about their industry. I thank members for the opportunity to note the report.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION Elder Abuse

[12.34 p.m.]

Ms SIEJKA (Pembroke) - Mr President, I move -

That the Legislative Council:

(1) Notes -

(a) that Tasmania has a high proportion of elderly people living in our community; and

- (b) that elder abuse within the privacy of a person's home or within an aged care institution is a growing problem in our community; and
 - (c) that this abuse can take various forms such as neglect, physical, emotional, financial or sexual abuse.
- (2) (a) Acknowledges that a National Plan to combat elder abuse is underway; and
 - (b) Strongly encourages the Government to commit to a review and extension of the Elder Abuse Prevention Action Plan 2015-18 to take into account the National Plan.
- (3) Recognises that there is a need to develop adult safeguarding legislation to help prevent elder abuse and urges the Government to pursue its development as a priority.

Elder abuse within the privacy of a person's home or within an aged care home is a growing problem within our community. This abuse can take various forms such as neglect or physical, emotional, physiological, financial or sexual abuse. Elder abuse can be a single or repeated act or a lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship, where there is an expectation of trust, that causes harm or distress to an older person. Elder abuse is a breach of a person's right to feel safe.

It is considered a human rights issue because it involves a person's dignity, respect, autonomy, liberty and physical safety. Elder abuse is often a hidden form of abuse and is under-reported. However, it is also considered to be increasing and prevalent.

While older people should not be considered vulnerable merely because of their age, some factors commonly associated with age can make certain older people more vulnerable to abuse. Disability, for example, is more common among older people, with more than 80 per cent of people aged 85 or over having some disability.

Tasmania has a high proportion of older people living in our community. We currently have over 98 000 people aged 65 years or over. We also have an ageing population with an increasing median age. This means that one in every five Tasmanians is over 65, or 19.4 per cent of our population. Their safety and protection is provided through state laws, including criminal laws, laws about wills and enduring guardianships.

However, there are gaps in our current legislation that need to be identified and addressed to ensure our elderly population is adequately protected from abuse. Large population-based studies show incidences of abuse are between 3 and 5 per cent of the population, which equates to between 3000 and 4500 Tasmanians.

It is well known that the most common form of elder abuse is the abuse of a parent by a child. However, the abuse can take many forms and it also includes institutional abuse. An example of economic abuse can be seen in the case of a Hobart man who stole \$280 000 from his sick and widowed mother, who was aged in her 90s, leaving her unable to pay her nursing home fees. To quote Justice Brett -

Investigation of Mrs Walker's accounts disclosed that almost immediately after the defendant was appointed as his mother's attorney he began taking money from his mother's account to pay it to himself or to his own interests.

Another example is of a Tasmanian grandparent blackmailed over access to their grandchildren unless they gave money to pay for a house.

The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania has said there could be as many as 10 000 cases of elder abuse, with this latter case just one of thousands that has come to it.

To quote the *Mercury* on a very sad example, well known to all of us -

An inquest into the death of an elderly woman in a near-freezing shipping container has heard she had lost 15 kilograms in the previous year to weigh just 37 kg ... and died of hypothermia ... while spending the night sleeping in the converted container.

Mr Dean - It is tragic that has to happen to draw our attention to it.

Ms SIEJKA - Absolutely. My final example is the case of a former aged care worker who took obscene photos of nursing home residents in Glenorchy. This man not only took inappropriate selfies of the elderly residents but also distributed them without their knowledge.

All those examples are on the record. I wanted to make sure it was known. These examples are appalling demonstrations of what can happen in our community to older Tasmanians when there are not enough protections in place, but these are only a few stories when there are thousands. Clearly as a society and we, as members of parliament, must do more to protect our most vulnerable.

Australia has a complex approach to ageing and aged care. In the current environment responsibilities are shared between federal and state governments resulting in gaps in relevant reporting processes and legislation. At a federal level, leadership is needed across all levels to provide a coordinated and consistent approach to protecting older people in our community. A national plan is needed to provide an appropriate framework for strategies and actions that all sectors of the community can take to protect older people from abuse.

An Australian Law Reform Commission report, *Protecting the Rights of Older Australians from Abuse*, highlighted the need for considerable work to be done at all levels of government and across the community. At its announcement, the national plan included five objectives taken from the work of the ALRC's recommendations - to promote the autonomy and agency of older people, address ageism and promote community understanding of elder abuse, achieve national consistency, safeguard at-risk older people and improve responses, and build the evidence base.

This is a promising step at a national level. However, it is imperative that Tasmania takes responsibility for our own jurisdiction by doing all we can to protect older Tasmanians from elder abuse.

Currently the Tasmanian Government has an elder abuse prevention action plan that is due to expire at the end of this year. This plan must be reviewed and extended because clearly much more work needs to be done within our state to protect older Tasmanians and allowing this strategy to end is irresponsible. Any review must take into account the development of the national plan, to

complement it on a state level and ensure the strongest protections are in place for older people in regard to elder abuse.

While our current Tasmanian plan has made inroads in the areas of raising awareness, empowerment and support, much more needs to be done. One such area that the Tasmanian Government must ensure is included in a review and extension of the Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy is the inclusion of adult safeguarding legislation. The ALRC report, *Protecting the Rights of Older Australians from Abuse*, recommended that a best-practice approach to preventing elder abuse must involve the principles of dignity and autonomy, protection and safeguarding. Following on from the work of the ALRC in this report, the Tasmania Law Reform Institute, along with a number of other stakeholders, such as Council on the Ageing, UTAS and Equal Opportunity Tasmania, strongly advocated for the need to develop Tasmanian adult safeguarding legislation.

On a state and territory level, adult safeguarding frameworks currently provide some protection, and criminal laws have some elder abuse offence provisions, but due to the gaps and inconsistencies very few prosecutions are made and the penalties are low. Tasmania does not currently have this adult safeguarding legislation. Adult safeguarding legislation would enable greater protections for the most vulnerable in our community. As we have heard from the sorry examples earlier, elder abuse undermines a person's dignity and autonomy. It can take away a person's ability to make their own decisions about their own lives. However, sometimes putting protective measures in place can conflict with a person's autonomy. For example, when an older person does not want to report their abuse by a family member to the police, adult safeguarding legislation seeks to counter this fine balance between protecting a person's autonomy and ensuring their human rights are upheld.

As with any other member of the community, older people enjoy their freedom and independence. They do not deserve, as a result of their age, to be stripped of their autonomy, dignity and humanity. However, the reality is that in some instances where very vulnerable people are involved, greater protections and government actions are required. In practice it would involve a role for safeguarding services to be available to at-risk adults who cannot protect themselves from abuse. In some cases, for example, it might involve court orders to prevent someone suspected of abuse from contacting the older person. The ALRC recommends obtaining consent from the at-risk adult before safeguarding investigation takes place. However, in some instances, such as the suspicion of serious abuse, investigations may need to occur without their consent.

It is also important to note that not all older people will need to access these protections, but they are important safeguards nonetheless. Some, not all, older people will need these protections. South Australia is currently leading other jurisdictions in the development of adult safeguarding legislation. Following a study conducted by the University of South Australia, South Australia is taking a best-practice approach to safeguarding legislation that includes a focus on the removal of rights and freedoms from the perpetrator rather than the victim. Other jurisdictions are following their lead.

Adult safeguarding legislation is a significant gap in our existing legislation and would provide considerably increased protection for older Tasmanians from elder abuse. I urge the Government to pursue its development as a priority.

Much more needs to be done to address and prevent elder abuse, but there are also questions and unknowns when it comes to the best way to pursue these protections. It is hoped that the national plan and the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety will provide much-

needed direction and impetus for this work to occur. However, while the royal commission's work is important and will no doubt provide insight into the best way forward in many areas, we also cannot wait for this to be completed. There are too many older people already suffering from abuse and it is critical that we prioritise addressing this. We must continue to strive to improve our services and care for older people within Tasmania. An ethical approach to caring for our older Tasmanians should recognise, respect and protect the rights and dignity of all older Tasmanians without infringing upon their independence and autonomy. We must remember that our human rights are ours for a lifetime and not only for as long as we are able to advocate for ourselves. We must do more to protect vulnerable older Tasmanians.

[12.46 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I thank the member for Pembroke for this motion.

Older Tasmanians have shaped the Tasmania we all love and enjoy today. They are valuable members of our community who contributed an enormous amount to our society and deserve our enduring respect. The value of every Tasmanian does not diminish with age. Older Tasmanians deserve to be able to feel healthy, secure and safe in their homes and communities.

We understand and support the intent of this motion but recognise that the timing regarding some of the elements is still to be determined at a national level.

We firmly believe that elder abuse in any form is not okay. That is why the Government is implementing the Protecting Older Tasmanians from Abuse: Tasmania's Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy. This work has been occurring since January 2011. The strategy is based on key strategic themes that underpin all policy activities - awareness, empowerment, action and support.

The Department of Communities Tasmania works in partnership with the Council on the Ageing and Advocacy Tasmania to deliver identified outcomes under the strategy. Our commitment to the prevention of elder abuse in Tasmania is evident in our 2018 state election promise to provide funding of \$150 000 per annum over the next three years to continue the implementation of the strategy. This is in line with our Strong, Liveable Communities: Tasmania's Active Ageing Plan 2017-2022. It is a comprehensive whole-of-government strategy to support older Tasmanians and enable them to participate at all levels in our community.

COTA receives \$195 000 per annum for three years to help implement initiatives under the Active Ageing Plan. The Active Ageing Plan identifies actions across four action areas: health, lifelong learning, participation and security.

The specific actions relating to security in the Active Ageing Plan are:

- To support awareness of, and improve our response to, elder abuse.
- To explore improved data collection for different demographic groups over 65 years and different types of abuse.
- To continue to implement Protecting Older Tasmanians from Abuse: Tasmania's Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy.

- To consider the findings from the Australian Law Reform Commission's Inquiry into Protecting the Rights of Older Australians from Abuse.

Mr President, elder abuse prevention is high on the agenda at the national level with the Council of Attorneys-General working with all states and territories to develop the national plan to respond to the abuse of older Australians.

The national plan will consider the Australian Law Reform Commission's publication *Elder Abuse - A National Legal Response*. This report is based on a nationwide consultation undertaken in 2017. It contains 44 recommendations designed to safeguard older people. A draft of the national plan is listed as an agenda item for the next Council of Attorneys-General meeting, which will be held in late November 2018.

We will, of course, consider this in the context of any future legislative requirements. The national plan to respond to the abuse of older Tasmanians will determine, in part, an updated Tasmanian plan and is due for release in February 2019. Also on the national front is the federal government's decision to establish a royal commission into the aged care sector that will focus on the quality of care provided in the home and residential care for older Australians. The Tasmanian Government welcomes the royal commission into aged care. While not directly involved at this time, the Government supports any measure to protect vulnerable older people.

At the Government's request, the Tasmania Law Reform Institute has been conducting an extensive review of the Guardianship and Administration Act 1995 and related legislation. This review has examined the roles of the administrators, guardians, persons responsible, the Guardianship and Administration Board and the Public Guardian. The final report is imminent and its recommendations will be of relevance to any work in this area.

A whole-of-government response to elder abuse in Tasmania is driven by the Statewide Elder Abuse Prevention Advisory Committee. The next SEAPAC meeting is scheduled for Friday, 7 December 2018. It is anticipated to meet at least quarterly. SEAPAC will continue to be a key mechanism for consultation relating to the next steps in the prevention of elder abuse, such as contributing to the national plan to respond to the abuse of older Australians and the development of an updated Tasmanian strategy that considers the work being done nationally and across governments.

In addition, the Tasmania Law Reform Institute, the University of Tasmania's research network on Preventing Elder Abuse Tasmania and the Council on the Ageing organised a symposium on elder abuse and neglect at the end of last year. This well-attended symposium highlighted the importance of addressing this issue and brought together a range of stakeholders to discuss ways to address elder abuse and neglect in Tasmania. Both the ALRC report and the elder abuse symposium, in conjunction with research on best practice in other jurisdictions, will be used to frame a new elder abuse strategy action plan for 2018 through to 2021 and inform the development of the national plan.

The Government wants a Tasmania that is the best place to live, work, invest and be part of a family as we grow older. Other ways we are supporting seniors include, first, giving one year's free access to our national parks and heavily discounted passes for future years. I did have someone who is eligible for this tell me what a shock they received when they went to visit a national park and were allowed in for free. That was a good aspect.

Ms Rattray - You get them from the information centres.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is a very good initiative.

Ms Rattray - Very popular, I believe.

Mrs HISCUTT - Second, we are also slashing stamp duty by 50 per cent for eligible seniors looking to sell their existing home and downsize. Third, if not totally, a wide range of concessions and discounts on the cost of government services, such as bus travel, electricity and adult education. The Government also recognises the important role the Council on the Ageing Tasmania has in advocating for and supporting older Tasmanians to ensure their voices and views are heard.

We support the intention of this motion, but need more time to consider the national framework before we take the next step. The Government is absolutely committed to preventing elder abuse from occurring in Tasmania.

With regard to the member's motion we agree with 1(a), (b) and (c) of the motion: that we have a high proportion of elderly people in Tasmania and that elder abuse occurs, which is why we developed our Strong, Liveable Communities: Tasmania's Active Ageing Plan 2017-2022.

As I said, the Active Ageing Plan identifies actions across four action areas: health, lifelong learning, participation and, importantly, security. This aims to support awareness of and improve our response to elder abuse. Initiatives outlined in our plan are already underway.

We are also active in regard to 2(a) of the motion in that we are working with the Council of Attorneys-General in the development of the national plan to respond to the abuse of older Australians. The Attorney-General is attending the next CAG meeting later this week, and the national plan is listed as an agenda item.

We have already committed to 2(b) of the motion, which is why at the 2018 state election we committed to provide funding of \$150 000 per annum over the next three years to continue to implement the Protecting Older Tasmanians from Abuse: Tasmania's Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy. However, due to the timing of this critical phase in determining the national response to the prevention of elder abuse, we cannot support the entirety of the motion, given that the national plan will not be released until 2019 and the royal commission has not yet been fully established.

We need these contributing factors to be settled before we can consider the next phase, which may include safeguarding legislation. It would be premature for the Tasmanian Government to commit to any further course of action before these two very important pieces of national framework are finalised.

[12.58 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Mr President, I thank the member for Pembroke for putting this motion on the Notice Paper for members to address. It is a sad situation that we need to talk about elder abuse in our communities. Sadly, it is a fact of life.

I have looked carefully at the motion. I acknowledge the Leader's contribution on behalf of the Government. It appears that there is only one sticking point, which is 2(b) where the motion strongly encourages the Government to commit to a review and extension of the Elder Abuse Prevention Action Plan 2015-18 and to take the national plan into account. I hear from the member

the reasons that national action plan cannot be considered as yet - it is not finalised. Then there is the royal commission as well, and no findings attached to that.

I am interested in what happens if the review is not undertaken and there is no extension of the Elder Abuse Prevention Action Plan. Does that mean we do not have anything in place or will things still remain as they are? I do not see that not having the national plan and not having any recommendations from the royal commission is going to change the situation. We still need to be look out for elder abuse and do everything we can as a community to make sure that it does not happen.

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

QUESTIONS

JBS Swift Australia - Return of Government Funding

Ms FORREST question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

Regarding the decision of JBS Swift Australia to close the Devonport City Abattoir, will the Government ensure the \$400 000 funding provided to JBS Swift for upgrades that appear not to have been undertaken be returned in full to the Government?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Murchison for her question. The answer is as follows -

A grant of \$783 200 was approved to JBS Swift Australia to assist it to complete the capital investment program at the Devonport City Abattoir. The total amount of the grant paid to JBS was \$362 279, which was invested into equipment in the plant that will now support the ongoing operation of the business under TQM. The remaining grants funds have not been paid to JBS Swift Australia. These funds remain available to support the red meat industry through the transition period as smaller abattoirs scale up and any gaps in the beef and sheep supply chain may emerge.

Tasmanian Agriculture Sector - Research and Development

Ms RATTRAY question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

Given the significant importance and growth of the agriculture sector to Tasmania's economy -

- (1) Does the Government acknowledge the importance of research and development to the agriculture sector?

- (2) Could the Government advise what current management arrangements, including length of lease, are in place for each of the following research facilities: Grove, Cressy, Elliott and Forthside?
- (3) In regard to the Cressy Research Station lease arrangement between the state and Burlington Berries, what legal requirement exists to ensure that the previous rights of other users - for example, farmers, Inland Fisheries, the RSPCA - in existence with Tas Global Seeds are protected?
- (4) What arrangements exist to review the leases and/or arrangements in place relative to the research facilities?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for McIntyre for her questions. The answers are -

- (1) Yes, world-class research, development and extension (RD&E) is an essential part of the Government's plan to grow the annual farmgate value of agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050. The white paper released in late 2017, 'Growing Tasmanian Agriculture: Research Development and Extension for 2050', is the Government's comprehensive blueprint for achieving future productivity gains and innovation in Tasmanian agriculture. The Government's election commitment includes increased funding to the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture totalling \$28 million over five years, including the establishment of a new agricultural innovation fund. This new funding is embedded in the 2018-19 Budget. The Government has also committed \$7 million to modernise Crown and TIA research farm assets to make them centres of excellence for practical research and demonstration. An action from the Research Development and Extension white paper is the development of the Research Farm Portfolio Plan.
- (2) Separate management arrangements are in place for the Grove Research and Development Station, the Cressy Research Station and the Elliott and Forthside research stations.

With regard to Grove Research and Development Station - the current lease agreement between the Crown and OAK Tasmania governing the management of the Grove Research and Development Station commenced on the 22 November 2015 and is due to expire on the 21 November 2020. This agreement includes an option to extend the lease until the 21 November 2026. Under the terms of the lease agreement, the station can only be used for the operation of a commercial orchard and nursery. RD&E activities include reasonable access to the site for third parties to conduct relevant RD&E activities, pre-existing historical sublease arrangements and maintenance of the station heritage pome fruit orchard.

Management of the station is overseen by the Grove Research Station development committee, which comprises representatives of the Crown and the lessee. The committee conducts quarterly reviews of activities undertaken under the terms of the lease and cooperatively seeks solutions to any issues that arise. The Government is currently working with OAK Tasmania, the Huon Valley Council and Fruit Growers Tasmania on a potential short-term project involving the Grove facility to assist an anticipated shortfall in seasonal worker accommodation in the Huon Valley for the coming harvest season.

With regard to Cressy, the members for McIntyre and Windermere had the opportunity to have an onsite briefing with the DPIPWE and Cressy Research Station in July this year. For Cressy, the current lease is with Upper Murray Seeds - a sister company to Burlington Berries - until 2019 with an option to renew until 2024. Upper Murray Seeds' plans for the Cressy station include developing a centre of excellence for pasture and soft fruit RD&E. In January 2018, it was granted a separate 10-year lease over a small 20-hectare portion of the station, to provide sufficient certainty to enable the company to make a multimillion-dollar investment for its planned centre of excellence. The lease includes four renewal options. Proposed developments on the site include long-term breeding programs for berries and pasture seed and seed cleaning facilities to support seed research and development.

With regard to the Elliott and Forthside research stations in north-west Tasmania, ownership of the Elliott and Forthside research stations was transferred to the University of Tasmania on 18 July 2017 under section 12 of the Crown Lands Act 1976, Crown Lands orders 40 and 41 of 2007. The transfer was made in accordance with the terms of the TIA Joint Venture Agreement entered into between the Crown and UTAS on 28 June 2007. Under the terms of the current JVA, UTAS must meet all costs associated with the management, maintenance and repair of the research station from the funds available to TIA. UTAS must primarily use the research station for RD&E into agriculture in Tasmania and not change the use of the research station without the prior approval of the TIA advisory board.

If UTAS wishes to dispose of either research station, it must first obtain the prior written consent of the Minister for Primary Industries and Water.

- (3) The current Cressy Research Station lease agreement is between the Crown and Upper Murray Seeds, and, as was the case under the terms of the original lease agreement between the Crown and Tas Global Seeds, Upper Murray Seeds is legally obliged to -
- allow the Bureau of Meteorology access to its weather recording instruments on the station
 - allow access to the station by a fisheries lane to the area of Brumbys Creek, traditionally used for fishing
 - allow Tasmanian Quality Meats to dispose of brown water on mutually agreed areas of the CRDS
 - negotiate in good faith with DPIPWE if additional area is required for the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program; provide facilities, including land, for RD&E activities to be undertaken by UTAS through TIA; and provide accommodation for animals seized for animal welfare reasons.

Upper Murray Seeds must also allow the other users of the station, including Mr Peter Hayes who has a separate lease with the Crown, access and egress over the leased area to those areas of the station over which the other users have control or responsibility.

- (4) Any alterations to the Grove Research and Development Station lease must be made in writing and must be approved by the minister. Should the lessee fail to meet its obligations the lease may be terminated in accordance with the provisions of the lease agreement. The lessees of the Cressy Research Station meet quarterly with the Crown to review the overall management plan of the station. Comprehensive onsite asset inspections are undertaken at least annually,

or are required by other arrangements. Under the term of the lease agreement between the Crown and Upper Murray Seeds, the lessee must provide a production and management plan every five years that allows for annual reviews and addresses requirements relating to the establishment and maintenance of the centre of excellence.

Emergency Services - Protection of Personnel

Mr DEAN question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2:41 p.m.]

My questions relate to the protection of emergency services personnel while attending emergencies on and in the close vicinity of roads.

- (1) The responsible minister previously advised that consideration to reduce speed limits past sites where emergency services personnel were working was taking place.
- (2) Is this matter being progressed; if not, why not?
- (3) If so, what progress has been made?
- (4) Is it expected that legislation might be introduced into this place in the very near future?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Windermere for his question. The answers are -

- (1) Yes, work has commenced on implementing the Government's election commitment to make it offence to pass an emergency services vehicle parked on the roadside with lights flashing at speeds higher than 40 kilometres per hour.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) The work is occurring in consultation with the Road Safety Advisory Council. At its November 2018 meeting, the RSAC members will be consulted on the scope of the regulation amendments and the development of an associated awareness program. This approach aligns with the intent of the Government's election commitment.
- (4) The Department of State Growth is preparing for the remake of the Road Rules 2009 which are due to expire on 30 November 2019. It is planned that the Government's election commitment relating to the passing of emergency services vehicles parked on the roadside with their lights flashing will be included in the remake of the road rules and will come into effect on 1 December 2019. The amended regulations will go before Executive Council prior to this time.

Community Housing Stock Leverage Program - New Homes

Mr WILLIE question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.43 p.m.]

- (1) Can the Government confirm how many new homes have been constructed under the Community Housing Stock Leverage Program?
- (2) Can the Government provide a breakdown of new homes constructed by each community housing provider signed up to the scheme?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Elwick for his questions. The answers are -

- (1) Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-2025 provides a comprehensive approach to prevent, intervene and respond to housing affordability issues to help those most vulnerable to housing stress and homelessness. This strategy is supported by an action plan for 2015-19 that provides \$73.5 million in investment over four years that will see almost 1600 Tasmanian households housed and will be supported by the delivery of over 900 new homes. The Community Housing Stock Leverage Program is one initiative that is part of a target that includes crisis and transitional accommodation, supported accommodation, disability accommodation, community housing, public housing and home ownership options, including affordable lots. As of 31 October 2018, 42 new homes had been delivered by the Affordable Community Housing Alliance Tasmania.

Local Government Ballot Papers - Instructions

Mr DEAN question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms HISCUTT

[2.45 p.m.]

My question relates to the Electoral Commission, the Electoral Act 2004 and the voting papers.

For a decade or longer, requests have been made, motions passed and reports provided recommending changes to these voting papers, including in this place.

Letters have appeared in the media and during the recent local government elections with voting papers as long as your arm, we still have at the top of voting returns, 'Vote from 1 to 32' - that is in Launceston's case and I refer to that as an example only - in bold print and then at the bottom, after people have voted, in small print, a statement telling the voter they only needed to vote for 12 candidates - again, Launceston's situation as an example - for a valid vote.

This creates problems and the first warning to voters is, in my opinion, misleading and wrong. Will the Leader please advise -

- (1) What is the Government's position on this matter?

- (2) Has any work been done on the wording of voting papers?
- (3) If so, what?
- (4) You do not have to vote from 1 to 32 - in Launceston's case, as referred to - at the top of the voting paper. When is this anomaly likely to be reviewed by the Electoral Commissioner as the act does not stipulate that the second notation must appear at the bottom of the voting paper? That is my interpretation of that act.
- (5) It should be included at the top and before voters have voted. Will this be addressed?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Windermere for his question.

(1) to (5)

Section 288(1) of the Local Government Act 1993 provides that the Electoral Commissioner is to prepare and print the ballot papers for local government elections in the format specified in Schedule 6 of the act.

Schedule 6 specifies the current layout of ballot papers, including the advice to voters at the bottom of the paper regarding the minimum number of boxes they must number to have their vote count.

In this way, the layout of the instructions on ballot papers for local government elections is the same as that for House of Assembly and Legislative Council elections.

I understand that the proposal to include advice to voters regarding the minimum number of boxes they must mark at the top of the ballot paper was raised in relation to the ballot papers for the House of Assembly elections as part of the 2016 Legislative Council Government Administration Committee B report on the Tasmanian Electoral Commission.

That report recommended that ballot papers be redrafted by merging the instructions and placing them at the top of the ballot paper to avoid confusion and make it clear that voters have options in casting a formal vote.

Changing the current ballot paper format for local government elections would require an amendment to Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act. The Government recently commenced a major review of Tasmania's local government legislation that will include an examination of all electoral provisions.

The review provides the opportunity to further discuss concerns about any element of the electoral process for local government and test views on potential changes. Any changes emanating from the review would be captured in legislation that will be in place ahead of the next council elections in 2022.

A public consultation paper will be released at the end of 2018 as part of the review process. I encourage anyone who has a view on this or any other matter to participate in that process.

The Electoral Act review announced by the Premier on 3 May 2018 will also consider submissions in relation to ballot papers for state elections.

Mr Dean - I have submitted a report and hope it will be taken notice of.

MOTION

Elder Abuse

Resumed from above.

[2.49 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Mr President, earlier I asked what would be in place if the review and the extension of the Elder Abuse Prevention Action Plan was not in place. That was one of the areas the Government indicated it might not be able to support, or gave as its reason for not supporting the member for Pembroke's motion. My view is that it only strongly encourages the Government to commit to a review and extension of the action plan and then it says to 'take into account' the national plan. We know we do not have the national plan and it will not be available but I still see no reason the Government would not be able to support it. That is for the Government to decide; I certainly will be supporting the motion.

During the lunchbreak, some of the advisors told me there would definitely be an elder abuse prevention action plan even if it does not include a reference that takes into account the national plan.

I am not here to do the Government's work but it is important we have all the information available. So, for my own information and for others, there is an intention to extend the Tasmanian elder abuse prevention strategy. The Government is working on the development plan for the strategy 2018 to 2021. It will be informed by what is happening nationally to ensure consistency. It will take into account what is happening.

It then goes on to say that in regard to (3), the timing is problematic around safeguarding legislation, given that the national plan is being finalised and the royal commission has not yet been established. That is what the Leader had already indicated to the House. I am very comfortable that the original strategy protecting older Tasmanians from abuse will be extended. My concern was that we would not have that in place. I said we need that; we need every protection possible for our older citizens in our state. We need to action that.

I have no problem with supporting this motion. I have a sense of disappointment that we have to be looking at elder abuse as a broader community. It is hard to comprehend from where I sit. I have been to many Council on the Ageing events around the state. I remember very well a wonderful event for the launch of Seniors Week on the east coast at Milton Vineyard, which is now in the member for Prosser's electorate. It is an absolutely stunning vineyard. The cellar door is exceptional. COTA had the launch of - is it elders week? It is something like that. We don't know about it because we are not in that bracket yet. We only turn up as members.

Ms Siejka - Seniors Week.

Ms RATTRAY - It may well have been Seniors Week.

Mr Gaffney - You are having a senior moment.

Ms RATTRAY - No, I am addressing the motion.

That is just one event I recall COTA organised for people around the state to attend. I am sure other members have those launches in their patch from time to time. We know they are well looked after and given information that makes their life so much better. I can only commend COTA on the work it does. I encourage the Government to take on board the points of the motion. I congratulate the member for Pembroke for bringing this motion forward because it is another important area for us, as members, to address on behalf of our communities.

[2.55 p.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, I thank and commend the member for bringing this matter forward, because elder abuse is much talked about in our communities countrywide and impacts on many of us because we have elder parents and relatives in homes and being cared for at home. It is a real issue and problem.

Our elder people are vulnerable and those who go into homes go because they cannot care for themselves and need to be cared for by other people. We trust that when our elderly relatives and parents go into these homes they will be given the treatment and life similar to what they would have had while they were at home. We expect them to be cared for properly and carefully. We cannot accept our elderly people are being abused, and they are being abused and exploited.

Ms Rattray - Sadly, sometimes it is by families and friends.

Mr DEAN - Absolutely, and examples have been given here today of their own family members exploiting and abusing them. It is a sad situation and we have to do everything to ensure they get the proper treatment they are entitled to. We cannot accept otherwise.

It has been made clear when there is a case involving this, in the homes in particular, and you give notice of the fact you are going to go along to a home and do an inspection or an inquiry, that when you get there it is 100 per cent hunky-dory. There was a case in Tasmania, where they gave notice of an inspection and the home met all the guidelines required. However, when they went to the home two or three months later unexpectedly, without notice, they found a lot of things wrong. You cannot accept what you are being told is happening in some of these homes. Sadly, I can give an example and it relates to a very close relative who was in a home in the south of the state. He had not been there long and when family went to visit, he was extremely upset. He was teary-eyed and told his family that two staff had placed a pillow over his face; he said he struggled to breathe and it created enormous problems for him. The family knew something had gone wrong, but they did not know what it was. They complained to management that a pillow had been placed over his face, and the staff admitted it. They agreed they had done it and said, 'It was a joke.' I was amazed they admitted to it. But was it a joke for a man, nearly 87 or 88, suffering from emphysema and breathing problems, having a pillow put over his face? No, it was not.

The report came in and the family should have gone to the police. In this instance, at least the management came back to the family and said that the staff member had been disciplined. The sad

thing about that whole story is that before they had time to remove their loved one from that home, he had passed away from natural causes.

There are many other cases like this. I think there is a certain number of staff to a certain number of residents, but I am not quite sure what those numbers are. I have two examples - one brought to me by way of a written complaint about a northern home where there is one registered nurse per 100 residents. Is that right?

Ms Siejka - I am not sure exactly, but I would think there would be more than that.

Ms Rattray - I would say that could not be the case, but it is a while since I have been involved in aged care.

Ms Siejka - That said, I know there are complaints about the staff-to-resident ratio not being generous enough. I think that number is not correct.

Mr DEAN - I have an example of a home in the north of the state. The lady who has been writing to me has not given me the right to disclose her name, but she wanted me to refer to the case where there is one registered nurse to 100 residents. I know of a home in the south where there is one registered nurse to 100 residents of an evening, possibly the same of a day, but I do not know.

Mr Gaffney - I know a person who works in that sector. At night, there is one registered nurse looking after 85 people. There is one registered nurse but there might be another aide, an EC or EN.

Mr DEAN - If there are required numbers to be present, is there any policing of that? Is it checked on? Are there any inquiries made to ensure there is compliance? If there is not, it really needs to occur.

Ms Rattray - It is part of the accreditation process of any facility. That is my understanding. If you are not accredited, you do not receive the federal funding.

Mr DEAN - It is attached to funding?

Ms Rattray - If they are not compliant with the staff-to-resident ratio, they would not get their accreditation. I find that very disturbing.

Ms Siejka - There are concerns among many that the standard ratio is not generous and could be higher. That is one of the issues.

Mr DEAN - The reason I raise this is that I am aware of another situation in the south of the state where a family found very important medication on the floor of their loved one's room. It was very important medication prescribed by doctors. This person is in her late nineties. The family, on finding this medication on the floor, approached staff and asked them what had happened and the explanation was that they did not have time to check. They did not have time to see if the resident had taken the medication handed to her. They did not have time to wait and make sure she took it.

Some of these elderly people are extremely frail and have memory issues. To simply hand a resident eight or nine tablets, in some cases, and expect them to take all of them of their own accord and do the right thing is pretty ordinary behaviour, to be quite frank. It is not good enough.

We had that press report about one home that did not have time to feed the residents. It is absolutely tragic.

The other thing is that staff, on occasions when they want to bring matters out, when they want to make complaints, are dealt with harshly themselves. I have a case here and I will read out what the abuse was, trying not to identify the person. I will cut in halfway through a lengthy report an employee gave me. She was on a probationary period and at the end of the probationary period she was asked to leave -

It centred around my refusal to routinely wake residents from 5am to commence showering them, despite this being obvious 'Elder Abuse.' (NB. Clearly, if a resident's hygiene is compromised by illness/incontinence, then of course care is implemented but I will not wake a resident who is sleeping comfortably and the ANMF recommends residents not be woken for care before 7am. Modern health care embraces a 'no wake' policy be in place, allowing for normal sleep patterns i.e. NOT task oriented care.)

A staff member is not going to do that. It is abuse if you have to wake an elderly person at 5 a.m. in the morning, to shower them and clean them up. She refused to do this and the consequences are she finished working for that organisation.

It is tragic these sorts of issues are arising and identified; if it had not been for the federal government's royal commission into elder abuse, we would have seen an inquiry into elder abuse in this state because of the number of significant matters coming forward.

It will be interesting to see where the royal commission goes, but I am confident it will raise a number of issues and there will be changes in legislation in relation to homes and caring for older people. We are confident it will happen, and some of us are saying it will be similar to the royal commission on the banks with many issues coming out. We will probably hear some horrific stories coming out of all of this.

I commend the member for bringing this motion forward. It is an important matter, probably one of the most important matters we can deal with here, looking after our elderly people who are entitled to the absolute best care. As members of parliament, we cannot sit back and see some of these things occurring without doing something about it.

[3.07 p.m.]

Ms SIEJKA (Pembroke) - Mr President, I thank the members for their contributions and am pleased to see work is happening and my concerns are shared.

It is sad to hear there are so many stories. While we often hear in the media of stories in institutions and nursing homes, they are also happening in places we do not hear about - behind closed doors in family homes. That is why a motion like this is so important, because this is where the most vulnerable people are. There are many people doing the right thing. My sister works in aged care and there are many people who work really hard to try to look after our elderly

Tasmanians. We should not forget that. There are many more stories we have not heard today and do not come before us. I appreciate the Leader's support on aspects of the motion.

In relation to the concerns and questions, I might go to the member for McIntyre's contribution first. I too, had concerns about a potential gap between the end of 2018 and any new plan starting, which is very much why I thought I should at least raise the matter today through this motion. Also, there is some concern within the sector. I know they have been working with you on this, but I think people would like reassurance about this matter, particularly on something so important.

Ms Rattray - They have it now.

Ms SIEJKA - We have it now, yes. I note an election commitment was made but it is about making sure things are in place. It is really positive this has been acknowledged.

In relation to the adult safeguarding legislation, I understand this is a little bit trickier to support. There are plenty of people doing the right thing, but adult safeguarding legislation is for those exceptions and those people who are harder to protect. Similar to domestic violence legislation where we now have mechanisms to report when people are unable or unwilling to, if they are a victim and it is perhaps their partner, adult safeguarding legislation provides that check and balance.

It is considered a best practice approach. The University of South Australia has done considerable work researching the approach and this has been drawn upon heavily at many levels. The Australian Law Reform Commission recommended that safeguarding be implemented nationally and this has formed part of the national plan recommendation. In all the work I looked at, it was recommended that the University of South Australia's research is the foundation of what would happen and that anything further arising from the national plan would repeat that and would not be anything new.

The Tasmania Law Reform Institute, COTA, Equal Opportunity Tasmania, UTAS and all the people at the symposium recommended and advocated for safeguarding legislation to be implemented as a priority. For clarity, safeguarding legislation seeks to counter the fine balance between a person's autonomy and upholding their rights. It is a significant gap in our legislation. While we need that work done nationally, we need it in Tasmania to match that up. We still need to do that work regardless of whatever happens nationally; it seems inevitable, seeing that is what is happening everywhere.

It provides additional protection for older people in need of any extra protection. It is not for everyone; it is simply to investigate, intervene and protect those people at risk. The motion simply asks that the need to develop it be recognised. It seems to me, based on all that I have outlined, that this needs to be done and it is just a matter of time, so I do not think it is a big ask to support it. We clearly all agree we must do everything we can to protect older Tasmanians, particularly our most vulnerable older Tasmanians. We need to do all that is required and this is required. It seems to be inevitable and this is what we need to do.

That is all I have to say on that. It is something we all agree is important, so I urge you all to support the motion.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION
Select Committee - Establishing Tasmanian AFL Team

[3.13 a.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, I move -

That a Select Committee be appointed, with power to send for persons and papers, with leave to sit during any adjournment of the Council, and with leave to adjourn from place to place to inquire into and report upon -

- (1) The likely benefits to the broader Tasmanian economy and community from having a Tasmanian team in the AFL;
- (2) Whether or not the Tasmanian taxpayer, or the AFL, should subsidise Melbourne-based AFL clubs playing in Tasmania;
- (3) The ongoing support required to sustain a Tasmanian AFL team;
- (4) The possible solutions to the AFL's perception of Tasmania being geographically and politically divided;
- (5) The impact on the aspirations of Tasmanian youth in the knowledge they can only be drafted into mainland teams;
- (6) The impact on the future participation rates in AFL in Tasmania of not having a Tasmanian team in the AFL;
- (7) The optimal time for Tasmania to field an AFL team; and
- (8) Any other matters incidental thereto.

And that -

Mr Farrell, Mr Finch, Mr Gaffney, Ms Howlett, Ms Siejka and the mover be of the committee.

There has been much talk with visitors to this state from AFL House in Melbourne about AFL football in this state, in particular on whether Tasmania should be affiliated nationally with the Australian Football League - that is, playing in AFL competitions.

Whether you like AFL or not, it is a game, like cricket - and other very important sports such as basketball, netball and soccer - that, now it is played by both genders, is constantly talked about. It is played by thousands, watched by millions and attracts huge media coverage. As some say, AFL is Australia. If you go overseas, people talk about AFL football. People in other countries have talked to me about Australian football and how we can play with this strange football. It is a part of our culture.

Mr Finch - Talking about people playing other sports, it was announced the other day that 1 million people play basketball. It is on the rise again. That is a big attractant for young people.

Mr DEAN - Netball has gone ahead like wildfire. In Launceston, in particular, you cannot get a court.

Ms Rattray - You cannot move through Hoblers Bridge on a Saturday morning.

Mr DEAN - I make a contribution to support the clubs. The numbers of people are enormous.

As I said, football employs massive numbers of people. I am not sure of the numbers in Tasmania at this time, but it would be a huge employer, with thousands of volunteers involved as well. If you look at the volunteers involved in AFL in this state, it is amazing.

Let us look at an AFL team. According to its website, Collingwood employs 119 direct employees; then you have all the indirect employees, organisations and companies that feed and deliver off that.

Ms Rattray - Is Joffa listed?

Mr DEAN - No.

The Melbourne Football Club employs 111 direct employees. Once again you have indirect employment on top of that. An AFL side has quite a large employment position.

Tasmania deserves to know where it stands regarding its own AFL team. Until Tasmania can address the perennial issues it confronts, such as the existing north-south parochialism, and to some extent north-west, and can sort out where an AFL team would play, train and be domiciled - its headquarters - it is not likely to be considered for a team.

I do not care how many hatchets the mayors of Launceston and Hobart bury. Sadly, it is not going to fix our current parochial issues when it comes to sport, AFL in particular. It is a sad situation. Those issues need to be sorted out. Also, the financial situation needs to be sorted out as best it can be sorted out at this time.

I overheard Gillon McLachlan, the CEO of AFL, as he was leaving Tasmania earlier this year, following his address about the issue of AFL in Tasmania, say that Tasmania has its own issues to sort out first before it would likely be supported for its own team - or words to that effect.

Ms Rattray - What were they? Did he say?

Mr DEAN - No, he did not, but Michael Fitzpatrick, who is involved with the AFL, addresses some of those issues. I will refer to that later.

Mr Finch - Sort out the issues that they manage, that they run?

Mr DEAN - That is right.

Mr Finch - It is their job to sort it out.

Mr DEAN - It is, but that is not going to happen. It is going to take an inquiry or something like that to get it rolling. Getting a firm position moving forward is what this is really all about.

I believe this inquiry will be in a position to consider many of the outstanding issues, including the level of support for an AFL team - we know support is strong - and, in particular, when might be the right time. Well-known economist Saul Eslake, a fair dinkum Tasmanian to boot, supports this inquiry and has provided some assistance in setting up its terms of reference. He has looked at them and has given some advice as well.

In the *Examiner* online of 14 November 2018, Saul Eslake made these comments -

'What I hope this inquiry will do is get people thinking about whether Tasmanians should say to the AFL, if you don't commit to Tasmania having its own team - with a clear timetable and pathway - then the Tasmanian government will not "roll over" the existing deals with Hawthorn and North Melbourne when they expire,' Mr Eslake said.

'That's why the proposed inquiry's terms of reference, as I understand them, call for an examination of the costs and benefits to Tasmania of those existing deals, and a comparison of the costs and benefits of Tasmania having its own team.'

In this same release, Mr Russell Hanson is referred to and, as the article says, he is a long-time advocate for a Tasmanian AFL team. He is a Lindisfarne resident - I think I have that right - a Tasmanian through and through. Russell has worked closely with me and the member for Rosevears in putting this together. It is probably fair to say that he has been a prime mover in this matter coming before this House.

He has travelled from Hobart to Launceston on several occasions to meet with us and I thank him for the work he has done and hope will continue to do. Mr Hanson is a very learned gentleman, a passionate AFL supporter in this state and a very passionate Tasmanian.

He is not here today. He wanted to be here today, but he had a very important anniversary that he said if he was not to be a part of, and on an intrastate trip, he would probably pay for it in other ways. It must be a wedding anniversary and that is why he is not here today.

The honourable Greg Hall has also been working with us on this important matter. I want to recognise and acknowledge what Greg has done. Members would have heard Greg talk about AFL football and his position on what we should be doing as a state.

Mr Valentine - He barracks for a good team.

Ms Rattray - From memory, if there is a Tasmanian team, he will have two memberships. He said he would not move away from his North Melbourne membership, but he would also have a Tasmanian membership.

Mr Finch - People do that in the north now, probably down south too: they have North Melbourne memberships as well as their own historical club they barrack for, but a lot of people in the north have Hawthorn memberships as well as retaining affiliation with their former club.

Ms Rattray - Evandale, Winnaleah, Scottsdale pros - now Deloraine.

Mr DEAN - Yes, they do. I will just go into a bit of the history and background. It is important to go through some of this. This issue has been going on since June 1990 when Alan Schwab -

some people will remember some of these issues; I do because I am old enough to - the AFL executive commissioner, in a response to the interstate game on 24 June 1990 when Tasmania defeated Victoria - a very important day, one which not too many football supporters would not remember - said that there was a genuine prospect of Tasmania having a team in the national competition in the near future - '1995 is a date by which we'd be realistically looking at Tasmania joining.'

The AFL emerged from the VFL in 1990. The plan, however, was based on the view that football followers throughout Australia are of equal importance, hence the VFL became the AFL to reflect the change in focus from Victoria to Australia as a whole.

It cannot be a whole without Tasmania. The whole process has been hijacked and it appears there is something inherently wrong with the way the AFL currently interprets its position on Tasmania versus its original intentions.

The year 1995 came and went with no Tasmanian team. In 2005, Tasmania's participation rate in Australian Rules Football for men aged between five and 39 was 22 per cent, the highest in Australia. The highest involvement in Australian Rules Football of any state in the country. Did the AFL consider a team for Tasmania then? No, they did not - in fact less than three years later in 2008, the AFL virtually cut Tasmania adrift and now it wonders why the participation rate has dropped off.

The AFL's continued rejection of the Tasmanian AFL team raised significant controversy along the way, with a Senate inquiry launched in 2008, which then AFL Commission CEO Andrew Demetriou and chairman Mike Fitzpatrick refused to attend. Unbelievable, but it clearly shows their attitude of contempt towards Tasmania.

Current CEO of the AFL Gillon McLachlan did, however, attend, but not in his role as the CEO of AFL. The findings of the 2008 report commissioned by the Tasmanian Government regarding the availability of a Tasmanian team in the AFL proved conclusive. Tasmania was ecstatic it had ticked off on the eight key criteria set by the AFL - expecting us to fail, it has been suggested - but nothing has changed: we still do not have that team.

Former AFL CEO Andrew Demetriou said -

They probably deserve a team, we shouldn't dismiss the contribution that Tasmania has made to our game. They are absolutely entitled to put forward a proposal, but the commission has already decided where the 17th and 18th teams are going.

No further comment was made indicating when there would be a Tasmanian team.

Gillon McLachlan indicated in 2014 that Tasmania would be the next AFL team, but it would be a decade - that is, 2024. Right now, there is no time line whatsoever. He further stated on 19 August 2015 at the National Press Club, that 'Tasmania deserves its own team. It just does'. He also told the National Press Club that while Tasmania deserves a club, it probably could not afford it, predicting it would need \$45 million in revenue -

Tasmania deserve its own team, it just does. Their participation rates, their ratings, their attendance, they are as passionate as any state. Their numbers stack

up with Victoria and in my view, they deserve their own team. The brutal reality right now, the economy and scale of growth mean they financially can't support their own team playing 11 games, you need \$45million.

A series of budget propositions were put to the AFL in a submission in August this year, all showing \$45 million is more than achievable, but still no time line for a team. When Mike Fitzpatrick retired as chairman of the AFL commission in April 2017, he made it crystal clear -

- That the north/south issue was a major problem
- That the issue of where the team would be located is an issue and is not solved.
- That if those issues did not exist then we would have a team.

It is accepted we have issues of our own and unless we can sort some of those issues out here, we will never have an AFL team. That is the reason I have moved for a select committee inquiry to look at some of these issues, to have a position to go to the Government and for the Government quite honestly to go to AFL with. If we can go to them and say, 'We have sorted these problems, this is what is going to happen, this is where the team will be domiciled, this is where they will play their games', we will be on the right path to a team in Tasmania.

In the submission to the AFL in August for a team commencing 2027, it was put to the AFL that -

Tasmania is united in its push for a Tasmanian team
Liberal, Labor, the Nationals and the Greens are united.
Add to that a commitment to share the games equally north/south and the problem would be solved.
All of Tasmania has increased benefits from additional games.

The AFL may say where the team is based is still a problem, as did Mr Fitzpatrick. But:

Have an independent review of where the team is based taking into account the logistics, player welfare, economics and the public; and then along with the AFL's ultimate requirements and the AFL's ultimate decision would silence any dissent on this issue.

The review to be called by the AFL and decided upon by the AFL without any involvement from the political scene in Tasmania.

I think that is probably the position. I suspect that if this committee were supported, we would look at that and would make recommendations. Perhaps identifying with an independent inquiry, the AFL would undertake it themselves in relation to where we fit in the scheme of things with a team in the national competition.

Then on 21 March 2018 in Hobart, Mr McLachlan stated -

I would love the state to have an AFL team and in the next 12 months will start deciding whether it does or not.

On the same day, he further stated in relation to the existing Hawthorn and North Melbourne deals expiring at the end of 2021 -

I have given my preferred view about a single team down here but in the context of what we have announced today, that will guide the decision post 2021 about what the right model is. Whether it's a single team for Tasmania or a new licence ... they are the two options.

His reference to a single team being either Hawthorn or North Melbourne, or some other team being the only team playing seven or eight games in Tasmania, is something that has been rejected outright by those two clubs. The other option is a new licence for Tasmania and that is what we want. Now that has disappeared.

On 3 July 2018, the AFL steering committee report into Tasmanian football was released. A Tasmanian team possibility had disappeared. The reasoning behind that is that pathways were fractured and participation rates were too low. That is not surprising with the quality of the games we have, particularly Hawthorn this year.

We had a quick look at the draw, as I suspect most football followers would have done. Let us have a quick look at the draw for Hawthorn and Tasmania at the UTAS stadium in 2019 -

Ms Rattray - They suggested that it is not much of a draw.

Mr DEAN - Not much of a draw at all. With the greatest respect to the teams that Hawthorn will be playing, they are struggling. Their first game is in round 6 on 27 April. It is Carlton, a new team.

Ms Rattray - Exceptional team.

Mr DEAN - Why have we got Carlton?

Ms Rattray - The coach is a former George Town boy who might get a lot of support from Tasmania. I hope so.

Mr DEAN - His parents live at George Town. His father, Lyndon, is quite a good friend of mine.

In my opinion the real reason we have them is because they finished on the bottom rung this year and have been struggling for the last two or three years. I have a son who strongly supports them. Everything in his house is Carlton colours.

Mr Finch - I do not think it is a good example because I think Carlton are on the up and up.

Mr DEAN - I hope they are.

Mr Finch - I have always had a bit of a soft spot for Carlton. By recruiting Brendon Bolton, they are going to help pull a big crowd to Aurora Stadium.

Mr DEAN - You are right when you say they are on the up and up. They certainly cannot go down.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - I think we need to focus on the motion that we are debating.

Mr DEAN - I am. I am voting on the reasons why we need a Tasmanian side here to attract good teams.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - We are arguing whether we need a committee to inquire into this rather than whether we need a Tasmanian team. That is pre-empting a finding of a committee.

Mr DEAN - I am putting this forward for members to look at and identify why we should have a committee look at these issues. That is what I am doing. I am focusing on that. The other games: Port Adelaide - not a good crowd drawing card; Fremantle, exactly the same; the Brisbane Lions are also fairly low on the scale. We are not attracting top-quality, class games. North Melbourne is a bit better off if you look at its draw.

Ms Rattray - I wonder why that is.

Mr DEAN - I do not know, but they have the Swans and Melbourne down here.

When you consider that in 2005 Tasmania led the nation in the participation rate, after being set adrift in 2008 by the AFL things started to trend downwards. Even in 2015, Gillon McLachlan was complimenting them. While the participation rate for Tasmania is now 8 per cent, Victoria is lower at 7.38 per cent, and they have 10 AFL teams. In Queensland, the rate is 4.84 per cent; in New South Wales, it is 3.07 per cent, and those two states have two teams. If you look at the percentage of Tasmanians supporting, it is high.

In Gillon McLachlan's press conference on 3 July 2018, he was asked whether a 10-year-old could one day aspire to play for Tasmania in the AFL. Mr McLachlan was circumspect. He said -

I think they can. ... They can dream to do that, and what we are trying to do is put the building blocks in place today to deliver on a unified, sustainable Tasmanian future that every boy and girl knows they've got a good pathway to the AFL or AFLW.

However, a submission put to the AFL in August this year for a Tasmanian team to begin playing in 2027, almost nine years away, was ignored by the AFL. It is fairly clear that whatever Tasmania does, it will only be for the benefit of the existing 18 teams by way of draft picks from Tasmania, not for Tasmania. Tasmania does not want to hear about our youth dreaming of playing in other states in the AFL. They should be aspiring to play for a Tasmanian team in the AFL. The committee would look at these matters and consider if it is supported.

The other thing the committee would look at is funding. Could the state possibly afford the \$40 million or \$45 million, or whatever is necessary, to field that team? Looking at the financial position, if you look at what the AFL contributes to these clubs, it is quite substantial. The AFL is currently contributing \$24 160 000 annually to the Gold Coast. That is what the Gold Coast gets as the top-funded team from the AFL - over \$24 million. If you go to the very bottom side of funding, Collingwood and the West Coast currently get \$10 610 000 each. All the other teams fit in between the top and the lowest teams I have referred to. If you look at the Gold Coast's \$24 160 000, that is a big start and a big part of what this state would need to fund an AFL team.

There are 10 teams in Victoria and two teams in each of the other mainland states. It is alarming that the state that receives the lowest funding for its two teams is Western Australia, but it receives \$22 880 000 and also gets 22 home games. Yet Tasmania has to pay \$5.5 million to have two

Victorian teams play only seven games in Tasmania. Four million dollars of the \$5.5 million goes to Hawthorn for four games, and the other \$1.5 million goes to North Melbourne.

The funding table also shows that in 2017 the Gold Coast Suns received the most. If you look at where they finished in the competition, they finished last the first year, then 17th, 14th, 12th, 16th, 15th, 17th, and this year 17th again. They are struggling.

On 21 September 2018, Chris Fagan, a Tasmanian coach of the Brisbane Lions and also one of three Tasmanians in the AFL steering committee, said that a team was discussed in the committee. A Tasmanian team remains the AFL's long-term goal, but it will not be through a nineteenth licence.

The CEO of AFL Tasmania was on ABC Radio's *Statewide* on Wednesday, 4 July 2018. He responded to questions about Tasmanians wanting an AFL team. It was not on the steering committee's terms of reference, about which he was challenged. Why not? As clearly, that is what all Tasmanians want.

I am putting forward this information to show why we need a committee, why somebody needs to look at these issues and why a firm position needs to be put forward to get what we are entitled to - our own team in this state.

This is interesting. The TV rights to football in this country are \$2.8 billion - that is for broadcasting. We are talking about a huge amount of money. When you look at all this, no-one really knows where the truth lies. The statements about Tasmania for the last 28 years are of a condescending nature and full of false hope.

Again, I urge members to support this motion so that we can start to look at some of these issues and bring these facts out with a clear position to move forward with. We have all heard about the steering committee that recently took place. I do not think I need to go into that in any more detail.

The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition both backed a Tasmanian team, as did Tasmanian state and federal MPs, whether Liberal, Labor, Greens or Nationals. The Senate in June 2018 backed a motion made by Senator Steve Martin that said the Senate -

... expresses its support for the establishment and inclusion of a Tasmanian team in the AFL and AFLW at the soonest feasible opportunity.

That Senate inquiry did not look at all the issues we are confronting and that is why we have to have something in place to do that.

A number of football greats around this country are supporting Tasmania for a team - Leigh Matthews, Mick Malthouse; Nick Riewoldt; Chris Fagan; Kevin Sheedy; Graham Cornes; Matthew Richardson; one of our own, Alastair Lynch; another one of our own, Jack Riewoldt; and another one of our own, Rodney Eade. All of them have stood up for a Tasmanian team. Mick Malthouse and Graham Cornes have called for the Gold Coast to be relocated to Tasmania. Many journalists are behind this as well.

My position is that Tasmania needs a select committee to resolve the issues I have raised here today as well as issues that have been talked about forever and a day. I do not need to repeat them; members are clearly aware of them. This committee would look at those issues.

While Tasmanian taxpayers continue to fund Victorian clubs, the AFL uses it to divide us and it puts our team further and further away. The member for Rosevears might cover this more, but we are the only state in the country where taxpayers are funding AFL football games in their state.

I commend the motion to members and seek their support for a select committee.

[3.46 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I congratulate the member for bringing this matter forward for discussion, but I am possibly not going to be the favourite committee member after I make a brief contribution.

I was approached by the member to be a member of the proposed committee. I said yes because if you are a member of parliament part of your role is to be involved with committees, whether you are for or against them. You are preparing a report for this House and the other place to consider. I have had some experience with football as a player, a coach and an administrator so it is a place I am familiar with.

I informed the member when he asked me that I do not support a Tasmanian team in the AFL competition for a variety of reasons. That is my personal opinion and to his credit he said, 'Perhaps, member, that is a good reason for you to be on the committee because you will have an opposing view to some of the others and I appreciate that'.

However, putting my personal point of view aside, I do not support an inquiry into this and will briefly say why.

First, committee work is expensive. Second, I am not sure who this inquiry is for, whether it is for the AFL Commission or whether it is for the Tasmanian Government or the government of the day. None of those has obligations to take on board any of recommendations that would come out of the inquiry report. I do not think it will have any impact at all on the AFL Commission. It firmly stated its case - as the member said, 2027.

There may need to be a committee to look into what would be the best way for Tasmanian football to prepare a submission to the AFL about where this should be, but it needs to come from the football fraternity, and the businesses and private corporations that might be interested.

This is not the place for that type of inquiry. In saying that, any committee that looks into any issue in this place should not have a preconceived position about what they are going to put forward.

Our role is to actually draw information from a whole range of sources and present recommendations. It should not be able to say, 'This is why we need this team'. We should not make those sorts of statements because people will say, 'They have already made up their mind what they are going to do'.

I understand and appreciate why the member for Windermere has brought this forward. It needs to be discussed but even though I would look forward to being part of that committee if this motion is passed and would work really hard to make certain it has positive outcomes, I will not support this matter going to an inquiry.

[3.48 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I reiterate the comments made by the member for Mersey.

When I read this motion initially, I felt the clear question is: who is this trying to influence? The Government has clearly said it would back a Tasmanian team. The Opposition has said that. The AFL has made it really clear what its views are, and I do not think a rocket is going to change them. The member for Windermere's contribution on this issue was really emotive and has much value in getting these points across and identifying the challenges, the issues and the fact that so many people back it, which we all know.

Saul Eslake has been out there for a long time. I have reservations about a Tasmanian team. I am a Kangaroo supporter and paid-up member and I go to games when I can. I am also proudly a foundation member of the North Melbourne Tasmanian Kangaroos women's team and hopefully I will be going to the two games in February. I encourage all others to go.

This issue is not a parliamentary inquiry matter. There is little benefit to be had and, as the member for Mersey said, there are costs associated when potentially the Government cannot really respond. They can respond and say they agree we should have our own team, and then what? I accept a lot of taxpayer money is going into football in Tasmania. The Hawks always get a very good deal; it is a bit of a secret how much the Kangaroos get.

I have a couple of questions I hope are answered this week. I sent them in 10, 11 or 12 days ago, and I am sure someone is listening in the Leader's office who might see fit to answer them. When you read the TT-Line annual report, members will see why I am asking these questions.

There is Consolidated Fund or Public Account money from the taxpayer to Hawthorn, a sponsorship deal through TT-Line with the Kangaroos, different issues, different ways of supporting it. Even if the direct financial support funding deal with Hawthorn were not renewed by the Government, we could still see TT-Line or another GBE arrange a sponsorship deal with another team. If you want to sponsor a team to bring people across to Tasmania for games, it makes sense to sponsor a Melbourne team or a team going to have to get across that bit of water one way or another. Some use the plane, some people use the boat, and they can offer deals in various ways.

I think the issues raised and the contribution made by the member for Windermere is a motion debating why we should have our own Tasmanian team. In some respects, it pre-empts any findings of the committee, because a decision has already been made by, not just the member for Windermere, but a whole heap of people who are listed, including the Government. I do not see the value in an inquiry. I commend the member for putting the information he has on the record. He could send that to Gill and see what he has to say. I do not think it is going to change his mind, as much as a committee report with all the time extents and effort that is required to do that - I do not think Gill McLachlan is going to hold that in high regard.

If the Premier cannot convince him, I do not think a parliamentary committee report will have much hope. The Premier has been very vocal, and I commend him on his actions because he has not been shy in backing away. Good on him.

I do not think this is the best use of taxpayers' money and resources, because it takes a lot of resourcing from this place to resource committees. There is certainly value in them, but the benefit from the debate about this issue is as effective as a committee inquiry but it will cost a whole lot more and take up more time and resources of members and staff in this place when a committee's report is to the parliament, not to the AFL.

[3.54 p.m.]

Mr VALENTINE (Hobart) - Madam Deputy President, I apologise for not having a coat on but it is very warm in here.

Mrs Hiscutt - I am happy for the member to have his jacket off.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - Just before the member proceeds, I am Deputy President. If anyone wants to remove their jackets, feel free. It is very hot in here.

Mr VALENTINE - Thank you. I read this with a degree of interest. I see there are a couple of components where you could provide some answers by digging deeper. I question a couple of them as well, such as (2) -

Whether or not the Tasmanian Taxpayer, or the AFL, should subsidise Melbourne based AFL clubs playing in Tasmania;

It is a bit of a policy question. I do not know how you would arrive at a position, effectively saying that you had enough information to be able to form an opinion.

'The ongoing support required to sustain a Tasmanian AFL team' is something that could inform the Government when they come to consider whether they would be willing to support an AFL team. 'The impact on the future participation rates in AFL in Tasmania of not having a Tasmanian team in the AFL' is a bit of a "crystal ball". I do not know how you would come out with a solid finding on that.

'The optimal time for Tasmania to field an AFL team' is something that is possible. I think there could be some learnings there. 'The possible solutions to the AFL's perception of Tasmania being geographically and politically divided' is something you might be able to get some extra information on that could inform a debate.

'The likely benefits to the broader Tasmanian economy and community from having a Tasmanian team in the AFL' - I presume we would be collecting a lot of information associated with our current involvement with the mainland teams. If they are generating a certain level of interest and a certain level of turnover, you could decide what the multiplier effect of that is and how you might see that translating into a Tasmanian team.

Out of the eight, three or four would be difficult to come to any useful conclusion on. I think some parts of it would be worthwhile. I do not know if that helps the member in his thinking. Maybe it is just a bit broad and narrowing it down a bit might be something that could be of benefit. At the moment, I cannot support it the way it is, but that does not mean that you might not come back at another time with a different set.

Mr Dean - Unless you wanted to move amendments.

Mr VALENTINE - I suppose it is possible, but I would like to take a little bit more time to absorb it. Thank you.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - I would like members to know that the air-conditioning problem has been addressed. You should notice the difference within about 20 minutes or half an hour. Hopefully, it will start to improve for members who are feeling a bit hot.

[3.58 p.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Madam Deputy President, I think this is an interesting debate; although I have not been here for the whole time, I have been listening to the contributions from my office.

I am not sure whether there should be a Tasmanian team, I admit that. Sometimes I think yes, sometimes I think no. I have concerns about having two AFL teams in Tasmania because I am sure that the Government will not continue to fund two teams. Not wishing to sound parochial but I always feel that sometimes when it comes to the north or the south, the 'centre of the universe' seems to win and it seems to come south.

Looking at the questions raised by the member and the fact that Saul Eslake and others are supportive of this, I take on board the member for Mersey's interesting comments. It is really good that you would be willing to be on the committee as someone who is not taking a side but obviously had reasons for thinking it should not go ahead. I have been weighing up whether I will support the committee, mainly because, when I look at it, I am not sure whether we should have a team.

It would be good to get any information that can help make this clearer in our own minds and to get answers to some of these questions. I also support the member for Hobart - we might not be able to get an actual benefit from all these questions, but I think we can for the majority of them.

If we could get some information that made it clearer we could get an understanding of whether it is possible or viable for Tasmania to have its own team. Whether anyone takes notice of it now or in the future, it would be good to have the information. That is what we are all about here: finding out about things and getting as much information as we can so that when we make a decision, it will be an informed decision.

I have appreciated listening to the other members' comments, and I have weighed up whether I will support it or not. I am leaning more to supporting it rather than not supporting it, so I will give my support to the committee.

[4.01 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Madam Deputy President, I thank the member for Windermere for his comprehensive contribution on this. As the Government has consistently stated, Tasmania should have a team in the AFL. Tasmania is a football state with a proud tradition of producing champion players. Some of them in the past have been Matthew Richardson; the Gale brothers, Brendon and Michael; Royce Hart; and Darrel Baldock. Currently there is quite an array of younger players coming on.

Mr Dean - The twins from Devonport, I cannot think of their names.

Ms Rattray - Febey.

Mrs HISCUTT - At the minute over there playing are young Mihocek, Robbie Fox and Maverick Weller - they were three boys that all went to school -

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - A lot of these were babies I delivered, I might say.

Mrs HISCUTT - They are babies that my babies went to school with, so there you go. There is also Jeremy Howe, Jack Riewoldt, Aaron Hall and Mitch Robinson so there is truly an array of

Tasmanians playing, and the AFL is not a truly national competition without a Tasmanian team. Our view is that the AFL should provide Tasmania with a clear pathway to achieve our goals of having a team with our own in the national competition.

The Government has been clear in our position of the welcome and support we have of those who share in this goal as Tasmania continues to build the case for it. We still have four seasons remaining on our existing AFL deals which deliver strong social and economic benefits to the state, but those deals will not, and should not, limit our progress towards building the case for our own teams.

The Government believes a select committee inquiry would help to inform and build Tasmania's case for an AFL team. Madam Deputy President, we support the establishment of the inquiry and we look forward to its work.

[4.03 p.m.]

Mr FARRELL (Derwent) - Madam Deputy President, I too have been asked by the mover to be on this committee. While I am happy to be on that committee if it gets up, I too share some concerns - which the member for Windermere may be able to answer in his reply - about what can realistically be achieved by this committee.

This discussion about an AFL team in Tasmania has gone on for a long time. It has broad support in the community, but without some broad support from the AFL, it is going to be something that never ever happens. The present Government and previous governments have all championed AFL teams, and that is right at the top of executive government, to try to get something happening.

It is going to be difficult to find out many of the details. A number of questions have been asked in this place over the years about the Hawthorn and the Kangaroos deals. I do not know if an inquiry of the Legislative Council will be able to get that information. I am a little concerned that we may go through an exercise, spend many hours and a great deal of effort and not get some of the answers because that is very much what the track record has shown. I do not know how much longer we persist with this: if the AFL is not keen to support a Tasmanian team in the national competition, it is not going to happen. Football has been very important to many communities around Tasmania for a long time and it was only in the 1980s when Tasmania had a very strong state football league that it seemed to be a natural progression for people to go on and play in AFL competitions.

The member may remember those heady days from your time as a football broadcaster of some repute. The whole scene has changed considerably since then; there are now many more sports being played in Tasmania. Is football the right sport to put the money behind or is basketball? Soccer is also another sport becoming more popular.

I imagine the member would like to have the committee hearings over the summer period and finalise it at some time; we have not had an indication but perhaps it could be mapped out to see what time we would need to put in. There will also be the expense, if we need to talk to the AFL, of getting people concerned with that organisation to speak with if they wish to do so. This is jumping in head first into a fairly intense inquiry as per the terms of reference. I do not know if there is a way to see if it is worthwhile starting off a little more lightweight and seeing how far you get.

I seriously doubt we are going to come out of a round of inquiries with solid facts and figures. The benefits to Tasmania - we all know people come over to watch football and we are told about what it generates, but there has never been a dollar figure put on that. There have not been any figures provided to us and I note one of the terms of reference is to look at what the ongoing costs are. There is certainly a lack of information; as the member for Launceston said, it is something a lot of us do not know much about because there is no information out there. The question I kept coming back to was whether this inquiry is going to be the vehicle to find that out and what we can actually present at the end of the inquiry's time.

Having said that, I have been on other committees where I have had had similar reservations and we have uncovered some quite good information because of the way the Legislative Council conducts inquiries. I am taking on board what other members have said. I have thought about this over the past non-sitting weeks, and the more you think about it, the more questions you have. It is whether those questions can be sufficiently answered by a Legislative Council committee.

Ms Rattray - Doesn't the AFL stump up the money for a team? They initiate a team into the competition and then put all their money behind them, so they cannot fail. Isn't that what they do?

Mr FARRELL - That is what they have done, but it depends - it is different horses for different courses. Where AFL identifies it wants to expand, it gives a lot of support. In Tasmania, it primarily has Government support.

Mr Gaffney - While you are on your feet, I have a question. Hopefully the honourable member will pick up on it. One of the things the AFL has said is that until Tasmania gets its house in order or whatever, there will not be a team.

My concern in going to this committee is: does that mean we have to decide where the team is going to be based? How is that going to work for us to get our ducks in a row? That would be much more than just a committee of six from this place deciding if it is going to be played in Launceston, Hobart or Campbell Town, because that is the middle of the state. I am not sure a parliamentary inquiry has the expertise and the people to say where a team from Tasmania should be based and how it should be funded. That is one of the concerns I have. I am not sure if we are going to satisfy AFL conditions.

Mr FARRELL - I do not think that is a question I could answer here. I think wherever this inquiry goes, it is always going to end up in a collision of sport and politics in Tasmania. You could say it depends where the treasurer or the premier of the time comes from as to where the state league would be based, but that would be being cynical so I would not say that.

So, I have a few questions there. I know that our inquiries always come up with some answers, but whether that balances up with the pretty big questions we have here concerns me a bit.

[4.12 p.m.]

Mr FINCH (Rosevears) - Mr President, I am going to be pretty much all over the show with this.

I am a bit like-minded about the questions, about the history, about what is happening in football at the moment; the questions that have been raised by the members who have already spoken and my own personal experience of course - an old Sandy Bay family - and my own involvement with junior coaching and administration over many years and the highs and lows that

you get with that involvement. It is sometimes good and sometimes it is absolutely shocking - the way we have seen football develop and opportunities come and go, sometimes riding high and sometimes down very low.

It is a bit of a moveable feast in respect of the state of football in Tasmania, but generally from what I have seen - and you might care to comment on this later, member for Windermere - is that our trajectory in respect of football is going down as far as the future of Aussie Rules in Tasmania is concerned.

Mr Valentine - What about women's? It is going the other way.

Mr FINCH - That is a different point altogether. I can come to that if you like. I will just make a note of it here while I go all over the show.

You must remember I was on the board of the Launceston Football Club. We had an approach from a group that wanted to bring a women's team to the Launceston Football Club. Mark Thurlow and I said -

Yeah, fantastic, great. What night do you want to train? How do we go about getting facilities? How are you going to play? Where are you going to play? What are you going to do about uniforms? Do we need to help you there? There will be a lot of social interaction at the club.

They were gobsmacked. They nearly fell off their seats and we said, 'What's the problem?' They said, 'We have been to North Launceston and we have been to South Launceston and they were not in the slightest bit interested.' Yet we saw the golden opportunity to help. They were burgeoning. It was growing. Then I think there were only two, three or four teams playing around Tasmania. It was all being cobbled together.

So, I am a supporter of that progression in our football. But as I said, my trajectory for football in Tasmania, having been part of the administration that watched for the last 12 years, is on a downward spiral. We have gone from one plateau; that is mucked up so we go to that plateau. That is mucked up; we go to that plateau. Always doubling back. That one; we will try this. That is mucked up; we will go here. That is mucked up. That is what I have seen. That is my frustration showing in football. I want to try to be the glass half-full sort of person and say, 'Maybe there is a way to halt this'. When Gillon McLachlan came to Tassie recently, I thought, 'He is here to muster the troops and to provide good ideas.' It was not all that positive. Some of the feedback was pretty ordinary - a mixed response from the most influential people at local level, state league club presidents. With one official stunned, our own AFL team was left off the grand plan. Craig Martin from North Hobart said it should have included an AFL team as the end goal. He did not suggest a time line. He said -

I am disappointed there is no road map for Tasmania getting its own AFL team. I think most Tasmanians are disappointed about that. These were not a set of conditions that other parts of Australia had to go through to get their own team, so I don't understand why we are expected to go through these sort of conditions to get our team. I find that a bit hard to get my head around.

That was his response.

The Launceston president, Sandra Boland, was surprised the AFL previously said there was no more money, so TSL clubs should not bother asking. Only for Mr McLachlan on that trip to then produce an extra \$1.4 million for other projects. That leaves administrators shaking their heads and saying, 'What the heck is going on here?' One minute no money, do not put your hand out or your begging bowl even though you are scratching around trying to make things pay. Then, all of a sudden, 'I am here to make you feel better, here is \$1.4 million.' Why was that not there initially to help us through the rough patches, or to help us work our way into the future, before we end up with a situation where it is crisis time?

North Launceston's Thane Brady said -

I'm disappointed that we had the opportunity right in front of us. This looks like when Gill McLachlan arrived in Tasmania all he had in his pocket was some crumbs off the table, \$1.4 million for programs that should have already been in place. There is no growth for the TSL, or plan to bring a North West team in, so I am not sure how we can show we are VFL-ready in 2021 when the AFL won't invest in the North West, in terms of the TSL. That is totally inconsistent.

On that subject, what a disaster, what a debacle to have no team from Devonport, no team from Burnie. The north-west coast - kids ...

Ms Rattray - It used to be the powerhouse.

Mr FINCH - The powerhouse. The great players that have come from the north-west coast and the great competitions that have been run there -

Mr Gaffney - If they are good enough, they still go to the AFL and play. The competition is going to strengthen because Devonport and Burnie are back into the local competition. Statewide they may suffer, but the north-west coast will get stronger, they will be prepared.

Mr FINCH - Yes. But if you are running a state competition, a state league, you cannot have a competition without the north-west coast being represented. My frustration is starting to show because I remember when we were establishing the statewide league - was it this one or the last one? At Launceston, we were great advocates for Ulverstone to be included because of tradition - it was the heartland of the north-west coast. Straight through the schools they developed their players. Have a look at the premierships that were won at all levels and how it was part of that north-west culture. I do not deny Burnie the opportunity in the way it cobbled its team together to make a future out of north-west coast football. If we were looking for a North Hobart in other parts of Tasmania, well you would go to Ulverstone, where we were not able to pull them across the line or help them in their thrust to be part of the statewide league. We could talk all day about opportunities lost and things that might have been done that might have made a difference. I can see from the points I have made that not everybody was impressed with the visit by Gillon McLachlan, who probably felt he was going to make some inroads and get a warm fuzzy feeling with what he was suggesting for Tasmania.

I will just look through my notes here because there was some mention of Max Brown. No. To come back - inquiry members do not dictate the terms. The point you were making, member for Mersey, was that you felt the inquiry members do not have the expertise. When is that ever part of an inquiry - that the members should be the be-all and end-all of the decisions that come out of the inquiry? That is not the case. You call on the experts to give you the advice.

Mr Gaffney - I think you misinterpreted what I was trying to say. The member said the AFL wanted Tasmania to get its house in order. If you think this inquiry will get our house in order, it is not going to be even close, because we do not have the people to make those decisions.

Mr FINCH - But inquiry members do not dictate those terms. We see what evidence comes in. That might not get any traction because people say that it is impossible to judge or contribute. No, that should not have been in the terms of reference. I made a note when you said inquiry members cannot dictate the terms on these things. That was the note I made.

Mr Valentine - Some of them can inform debate.

Mr FINCH - Yes, it is up to the people who come forward. This is the point. This is why I have always been interested in the discussion taking place because I see this as an opportunity to give people a chance to speak about their feelings, about their thoughts, and put that on record. We have it dealt through the media and all that sort of thing, but this is a way to focus on what people are feeling, those who have the knowledge, history and opinions to put forward. This is a way to do it - through to state Government. It might fall on deaf ears with the AFL. It might just put the blinkers on and say, 'We are not going to listen to this talk coming out of Tasmania'. But at least our Tasmanian people, who have put us here, will have the opportunity to express themselves and say what they are feeling at this time. That is what I think it is. This inquiry resonates with me. It is giving our people the chance to say what they think.

Go to 99 per cent of Tasmanian and say, 'What do you think about this?' They all have an opinion. They can all talk of yore and what had happened and the people they went to see when North Hobart played Sandy Bay. They will always talk about that history. They all bemoan the fact that we are not where they would like Tasmania to be.

This is a chance for people who are strong on opinion to come to the inquiry and express those opinions. In that sense it is a good idea to have the inquiry. The other thing, of course, is that if you talk to other people in the know, the grand plan is for North Melbourne to be the team in Tasmania, and as for Hawthorn - the AFL wants them to scoot back to Melbourne. Hawthorn has come right financially; from some discussions I have had, North Melbourne has come to Tassie, and they are right financially now.

That is what we are representing in Tasmania - it is bring down your basket case. St Kilda, bring down your basket case, we will sort you out. As soon as St Kilda were back on their feet, away they went. That is the way we have been used in the recent decade. Is that what we want? My thought always was that North Melbourne, had they been encouraged enough, would go to the Gold Coast. They had that beautiful facility to play in, supported by the AFL. They were still thrown - it would have been a cash splash to North Melbourne and there would have been the vacancy for an eighteenth team that could have been from Tassie.

But, oh no, it was about this Gold Coast Suns - and every sport that has tried to establish on the Gold Coast has eventually been shown not to succeed. Gold Coast people are a different breed altogether. You do not get the support you get from other areas of the state and they are not an AFL location, not like Tassie. For Tassie, it was our culture, heart and soul.

Ms Rattray - It is league up there, isn't it?

Mr FINCH - Rugby League, yes.

You talked about employment opportunities, member for Windermere. I remember once having a discussion with the director of sport at a school, talking about that conundrum for private schools between promoting academia and promoting sport within the school and trying to give it some sort of balance so that the young people are involved in sport as a recreational and physical activity but also have a focus on academia. My argument was that some are not going to be academic and that sport could represent their future.

I was pooh-poohed over that: 'No great future in sport.' I said, 'Hold on, Collingwood, one football club in Australia, has 90 people on its staff.'

Mr Dean - Collingwood has 119.

Mr FINCH - One hundred and nineteen now. Try to tell me that there are not opportunities in sport - well, you people would know that sport is a great focus for people's futures: physiotherapists, masseurs, administrators, coaches, trainee coaches, all of those sorts of people. It is a great employment opportunity that could be part of this future with an AFL team in Tassie.

I want to go to Martin Flanagan - 'Oh yes, you pull out the obvious one' - but Martin Flanagan is from the north-west coast of Tasmania, he has played football here, he developed City-South and he is a great observer of AFL football per se; he has written some terrific stuff about football and made some great observations.

I want to quote from a speech here, though I am not sure where it was given. I think it was given in Melbourne but I will have to track that down for *Hansard*. He talks about his football journey but then he says -

I knew Tasmanian football in Tasmania was in serious trouble four years ago when I went to Hobart and the sports report on the evening news led with soccer - not EPL or A League but local soccer. Tasmanian soccer had replaced Tasmanian football as the dominant sporting story. This is not unrelated, I believe, to the fact that Tasmania has had only one single draft pick in the past two years. The power of Tasmanian football as a dreaming is much diminished. Four years ago, when I started asking around, I found to my disbelief that the Tasmanian Statewide League had been unable to secure a financial sponsor. Clubs were struggling to get sponsors for individual players. This was at a time when, back here in Melbourne, the AFL was congratulating itself on the fact that it had secured a record sum for broadcasting rights to the game. How, I asked, could this be happening at one time, such extremes of poverty and wealth within the one game, the one culture?

The answer is that the game has evolved into two very different cultures. Those at the top talk in terms of branding and product and market share, the language of corporate culture. The culture at the bottom was best described by Glenorchy Football Club president John McCann when he said two years ago that the ecosystem of Tasmanian football was sick. He was right on two counts - he was right that it was sick, and he was right that the grassroots game, that growth of more than 150 years, is best understood as an eco-system. The AFL and those around them talk about 'the industry'. If football is an industry, it is at the most basic level a primary industry, but everywhere I go in Australia, I hear the same - that industry is struggling.

Anyway, he moved a toast - 'Ignore grassroots football at your peril' was his closing line. That is what we are dealing with in Tasmania. It is about our grassroots football and the fact that it has not been treated very well over the years in the way it has been developed.

Max Brown lived and breathed Tasmanian football and he is now close to being too embarrassed to even talk about the health of the sport, such is its current state. He said that he had been alarmed at the health and growth of soccer on the coast, while football, a sport that has fought more with itself, has suffered. 'If we are going to fight, we should be fighting against rugby and soccer, but we've fought with ourselves', Brown said. That is just another observation that came my way through looking at what people are thinking and feeling about this situation.

As I say, most of my feedback has been that people would love to see an AFL Tasmanian team. Is it a pipedream? I think it is still worth testing. It is Chinese water torture. I think it is still worth persisting with it, but letting the AFL know that once we go lame - once we say, 'Yes, righto, let's go into a second-rate competition in the VFL. We will pump the Mariners back out to a full team. It should never have gone to a part-time team. It should not have gone to six or eight games a year, that just threw the kids all over the show. It threw the clubs all over the show. It was a shocking decision to do that.

Mrs Hiscutt - Is that not the path that AFL Tasmania indicated it wants us on? This VFL -

Mr FINCH - Yes, but why did they muck around with it before?

Now we are reinventing the wheel and going back to a representative team in a VFL-type competition. We left that before. It was a debacle; it did not work. I would probably sheet a little of the blame back to administration of that whole process so that it did not end up the success it might have otherwise been. That is what I am saying about the trajectory. This plateau, down to that plateau, down to that plateau we go. And here is our next iteration.

Mr Valentine - Isn't there a danger if this does not receive a lot of input from people that it might actually cruel.

Mr FINCH - Honourable member for Hobart, when we were here everyone supported it. When we came down to here, everybody supported it; when it came down to here, everybody got on board. Then, all of a sudden, all of the volunteers, administrators and grassrootsers for football are all down here and saying, 'What the hell are we doing? I am fed up with this. I am being kicked from pillar to post. We are getting nowhere'. Away they go; they have gone. The heart and soul of football are out the back door. Think of the Esk Association, think of all the associations - district league, amateur league, West Tamar Association, East Tamar Association, Deloraine Association. The list could go on and on. Where have they gone? Where have their administrators and volunteers gone? They got fed up.

Sure, there are other reasons: the lack of young men in rural areas and bigger opportunities in the city for jobs and that sort of thing. There are a lot of different factors.

Ms Rattray - Fly-in, fly-out.

Mr FINCH - Yes, a lot of different factors.

I did not want to call on that as a strong part of my argument but that is what has happened: volunteers, the women's auxiliary, presidents and boards were all fed up with the way they had been treated. That is very frustrating. It was very frustrating to watch and also to be a part of. As administrator, you did not know if you were Arthur or Martha. What was going to happen next? What is the next iteration? The time we put in at Launceston to develop the state league was horrendous. We formed a subcommittee with some of the best football brains in Tasmania. There were six or seven of them, plus me.

We gave our heart and soul to come out with the best state league we possibly could achieve in that reiteration of a state league. Where has it gone? Bzzzzzzzz. Down it has gone again!

Ms Forrest - How is a committee going to fix all this? With a coin? What's the point?

Mr FINCH - I am going to make it, if you would listen.

The history is that people are sick of all of these ideas and new iterations. They have all failed all the way along the line. What we need is a grand plan. There is no grand plan in what Gillon McLachlan brought to Tasmania. It is a game of bandaids and temporary measures.

Ms Forrest - If you have an inquiry that says, 'Yes, we want a Tasmanian team' and he says, 'Go away' -

Mr FINCH - No. Were you listening to me earlier when I said that it is about Chinese water torture? We have to keep going at this. Once we fold and say that it is unachievable, we are going nowhere, our kids are going to play basketball, our kids are going to play soccer, the other sports are coming to take over our territory, which was once our culture - well, of course, bang!

Mr Gaffney - As long as the kids are playing sport, it does not matter whether it is football, soccer or basketball.

Mr FINCH - I think you are dealing with a different subject.

Mr Gaffney - You brought it up.

Mr FINCH - What I am saying is that the kids will go there rather than to where we think there is an opportunity for Tasmania. The opportunity is to have a team in the AFL, developing our history that goes way back, developing that culture in Tasmania - hello, being part of Australia.

Mr Gaffney - There is no national Tasmanian basketball or soccer team. Yet kids are going there so you cannot just use the national league to solve the problem.

Mr FINCH - Wait a moment. If the AFL reneges on it and says, 'It is all too hard in Tasmania; they are all divided. They have no money in Tasmania' -

Ms Forrest - An inquiry could confirm that. Then what happens?

Mr FINCH - Then you have confirmed it. Everybody could stop bellyaching if you could confirm it. That is the role we play here on behalf of our constituents, on behalf of the Tasmanian taxpayers. Let us work that situation and see what we come up with, what is suggested, then we can stop the bellyaching.

Mr Valentine - Would it not be the role of government to test that rather than the House of Review which reviews what government does? We are doing the Government's work in a sense, are we not?

Ms Forrest - The Government has already said it supported that.

Mr FINCH - The Government supports the inquiry. They want the answers, they want to have the information in their kitbag when they go to argue.

Mr Valentine - Why aren't they doing the work to get that information? Why are we doing that work for them? It is a fundamental question

Mrs Hiscutt - I think the Government has done a lot of work.

Mr PRESIDENT - The member for Rosevears has the podium at the moment.

Mr FINCH - It is interesting to hear the different comments and where this might go.

I am a little more frustrated about the process we have been through over the years and where we have got to at this stage. I have got to the stage where I am venting my spleen a fair bit and not remaining as constructive as I would like to be. I still feel that there is an opportunity on a lot of fronts for Tasmania to come into the federation, to come in to what we should have in Tasmania with our history. It has been neglected, mismanaged and maladministered. That is why we find ourselves in the position we are in.

Let us look at the history of the players we developed and the quantum of those players who went from here to the mainland.

Mr Dean - And what they do for Tasmania.

Mr FINCH - Absolutely.

We have only to look at the money that the AFL has put into the Gold Coast Suns. We are green with envy. And the money put into GWS. Where have they gone? GWS might be a little more successful, but Gold Coast Suns is costing more and more money in an area that does not have the culture Tasmania has. If the AFL were to support this, there is a situation coming up with the television rights and whether that is going to be of the quantum it is now or be lesser. I hear varying reports on where it is going to be.

Mr PRESIDENT - It is \$2.8 billion at the moment.

Mr FINCH - How does that compare with what is on the table now?

Mr PRESIDENT - It was \$1.25 billion and is now \$2.8 billion.

Mr FINCH - In case the person who made an offer to me to chair the committee is wondering where the money is coming from, I think the answer is there. There are new broadcasting rights, new landscapes that can unfold for AFL. Will it benefit us in Tasmania? Have a look at what bringing St Kilda, Hawthorn and North Melbourne here has done for our economy. It has been fantastic during the winter, boosting the economy at those bad tourism times of the year, giving us

a good focus and publicity from having the magnificent grounds, particularly Aurora Stadium. It was a revelation for the mainlanders to see we could have facilities of the standard of an Australian competition.

Mick Malthouse, a triple premiership coach and yet another high profile AFL personality, threw his support behind the plight of Tasmanian football. He suggested Tasmania is abundant in football talent and is crying out for an AFL team. If we neglect grassroots football, abandon the plight of Tasmanian football, if we ignore the struggles of country football, we effectively strangle our game of the most important ingredient - the players. Those comments are coming all the time from commentators.

Mr Valentine - With those eight parts to the inquiry, do you see they are all valid things?

Mr FINCH - Number (5) would cause a few concerns for me - the impact on the aspirations of Tasmanian youth in the knowledge they can only be drafted into mainland teams. If you have a chance of being drafted anywhere, you are not going to bemoan the fact we do not have a Tasmanian team for you to play in. You are going to want to play at AFL standard, but how good would it be to have the opportunity to aspire to play for your team? Remember, over the years the pride people have in the map of Tassie with the big T in it and the colours of Tasmania. It would be fantastic if they were able to aspire to that. I think that one is nebulous.

The others I went through - the benefits to economy and community - absolutely. Whether Tasmanian taxpayers or the AFL should subsidise Melbourne-based AFL clubs playing in Tasmania is a moot point, and opinions need to come in on that. You can then have the AFL's and the Government's opinions. The ongoing support required to sustain the Tasmanian AFL team - who in the football community is not going to want to support and go and buy a membership? As we said before, you would have your membership for your historical team and then you would have your membership for Tasmania to help support Tasmania.

I can see it being a really strong membership. They are talking about these 100 000 membership clubs, and you do not have to buy full membership now. To be a member you can actually buy a membership for three games, for \$50. In other words, you can be a member for \$50, it will get you to three games and a lot of people only want to go to about three games in a season, but the point is they are counted as members. When we look and say, 'Richmond has 100 000 members, Tassie is not going to pull 100 000 members', no, but we are going to be able to get on the same playing field in respect of the types of memberships. Every Tasmanian is going to pay \$50 for a membership and then that resonates with your sponsors and with your people who financially support, that we have the numbers. We have 10 000 Hawthorn supporters - where do they come from? Nearly out of thin air! There were not that many Hawthorn supporters before Hawthorn came to Tassie. It is probably more up there, about 12 000 supporters.

What is the possible solution to the AFL's perception of Tasmania being geographically and politically divided? Let us talk about it, let people give us their opinions - 'No, that is a furphy, bull!' That is okay, let us get that opinion - the AFL can look at that, but this is not going to be the solution. Others might say, 'Yes, there is the opportunity for the people up at Oonah or Winnaleah and people down the Huon, people over on the east coast and the west coast to be linked in a common bond'. That might be what the social demographers would say.

This is going to be a good thing for Tassie. It has never happened before. The impact on the future participation rates in AFL in Tasmania of not having a Tasmanian team in the AFL - what I

am saying about that is that we are going down, down, down. If we keep going down without any positivity, the kids are going to go elsewhere. Kids are not going to play football. It is not going to be in schools. There is going to be no glory in playing Aussie Rules Football or being involved in Aussie Rules Football, so I think it will just to keep going down.

As for the optimal time for Tasmanians to field an AFL team, I mentioned about the new contract for television rights and that could be an opportune time. It might be that Tasmania bites the bullet, grows a spine and says, 'Okay, we are not going to fund AFL teams playing in Tassie, it is penny-ante; it is not doing the right thing by Tasmania; let us not have football.' We might have to bite the bullet for three or four years until that new contract is signed and money becomes available for Tasmania to have a team.

The Gold Coast Suns - what if they folded tomorrow? They are down the gurgler as it is and struggle, struggle, struggle to keep the players and the people there connected; they are pouring millions and millions of dollars into it - why not just give it a miss? Put a team in Tassie where the culture is and rebuild Tassie's football on the back of holding to an 18-game competition. It does not need to be an 18-team competition; it could quite easily be 19 teams.

You can see that as I go down the list, I am comfortable with those there. I did not have a hand in drafting those terms of reference. The one about Tasmanian youth is the only one that concerns me. Anyway, thanks for the opportunity to vent my spleen. I will support the motion.

[4.48 p.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, in summing up, I will endeavour to answer the questions. I will answer the questions not thinking that these are the answers; I will answer the questions because if you think, you obviously do not know. I will not be using the word 'think'. If I have missed your question, please raise it with me so I make sure I cover it at that point.

A question was raised by the member for Mersey and others about not being sure who this is for or what the inquiry is about. The inquiry would be about informing the Government on a number of issues that are clearly very much up in the air at this stage and are areas concerning AFL. It would provide the Government with the position of Tasmanians. I hope the committee would get interest from around the state, and I am confident it will. A number of people have already contacted me about it; perhaps they have contacted other members as well. I am confident witnesses will be coming from around Tasmania and putting their position forward.

It informs the Government on a position that it can take to the AFL, so it can say that we have had a statewide parliamentary inquiry and coming from that inquiry is this evidence. If the evidence is clear that we cannot afford an AFL in this state at this time, that we cannot have a position on where our team will be domiciled, where it will be geographically located and where it is going to be played, then so be it. That is the finding a committee would make.

The member for Mersey was saying, on the committee making these findings, that every committee makes findings on the evidence given to it. It should not be findings the committee, for some reason, does not want to make of its own volition. The committee will make findings on the evidence provided. In this instance, if the evidence came in to say that we cannot determine where games will be played, or where the headquarters will be, that would be the finding of the committee. The committee would say the state is still divided, and the evidence the committee has received strongly identifies that a conclusion cannot be reached. That would be it. It would not be what the committee might think.

That is what all committees do on any inquiry they undertake. I could go into the blueberry rust inquiry, or the irrigation inquiry or all of the other inquiries we undertake. It is not our position that we want to put forward to the Government - it is the evidence we have received and the findings and recommendations that have to be supported. How often do we say when we are making a finding that we have to be able to support this on the evidence given to the inquiry? I am always saying that. We have to be able to make recommendations based on the evidence provided to us. The evidence has to be in the file, in the background, to support it. That is what it is about.

I thank all members for their input, whether it was for or against the motion. My position is that I strongly support AFL football and believe we should have a team in Tasmania. The member for Mersey said that I have a preconceived position. Well, I do not. If the inquiry got up, as a member of the committee - I am not saying I would be the chair of that committee, and any member of the committee would be available for the position and would do a good job. So, not necessarily me there at all. The member for Mersey told us he has a preconceived position. He does not support an AFL football team at this stage in this state. He has a preconceived position. You all have situations and positions, but at the end of the day this is about the inquiry and the evidence given to the inquiry. I am not going to go near the grass.

I think I have answered the member for Murchison's question as who was trying to influence the Government and the AFL at the end of the day.

Ms Forrest - I do not think the Government needs influencing. They are strong supporters.

Mr DEAN - No, but the Government needs to be able to go to AFL, or who else is going to go to the AFL?

Ms Forrest - Why would they not do it of their own volition with the information they have?

Mr DEAN - The AFL has said there are a number of concerns in Tasmania. One is: where will the games be played? I mentioned in my contribution that they raised a number of other areas they are concerned about. I will go through them again.

Ms Rattray - Was that getting your house in order?

Mr DEAN - Yes, getting the house in order. They have raised these issues as real concerns for them. So, if an inquiry came back with evidence that will satisfy or not - it could change, and if evidence comes back we cannot satisfy, so be it. If we go to the AFL or the Government with the evidence that we are in no position to proceed with an AFL team in the foreseeable future, so be it. That is on the evidence to be provided. We are already on the radar of AFL. We are already there. The AFL is giving a lot of thought and consideration to Tasmania and to Tasmania fielding a team in the AFL national competition - we are already there. What an inquiry would do is keep us there and would make the AFL consider and think about it. I do not for one minute think the AFL would sit back and take absolutely no notice at all of what is going on in this state. It would take notice. Why would it from time to time come across here and talk to us about AFL football, where we are going and what we are doing? Why would it still be interested in drafting people from Tasmania if it had no interest in AFL football in Tasmania? It does have an interest. We are on the radar. This would keep us on the radar. It does exactly that. I would ask members to consider supporting this motion. As I said, I am not pre-empting what a committee will find. I do not know what evidence will come. I can assume some evidence might come, but I am not pre-empting what it might do.

The terms of reference - the member for Hobart went through the terms of reference and the member for Rosevears covered them. I probably need to look at them again. Much thought went into putting these terms of reference together and a number of people, including Saul Eslake and -

Mr Finch - Tim Lane?

Mr DEAN - I think they were also provided to him. I am confident they were and a number of us were sitting around the table. Greg Hall was there at times looking at them. They were put together by a number of people to satisfy what was believed to be the situation a committee should be looking at, or trying to get some evidence on. Having said that, if the inquiry is supported - as it is - committee members would take notice of what has been said in here today and would say, 'We do not need to look at that term of reference; I do not think it ought to be in there', and we could come back to this Chamber - as I think is the course we would have to adopt - to ask for an amendment to the motion or to the inquiry. That could happen.

Ms Rattray - Would it not be easier to take it out now?

Mr DEAN - You could, but I would not like to take them out unless I had spoken to Saul Eslake and some of the other people who have helped put it together. If I take something out, they may well say we have stopped bringing in evidence relating to this matter, although there is the capture of 'any other matters incidental thereto', they would be incidental thereto.

If members were saying, 'I do not like that term of reference and I cannot do it now', I would say the committee would look closely at what has been said here. It would look at those terms and say we do not think we should pursue that course. I do not think it will assist or support the inquiry in any way.

Ms Forrest - Don't you run into the problem like you did with the gun inquiry, where you had specific terms of reference agreed by this House, and you have to come back to the House to adjust your terms of reference?

Mr DEAN - It did, yes.

Ms Forrest - You would have to come back.

Mr DEAN - Yes, sure, I have said it would have to come back. It would have to come back to this House simply to have them agree to those changed terms of reference. You are right, it is not unusual. It has happened to me before in this place.

Ms Forrest - When?

Mr DEAN - I am saying I am reluctant to make changes on the run without consulting with all the parties and people involved in this. I would not do that. I do not think it is the right way to proceed. I think the member for Mersey raised the issue of where we decide games will be played and he might have mentioned Campbell Town. No, the committee does not decide at all.

Mr Gaffney - No, you said - and repeated it - that one of things the AFL said is that we do not have our house in order.

Mr DEAN - That is right.

Mr Gaffney - Therefore, in doing this report one of the expectations for us, or from you, because you have made that comment, is that we would be saying where the games would be played or where would be the home of football in Tasmania. I want to know if one of the aims is to solve AFL's concern we do not know what we are doing in the state and stop the parochialism because you need to make a choice over Launceston or Hobart. I want to know if there is an expectation that we recommend where it will be played and where the home will be.

Mr DEAN - That is a concern of the AFL. It has raised that as a real concern. There is no issue about that - no ifs, buts or anything. The committee would make a recommendation or finding, or both, in relation to the evidence it gets.

I am just going to mention that it could happen. People could say, 'Clearly Hobart is the capital city, clearly Hobart is where the team should be based'. Very clear. That could be the finding of the committee based on all of the evidence it gets from professional and senior people and others. It could also add that every other game would be played in the north of the state at UTAS Stadium. They would play 50 per cent of their games in the south and 50 per cent of their games in the north, with training to take place at the oval where the game is to be played that next week. That could be on the evidence provided to the committee.

But the evidence might well be all over the place, with the committee not being able to make a finding on it. The committee would be bound to make the finding on the evidence it gets. At the end it might have to say, 'Tasmania is undecided on where the game should be played and where the team should be domiciled'.

Mr Valentine - Could that not be the damaging aspect of it?

Mr DEAN - It could be, but we have to accept that. There is a risk with any inquiry you take up as to what the findings will be. If we knew those now, we would not need the inquiry. If it were abundantly clear to everybody where they would be played and so on, we would not be going down this path. I should imagine the AFL in Melbourne would probably say, 'Tasmania has a clear position moving forward. All we have to determine now is when we will bring them into the competition.'

They are not prepared to do that based on the evidence and information provided and what Gil McLachlan, Michael Fitzpatrick and others have said. They are not prepared to do that. That is a concern for them.

Mr Gaffney - You said you had a number of people outside of the committee members look at the terms of reference. Were any of those people current AFL Tasmania officials? Has AFL Tasmania been involved with the terms of reference? That would be a group that would be more in tune with some of the feedback they have had from AFL Australia. Has anybody from AFL Tasmania been involved in the terms of reference?

Mr DEAN - That is a good point you make. To my knowledge, no, but I do not know.

I am confident they have not. I know that Saul Eslake, Tim Lane, Russell Hanson, the member for Rosevears, Greg Hall, myself and I am not sure who else - no, I cannot say that they were involved in any way at all. I do not know.

Mr Gaffney - If that is the case, is there an issue that AFL Tasmania might have a term of reference? If we are looking at the future of an AFL team in the state, is that an area that needs to be discussed or can we discuss it at a later stage? Do you know what I mean?

Mr DEAN - Yes, sure.

Mr Gaffney - They are the main players in the game from Tasmania's point of view.

Mr DEAN - You are right. Absolutely, it would matter. I do not know but I assume that if the committee were supported, the committee would be writing to AFL Australia -

Mr Finch - First cab off the rank.

Mr DEAN - to determine from the AFL whether there are concerns the committee should be considering. I suspect if evidence came out - I am not quite sure how it could - that the terms of reference might not be able to capture, the committee could come back to this place not once, but two, three or four times if it wanted to, to seek amendments to the terms of reference.

That was a good question from member for Mersey. That is the best way I can answer at this stage. Are there any questions I have not answered that I can answer? Do not make them too hard. I think I have gone through most of the questions. I urge members to support this inquiry. One member mentioned the time that our staff have to put into these things. That is the same with any inquiry. We move many inquiries through here and we take up inquiries where staff are there to support us moving those forward. They are always there. You can say that we are wasting staff time, and you can say that for a number of other inquiries we have done, but that is not the case. As one member pointed out - I think it was the member for Derwent - a lot of the inquiries were a bit suspect but good evidence and information came forward from them. I am confident that would be the case here as well. One way or another, some of those concerns would be satisfied. We are on the radar; this would certainly keep us there and would keep the AFL looking very closely at Tasmania and where we are. This would be a statewide inquiry. I urge members to support the motion.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Consideration and Noting - Select Committee on Tasmanian Irrigation - Final Report

[5.06 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Mr President, I move -

That the final report of the Legislative Council Select Committee on Tasmanian Irrigation be considered and noted.

It is my pleasure to be able to speak on the final report of the Legislative Council Select Committee Inquiry into Tasmanian Irrigation. In doing so, I acknowledge the members of the committee - Hon. Ivan Dean MLC; Hon. Greg Hall MLC, who was Chair of the committee until 28 January this year; Hon. Craig Farrell MLC, Deputy Chair; Hon. Leonie Hiscutt, Leader of the Government; and myself. It was almost a copy of the Legislative Council Select Committee on the

Dairy Industry in Tasmania, with the addition of the member for Windermere. We were very pleased to have him on board.

Tasmanian Irrigation is a state-owned company that develops, owns and operates irrigation schemes in Tasmania; it is governed by a board comprising five independent non-executive directors. It was formed in 2001 when the Tasmanian government dismantled the Rivers and Water Supply Commission and merged its two entities - the Tasmanian Irrigation Development Board - TIDB - and the Tasmanian Irrigation Schemes - TIS - into TI.

TI certainly has an extensive portfolio that it manages and assets in excess of half a billion dollars. We are talking about significant assets there: 25 dams, 38 pump stations, three power stations, including assets in construction, 1042 kilometres of delivery pipeline, and 992 outlets.

From that alone, including 979 active irrigation rights and 732 delivery rights through TI, it is no wonder that Tasmanian Irrigation is such a vital part of our landscape in Tasmania, particularly for the delivery of water. The delivery of water has come to areas that in the past had not seen the benefit of reliable water, particularly through the summer months when Tasmania can be extremely dry. It certainly has generated opportunities that have unfolded for TI.

The first stage of irrigation development, tranche 1, delivered nine irrigation schemes - approximately 75 000 megalitres of water - to a potential area of 133 000 hectares. The schemes were Dial Blythe, Great Forester, Lower South Esk, Midlands, Upper Ringarooma, Whitemore Sorrel, Kindred North Motten, and Sassafras Wesley Vale. In the second phase, tranche 2, five schemes were approved and have been completed or are under construction, with the Scottsdale Irrigation Scheme recently put out to tender. The tender has been allocated and work will begin soon. There will be a combined capacity of 28 000 megalitres for those schemes in tranche 2, with the potential to reach 82 000 hectares.

Tranche 3 is on the cards, with 10 potential irrigation schemes statewide. We certainly have the support of the Tasmanian Liberal Government, which has committed \$70 million towards the third tranche of irrigation schemes. It will be looking for support from the federal government to roll out those schemes or explore the opportunity.

Water development in Tasmania has been a crucial part of agriculture. I note from a recent Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association media release that it fully supports the latest submission to Infrastructure Australia to be on its national priority list. They called it 'the pipeline to prosperity' and it is the third tranche of the irrigation schemes developed in Tasmania. They went on to say it would be vital infrastructure for the state's agriculture sector and would add to the opportunities that water development has played in the agriculture scene in our state.

It is well supported not only by the Government, but by farmers in our state who have put their hands into their pockets to fund their part of the obligation, under the rollout of water development. That has been significant and was touched on in the report.

One of the big issues the committee found was the ongoing management of the schemes. Once a scheme had been established and a local area management group put in place, there were a number of management groups who would like to take control of their scheme. They raised some issues with the committee. On page 6 of its report, the committee noted that the 2011-12 TI annual report reported its statement of corporate intent as -

The principle purpose of Tasmanian Irrigation as outlined in the Members' Statement of Expectation prepared by the shareholding ministers is to undertake the following:

- Develop own and operate irrigation schemes in Tasmania and where feasible and appropriate, to facilitate local community management of these schemes.

It was noted that TI's 2016-17 statement of corporate intent had changed to the following -

The principal purpose of Tasmanian Irrigation is to develop, own and operate irrigation schemes in Tasmania, in accordance with sound commercial practice, for the purposes of facilitating the expansion of agricultural production in the State.

The intent had changed from a focus on facilitating local community management of these schemes - and obviously those corporate intent statements are valid - to taking away the focus on facilitating local community management of these schemes. It was raised through the committee process and the committee went about trying to address those issues because it was something we thought was an important component of the inquiry.

I am not going to read every one of the findings, but I will pick out some of the main findings from the report. Everyone has the report available. I will not read word for word any of it. The success of TI was acknowledged in the findings. Considering that it was only established in 2011, as I said in the brief history, it is expected to take time to continue to evolve. It is a significant public-private partnership model. As I said, private individuals are investing heavily in publicly owned irrigation infrastructure, including future maintenance. There is strong support from those who are accessing the water.

TI works on a full cost recovery basis, including the cost of staff administration, which is built into annual fees. There is always some contention around whether those fees are excessive or not. But when you have a corporation like TI, the people who work in that corporation have to be paid and there is also expertise that comes with an organisation like that. We have to acknowledge that there were some costs that TI considered were being addressed to bring down some of the costs of the running of the schemes. That is a work in progress. I will talk a little more about that when I talk about the appendix to the report.

The TI schemes will provide 95 per cent reliability. That was a requirement of the Commonwealth to be able to provide the funds through the water delivery. That is certainly the basis. Every scheme had to have that 95 per cent reliability. That was a key to any scheme getting off the ground.

The post-farmgate sector has invested significantly and the reliability of water is an important factor. It stands to reason that the water will boost agriculture productivity, and that has been the case. We have seen crops put into areas where we have not seen them in the past, particularly through the Midlands area. Other areas of the state that have not had reliability of water in the past are seeing something different in the way they farm now.

We have talked a great deal about the Meander scheme in this place for many years, until it was up and going. The cost of \$1100 per megalitre has become the benchmark. The cost of the delivery is approximately \$485 per megalitre. As we know, that is a significant amount of money.

The Elizabeth Macquarie Irrigation Trust was one of the irrigator local area management groups that was very keen to continue to control the management of this scheme. It is working extremely hard and meets all the statutory requirements. It does it at a lower cost than some of the others. It is a bit of a benchmark for self-management.

Self-management, in the view of the committee, means that access to water provides flexibility to irrigators. If there is self-management, you have people on the ground who have a direct interest in the supply of water at any given time and it is in their interests to make sure that everything runs as smoothly as possible. It is not a perfect world; there will always be issues, but generally that is the finding of the committee.

We talked about the statement of corporate intent. It had changed and that was something that concerned the committee because those local community management groups are very keen in a number of cases to be able either to continue on with the management or to take management of those schemes so they have local input.

We also talked in one of the findings about the fact that if the water continues to be more expensive - and it is heading up \$1400 a megalitre - developers or owners of property will potentially look at other private schemes if they perhaps have some on-farm water storage to bypass TI, so that has to be considered.

For tranche 3, this will be a key component, because if the water becomes too expensive, it will not be cost-effective for them to undertake. The tranche 3 schemes are the more difficult and expensive ones and may have trouble getting off the ground. We have to make sure we keep the balance, so that it is cost-effective for farmers to undertake and to buy into a scheme, but also to be able to get a return back for their investment, because borrowing \$100 000, \$110 000 or \$150 000 for water is no small feat.

Some schemes have not had full uptake and have some available water entitlements. In the Dorset area, which I know well, the local council took up some of the water rights to make sure the scheme was across the line. This was a fairly bold move for a local government area, but they felt that had the council not put up some support for the water rights, the scheme may have failed to pass the post. It was a bold move, but it was supported well by the community at the time. I am not sure whether other communities would be in a position to do that. A number of areas in the third tranche have been identified, but I am not sure whether they will have the broader community support.

It was also a finding of the committee that the Tasmanian Irrigation Board was not representative of its customer base. We felt there should be more customer-based input onto the board. I trust the Government is taking that particular recommendation on board, because you really need to have on-ground input into the board to make decisions that are going to affect producers.

The water costs are not consistent across schemes and that was one of the concerns because some consumers believed they were subsidising other schemes. As I have mentioned, you start off with the Meander Dam at \$1100 a megalitre, which is the benchmark, and then some of them are more expensive. Whether there is cross-subsidisation or not, it all depends on the input and output costs as well to make sure they can be as cost-effective as possible.

We put in the findings that TI had been negotiating more favourable terms with Hydro and TasWater, and I feel sure this will be very much appreciated by any of the users of the system. This

information was provided towards the end of the inquiry. As the inquiry went on and some of the issues were raised, TI provided the committee with a significant document, an appendix to the inquiry, for responses to statements made during the inquiry. I acknowledge the work TI did during the inquiry. That was one of the findings we were able to add into it as we worked through it: that from what they had heard through the inquiry and reading the transcripts, they had been able, and were continuing, to negotiate better prices for those who are using the water assets. I congratulate them on doing that.

Members will see 25 pages of responses to statements made during the inquiry. These were certainly significant, and for every one of the questions put forward - down to the statement made by someone representing the Winnaleah scheme -

Winnaleah wanted to increase the pipe size, Tyco advised this would cost around \$500 000 but TI advised it would cost \$1.5 million.

They outlined the response and got down to the end where it says -

Outcome of the meeting - WISL and TIDB agreed that the compromise had made a significant difference in the hydraulic performance of the scheme.

Of course, the Winnaleah irrigation scheme farmers who take water from that scheme would have preferred a larger pipeline, and they fought pretty hard to try to get that, but at the end of the day a compromise was reached. Sometimes the outcomes are the art of compromise, and in this case a compromise was made. Those sorts of issues were raised right throughout the inquiry and as you will see from those 25 pages of responses TI was very astute in what it did and what it provided to the committee.

Other concerns raised during the committee process were somewhat responded to and actioned before the committee had even completed its inquiry. Some would say that it was an excellent outcome that the committee was established. I again acknowledge the work of the former member for Western Tiers, Greg Hall, whose initiative this was. TI was able to take on board the issues raised and deliver on some of those aspects of concern to irrigators and customers of TI.

Moving back to the findings, I touched on the corporate expertise within TI and making sure we can hang on to that expertise for the next tranche. That is one of the issues that TI is facing: when schemes come to fruition and are completed, the people who have the expertise in that area possibly move on and are looking for other opportunities. Being able to hold that expertise within Tasmania is a challenge for any organisation. TI acknowledged that it was one of its significant issues but that there is a huge benefit in being able to retain that corporate expertise, particularly with tranche 3 on the drawing board and hopefully being able to be realised into the future.

There was some criticism about the corporate costs TI worked under. It also addressed this in its responses to statements. TI has significantly reduced corporate costs. Further cost reductions in its view are anticipated as it continues to look at ways to bring costs down, particularly regarding the ongoing management of schemes. I doubt very much whether the cost of water per megalitre will come down, because tranche 3 mostly comprises the more difficult water schemes to develop and therefore the cost may well be in the upper echelons of pricing.

Another issue brought out through the committee process was that information is not publicly available from TI and other schemes regarding water allocations, volumes and water flows. These

are really important for irrigators. It is certainly a recommendation the committee wanted to put forward in regard to making the information more available. We know now irrigators have the information on their phones; they are technically savvy. There are not many irrigators of my dad's vintage running their farms. They have handed them over to their much younger, technically savvy family members who know how to operate and work with technology. It is certainly a big change for many of them, and to have that available information on your smartphone is really important.

The committee made five recommendations; and the reason there is such a small number of recommendations - and other members of the committee may well agree - is because TI had been proactive: it had acknowledged there were some issues with its organisation and communication with customers and that it needed to improve as soon as possible. TI did not wait until the committee had arrived at its final report because, obviously, we had an election and, of course, that stalls things around this place. By the time the committee was reconvened and back to its work, TI had taken the opportunity and initiative to address a number of the issues raised. I believe that is why there are five key recommendations. There could have been more recommendations had TI not been proactive and taken the initiative, as it did in section 2, Responses to statements made during inquiry, and acknowledged, particularly on the reduction of corporate expenses, that this was certainly a big issue.

Mr Dean - Gold-plated it was.

Ms RATTRAY - That is right. It was gold-plated. That was the reference - we were rolling out gold-plated schemes. We want them to last for 100 years, yes - but do we need gold-plated? No. Because at the end of the day, we are asking farmers, landowners and developers to stump up. The recommendations on page 11 -

The Government -

1. Facilitate a clear pathway for each scheme to determine its own future, whether this be:
 - self management
 - a hybrid model using the resources of TI; or
 - management remaining with TI.

Again, I want to expand a little bit on this. Self-management will not suit every local area management group. That is not a desire for every group. We heard clearly that there were some schemes that were comfortable with TI. Obviously, they want to know it is managed well, efficiently and cost-effectively. They want to know all those things. They want to have input into that management. That is where the communication part comes. If the lines of communication are open and there is that two-way communication between TI and the groups that look after the members of the scheme, they might well be comfortable with that arrangement.

We know self-management needs good governance structure in place. We know it needs commitment by the irrigators/farmers. We also know it needs the expertise to do that. To take on that self-management is no small feat. Anyone moving down the self-management path will have to ensure they have all those things in place.

I suggest, Mr President, that it is in TI's interest to support those groups through that process. They might even get to the end of the process and say, 'We are not sure that it is for us after all'.

There might be a strong will: perhaps half of the group are very keen to have self-management and the other half think, 'I am not sure about this; I do not have the time. I do not have the expertise or the commitment', but that is up to those groups to decide.

That is where I think TI has a really strong role to play. It has the expertise, it knows what it takes. I believe that it should be walking through that process with those groups. As I said, they may well come out the other end and say, 'No, it is not for us. We do not think we are in that space'. But if they are, they have all the support around them. There was the intention - and it was understood by many of the people who took part in the schemes - that they would eventually get self-management back. As I said, the corporate statement of intent did change from 2011-12 to 2016-17. It took out 'facilitate local community management of these schemes'. The focus did come off but that was always the intention in the view of many of them.

The hybrid model is using resources of TI, which has the expertise. It is already managing the schemes. To have a hybrid model where you have some self-management and some TI support might well suit some. I expect it probably will.

This could be a very good corporate exercise for a good corporate citizen: to be able to work with these schemes and to be able to facilitate the best possible management of the schemes. We have suggested there are three different ways it could be undertaken. TI has a role in each one of those. It is important and it is in its interest to make sure that these schemes work well, otherwise it will be a reflection on them.

The second recommendation is to 'ensure that irrigator groups remaining with TI have the opportunity to provide input into the management of their schemes'. Therefore, there needs to be that line of two-way communication, not just a one-way street. Not 'you will do ...'; no, it is 'How can we work together to provide the best outcome possible for all users of the scheme, and that benefits the whole community?' That goes hand in hand, 1 and 2.

Recommendation 3 was -

Facilitate local community management groups, together with the means for smaller schemes to pool resources, for example, to share the costs of a business manager.

The Cressy scheme does it really well. We found during the inquiry process that they have been able to work with their irrigators and they have a business manager who looks after the business side of things. There you have a model that works, so why not take the best of it and roll it out to other schemes where it is applicable? It will not suit all, but it may suit some, and there is that opportunity for smaller schemes to pool resources. They will need some expertise and some support, and here we have a way of supporting each other. The agricultural community is very good at supporting each other. I talked about that in the Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority this morning, about when they go to field days. They are happy to chat about what works and what does not work. That is how you get the best outcome for everyone.

Recommendation 4 was -

Ensure that TI continues to be transparent, accountable and responsive to its users, including making all relevant information publicly available.

I touched on the fact that some of the information irrigators need to be effective and know what is happening is not publicly available. It is available - TI has the information, but it just has not

shared it with the irrigators. That is a very important part. It helps TI in its role if it has that transparency and accountability, and is responsive. Again, it is that line of communication where you can ring up and find out what is going on. If it is online, you can pick up your smartphone, you can put in the website and find out the information. You know how much flow there is, you know what is available and when it is available, you know when the irrigation season starts, and you know what time it finishes. It is important to have allocations, volumes and water flows. That is the main crux of the irrigation water available.

Last, but equally important, is a review of the TI board membership with a view to making it more representative of its customer base. Again, I get back to the fact that you need somebody who is a representative of the user groups to be part of that board so that they can put forward, 'No, that is not going to work; I know that because I am part of this scheme and this is how it works for us' - that sort of thing. We have boards with expertise, but unless you are actually looking on that smartphone and working out your allocation, your volumes and your water flows, and having those engaging conversations with TI through that process, you might not necessarily know what is the best way forward for your customers. It is all about customers because they are the ones who pay.

It is on a full cost recovery basis; the customers are the ones paying for the full cost-recovery. Once your customers cannot pay, you are in trouble. That is when governments have to step in, and we know how difficult it is for governments to continue to have to step up and try to support different businesses and industries facing challenges. We need to make sure that in this case we support all those customers and do what we can.

It is not an extensive report, but it is an important one, and we certainly acknowledge the work that has gone into the report. We have our rural girl, inquiry secretary Natasha Exel, who heads up into the southern Midlands, again the member for Prosser's electorate, as often as she can, and also the executive assistant, Allison Waddington. They have been exceptional in their work on this inquiry. I acknowledge the work of all members, but particularly acknowledge the valuable contribution of former chair of the inquiry Greg Hall whose interests in both this matter and the broader agriculture sector continues to be of great benefit to Tasmania. I know he is working very hard and still has a strong focus on the agricultural sector. It is his passion, it is his livelihood, and he will always take a strong interest in it. I will leave it to other members to make their contributions. I hope I have not stolen too much of the areas they were going to address. I tried to cover the overarching points.

There are two appendixes to the report, and the other document was responses to questions from the committee. TI not only picked up on the committee questions we sent off to them, but also responded to the information coming in through the transcripts and inquiry process. TI must have spent a lot of time looking and working through the report. Again, I acknowledge the significant work of all members and particularly the former member and the chair - I thank him for bringing forward the reference and being part of the establishment of the committee. It was always valuable information and I truly believe TI has better communication channels in place. I do not say they are perfect, but certainly from the time the inquiry commenced to the time we finished and reported, there were some significant improvements in the way it was dealing with its customers through the rollout of irrigation schemes and water development in this state, which is so important for our agricultural industry. I note the report.

[5.48 p.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, I would have been disappointed had TI not made changes on the evidence coming in.

Ms Rattray - Often changes do not come until after the report is made. I was impressed they came during the inquiry process.

Mr DEAN - That was good to see. Our check person here picked up this inquiry partway through and went along without any concerns or hiccups at all and that was good. Former member Greg Hall initiated the inquiry and brought it forward, and I want to acknowledge his position and his involvement in the earlier stage. He chaired a number of meetings with evidence -

Ms Rattray - Right up until January.

Mr DEAN - It was a good inquiry and it brought out many issues, but I still think Tasmanian Irrigation has a way to go.

Numerous issues were raised by water consumers. I know the member for McIntyre has raised some of these issues and I will probably go over some of them again, and I do not apologise for that.

Numerous issues were raised by water consumers, the farmers, concerning the cost of water. Differences in cost, the handing over of the management of schemes, and questions were being asked on what was perceived to be a top-heavy management structure in Tasmanian Irrigation. Tasmanian Irrigation was also being referred to as a gold-plated business which was seen as being unnecessary and at a cost to consumers. The word 'gold-plated' was referred to by the CEO. She used that term at another stage. I will refer to that in a moment.

On 7 December 2016, during GBE hearings into Tasmanian Irrigation Pty Ltd, I was involved in a number of exchanges with the minister, Jeremy Rockliff, and the CEO, Nicola Morris. I did not impress those people too much. I did not impress them much in this inquiry as well.

Ms Rattray - As a member of the committee, you are entitled to ask tough questions.

Mr DEAN - That is the point I am going to make.

It is not at all wise to shoot the messenger. I learned very early in the piece not to shoot messengers. I learned to find out what they are doing and why they are raising issues, and the reasons for that. That is what was happening in both the GBE where I conflicted with others and in this inquiry, where I conflicted to some extent.

I brought forward questions, information and evidence provided to me from users and customers of Tasmanian Irrigation. I was bringing forward information and evidence from employees within Tasmanian Irrigation. I was not manufacturing them; they were not issues I was raising. It is sad at times. People jump off at the deep end and do not consider why these questions are being asked.

In 2016 concerns were being raised regarding the cost of water and cost increases. At that time, the take-up of water usage across all schemes was about 70 per cent. Farmers on the scheme wanted more effort put into selling more water rights as that meant more people to share costs which ultimately would reduce costs for all consumers. In the same GBE hearing, I challenged the minister on the perception held by users and others that Tasmanian Irrigation was a gold-plated system and users were paying for it. This was disputed. The minister talked up the need for

infrastructure and tendered that the last 100 years had been good and of a high quality. Nobody would contest that; that is what we all want, good quality infrastructure.

Ms Rattray - Some wanted bigger pipes.

Mr DEAN - You are right - they did.

The CEO then became involved and said selling of the remaining water rights was a priority; she agreed Tasmanian Irrigation was perceived to be a gold-plated organisation on the operational side. She went on to say -

What I have said very clearly to my staff, and I have relayed this to irrigated Chairs, to irrigate committees, we are not going to be a gold-plated organisation. We do not need to be a bread and water organisation but we are not going to be gold-plated.

That is from page 4 of the *Hansard*. So, the CEO was the first one to raise the gold-plated issue. Having said that, it was pleasing to hear through the second phase of questioning with the CEO of Tasmanian Irrigation, a little earlier this year as part of this inquiry, that since the inquiry commenced the removal of some positions in Tasmanian Irrigation had occurred. That was great to hear and see that they were listening. That is the important part of inquiries; to listen to what is being said.

Let me make it clear: I do not think there are too many people in this state who do not support what Tasmanian Irrigation and these schemes are doing for Tasmania. It is strongly supported. Having said that, why can these organisations not see what is going on before inquiries are held? Why do they have to wait for inquiries to occur to look at these issues? My suggestion to organisations would be to take a good look at yourself on a continuous basis. There should be a continuous program to consider where you are, what you are doing, what is happening and the staff you have. You should not have to wait for an inquiry for this information and evidence to come out. The information I was given at the time was that a lot of these issues were being raised with Tasmanian Irrigation, but they were not listening. I refer to the second phase of questioning with Tasmanian Irrigation a little earlier this year, on 16 August. During this session I asked a question of the CEO along the lines of -

What was the original position when Tas Irrigation was put in place regarding the ongoing management of the schemes?

That was asked in the Long Room, the day we had the meeting there. To my surprise, the question had to be taken on notice. Further to my knowledge, that question really has not been answered. Unless this question and answer is what I was looking for. The question -

Provide information as to the rationale and series of events that saw Tasmanian Irrigation evolve from an infrastructure development organisation to having an ongoing managerial role.

That was a question put by us to Tasmanian Irrigation. The answer provided to the question was -

The principal objectives of the merged company have always been to develop, own and operate irrigation schemes in Tasmania and to operate its businesses and activities effectively and efficiently and in accordance with sound commercial practice.

Is this the response to my question regarding the original intention relative to ongoing management of the schemes? Because, if it is, it is not accurate. If it is, it is not accurate at all. In fact, it is probably misleading. Let me quote the original statement of corporate intent taken from the annual report 2011-12. You might have mentioned this -

Ms Rattray - I did. But, look, it is important.

Mr DEAN - I will bring it out again -

The principal purpose of Tasmanian Irrigation, as outlined in the Members' Statement of Expectation prepared by the shareholding ministers, is to undertake the following:

- develop, own and operate irrigation schemes in Tasmania, and where feasible and appropriate, to facilitate local community management of these schemes.

I recall this point being talked about at the time of Tasmanian Irrigation coming into existence - that is, once the schemes were set up and operating, some might, or would, pass over to local management should local management want to take the task on of managing those schemes only. The ownership would always remain with Tasmanian Irrigation or the government.

I raised this because it is an important point and was referred to during the inquiry, with some involved in some of the schemes expressing a desire for local management. Corporate intent changed. However, in the 2016-17 Tasmanian Irrigation Proprietary Limited annual report, the Statement of Corporate Intent changed to -

The principal purpose of Tasmanian Irrigation is to develop, own and operate irrigation schemes in Tasmania in accordance with sound commercial practice for the purpose of facilitating the expansion of agricultural production in the State.

This time we saw the words 'and where feasible and appropriate, to facilitate local community management of these schemes' left out in the Statement of Corporate Intent. It no longer appeared in the Statement of Corporate Intent. I asked some questions about this. Whose idea was it to remove those words, and why? Is it for the purpose of ensuring Tasmanian Irrigation had a stronger and moving footprint, or is a part of empire building? Is it to ensure retention of senior staff in boardrooms? I do not know. Is it because there can be no faith in local management of the schemes, or is it because there is no interest in local management? That is not quite right, because there is some interest in local management. Or is it included in other places, and more difficult places to find? I do not know. Why was it removed from the Statement of Corporate Intent?

In the GBEs in 2016, this matter was discussed at some length following questioning from me on management being offered to or taken over by user groups. As per the Statement of Corporate Intent, 2011-12, the minister answered -

The original intent, as I understand it, was to transfer to local ownership in terms of management.

That is still the intent, if the farmers themselves wish to do that. The CEO confirmed the statement and added to it and said -

Certainly. At a meeting I held a couple of months after I had started, where we gathered together the chairs of each of the irrigation groups, the question I was asked was not so much your question. I was asked what my view was on schemes returning to be self-managed. I have never been asked where is a time line for this to happen?

I said, 'You are now.'

Here we are talking about the future management of these schemes, and just a month or two later, following the questions in GBEs, a significant amendment was made to the statement of corporate intent - that is, the removal of those words 'to facilitate local community management of these schemes'. That concerns me somewhat. Why did not the minister, or Ms Hogg, or the CEO, Nicola Morris tell us during the GBE hearings that this change was going to occur? It happened just after the GBE hearing we are talking about, after that inquiry. It was only a month or two after that it was changed.

The minister almost got there when he said, 'The original intent, as I understand it, was to transfer to local ownership in terms of management'. I cannot accept the change was not known at that time. Was it a push from Tasmanian Irrigation? I do not know. I was not to know the reason, and hence I have questions without notice. I put them on the Notice Paper and I got answers back, but the questions were answered and I am far from satisfied with the reason behind the removal of these important words from the statement of corporate intent. It was not necessarily my view and, to me, identifies with a move away from local management. In my opinion that is what we have: Tasmanian Irrigation wanting to move away from that and wanting to retain management of four schemes. That is the way I see it.

This is an important matter and therefore, I have discussed it with the chair of the TFGA water committee. I spoke to them about this. I raised with them their position in relation to our inquiry and its findings and recommendations. On the changes to the corporate intent, the water committee was told - and I am paraphrasing what they said to me - that changes to the corporate intent were in draft form only and that TI would come back to them. 'They never did and this is our gripe. We want a say in what is happening. We want to be listened to, and we are not' - or words to that effect.

They then talked to me about our report -

We accept the report findings and recommendations. Will they have any meaning to TI and the Government? It is a good report and it addresses our issues and our concerns.

I was pleased with the comments, whether they were trying to appease me or not. I do not think they were; I think they were being fairly open.

Then the comment was made on the lines of 'What happens if they do not accept it?' - make no changes, just ignore it. I said that was an issue but it would be foolish, I thought, for TI not to take

notice of it as the spotlight was on them, that we were waiting for the Government's response to it and further, that we would be watching TI closely, and we would have them back before us in the GBE scrutiny committee at a later time.

The chairman of the TFGA's water committee raised the issue of a separation in ownership and infrastructure management.

During the inquiry, issues with the culture existing within Tasmanian Irrigation were raised. It was said to be a damaging culture, a strong culture that needed to change. In late September this year, I had a further conversation with customers of Tasmanian Irrigation when I was told this poor culture remained. This statement was made that, 'It is their way or the highway, nothing in the middle.' This is a statement made in September 2018. I will paraphrase the conversation -

It is going well on the back of the irrigators. However, there needs to be a good relationship between the managers and users of water. Rolling out schemes and it is known, one scheme in particular could be done privately and/or jointly with Tas Irrigation and private operators. A private-public partnership and much cheaper. However, Tas Irrigation will not bend. What accountability does Tas Irrigation have to shareholders? None, it goes back to their culture.

And we were given the information during the inquiry on a scheme that could have been done privately. That is in the report.

Continuing on from that conversation, nothing has changed from the Lake Leake meeting in late 2017 where there was a strong argument with Tasmanian Irrigation senior management and the meeting was abandoned. That also came out in the inquiry.

Ms Rattray - They responded to that.

Mr DEAN - Yes, they did. All that evidence is in the report. In this conversation I was having with this person, they went on to say -

We know who owns it, the people, Tas Irrigation only manage it. Why doesn't one of your recommendations cover off on the culture existing in the senior management of Tas Irrigation? There are human resource issues and allegations of bullying. There should be an HR report -

Ms Rattray - We did not receive any evidence in regard to that.

Mr DEAN - No, this is what this gentleman said to me in September.

Ms Rattray - We did not receive any evidence in regard to bullying and harassment and the committee cannot report on something they have no evidence for. You have already talked about that today.

Mr DEAN - I have. There should be an HR report and they need to consult with all the stakeholders.

The schemes are generally operating well and we are seeing agricultural crops growing through the Midlands where it has never experienced it before. I never thought I would experience that

there. If my father were here today, he would not be able to believe what is going on. Where we have produce now being grown is amazing - all because of the availability of water. On an ABC rural program on 15 October 2018, farmers from the Midlands area were talking up the value of the irrigation scheme in the area and what it meant to them.

The inquiry was necessary and if the findings and recommendations are seriously considered, we will see improvements right across Tasmanian Irrigation and its services. The culture must change if there is to be harmony and if we are to get the best from the scheme.

The inquiry was brought on at the right time. Tasmanian Irrigation was in place at that stage. I think it commenced about seven years ago.

Ms Rattray - In 2011.

Mr DEAN - It had been operating for about seven years and it was good timing for the matter to have come before an inquiry and we will get the opportunity in GBEs and at other times to look at Tasmanian Irrigation to see where it is going.

It has to accept changes have been made but there is probably further distance to go, but I will be interested. I do not think we have anything back yet from the Government on the report. We are about to. They will give us the full report. I do not think they will.

Mrs Hiscutt - Just some preliminary remarks.

Mr DEAN - When will the Government respond to the report?

Mrs Hiscutt - When it has had time to consider it.

Ms Forrest - You have three months. That is the statutory requirement under the sessional standing orders.

Mr DEAN - While they have a period of time in which to come back, some of these matters raised are fairly important. I would think that any government receiving a report would be looking closely at it and saying, 'These are very important points. There is evidence to support why they should be taken up and we are going to do that'.

Ms Forrest - What date was the report tabled?

Mr DEAN - Good question. I have the report.

Ms Forrest - On 25 December.

Mr DEAN - Mr Acting President, I commend all the members of the committee for their support and the staff who once again played a great role in supporting the committee. I support the motion.

[6.11 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr Acting President, as members would know, I was part of this committee. The most pleasing

response was the immediate and proactive response we received from TI, as the member for McIntyre pointed out earlier. That was very good to see.

I thank the member for McIntyre for chairing this committee, putting it on the Notice Paper and bringing it forward for this debate.

The select committee inquiry into the future management of water rights and associated assets administered by Tasmanian Irrigation Pty Ltd is what we are discussing. I want to thank the other members for their valuable contributions on the committee and I also acknowledge all the stakeholders who have made submissions. I reiterate what the others have said in acknowledging the valuable contribution of the former chair of the inquiry, the honourable Mr Greg Hall MLC.

The Government welcomes the inquiry report and will table a formal response to the committee's recommendations in due course. As has been discussed, it will be due on the 25 December so there may be a Christmas present, all things being equal.

The Government would like to make a few preliminary remarks in relation to the inquiry's final report. The select committee's findings highlight that Tasmanian Irrigation has successfully developed irrigation infrastructure schemes in Tasmania and that this has boosted aquaculture productivity and supported growth in both on-farm and post-farmgate investment. The report endorses the Tasmanian Irrigation public-private partnership model to provide high reliability irrigation water to Tasmanian farmers. Accounting for all five inquiry recommendations, the report also credits the path the Government is on with the Tasmanian Irrigation board and management in terms of managing costs, improving transparency and accountability, and improving communication and engagement with the irrigators.

The report notes that while Tasmanian Irrigation has and will continue to create very successful and significant opportunities for growth in the Tasmanian agricultural sector, as with any business there are opportunities for continuous improvement. This aligns with government expectations on how Tasmanian Irrigation should operate as a business, including ongoing efforts to establish more collaborative relationships with irrigators and to enhance the transparency of management and operational decisions. In this regard, it is worth noting that the Tasmanian Irrigation 2017-18 annual report has confirmed a 77 per cent increase - that is nearly 60 000 megalitres - in the amount of water delivered statewide compared to the previous year, noting that this is below the record delivery achieved during the 2015-16 drought season.

Importantly, recognising that the cost of water is a significant input cost to the farmers' bottom line, the latest annual report notes water delivery overheads have reduced by 12.5 per cent on a dollar per megalitre basis from 2016-17, and corporate overheads by 11 per cent and that the board and management are committed to further efficiencies.

I am advised the TI board and management continues to work to the very clear stakeholder expectations that TI runs its operation efficiently, actively seeks to minimise cost, is client-focused and takes into account the business and climatic environment farmers are operating in.

Self-management and providing pathways for each scheme to determine its future were clearly important issues discussed during the inquiry. I also note the latest annual report confirms the purpose of Tasmanian Irrigation is to develop, own and operate irrigation schemes in Tasmania and, where feasible and appropriate, enable local community management of these schemes.

To keep building on the delivery of better irrigation outcomes for Tasmania, the Government recently announced the proposed Pipeline to Prosperity, otherwise known as the tranche 3 irrigation development program. The Pipeline to Prosperity irrigation program recently headlined Tasmania's latest submission towards Infrastructure Australia's national infrastructure priority list. Pipeline to Prosperity further supports the Government's Agrivision 2050, which aims to increase the value of agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050.

Following the completion of comprehensive pre-feasibility studies, Tasmanian Irrigation is exploring a potential 10 projects statewide, which combined have an estimated capital cost of up to \$496 million. If all were to proceed, it has the potential to deliver an additional 78 000 megalitres of water.

It would return an estimated \$114 million each year to the agricultural sector and our economy more broadly and an ongoing employment stimulus of over 3900 direct and indirect full-time equivalents, in addition to construction jobs.

The Government has committed a further \$70 million towards tranche 3 to continue our successful relationship with farmers and the Commonwealth Government.

Further due diligence will be undertaken before approval of each prospective project, including the need to demonstrate a sound business case.

The rollout of the first two tranches of the Tasmanian Irrigation program has and continues to transform Tasmanian agriculture, and add to this the potential further growth from the construction of additional schemes, under the proposed Pipeline to Prosperity program.

As the inquiry highlighted, this occurs at a time when Tasmanian Irrigation manages a significant portfolio of infrastructure assets and its water operations involve supplying water to some 979 irrigation rights and 732 delivery rights.

The inquiry on Tasmanian Irrigation has therefore provided a timely opportunity to take stock, review the successes and identify some areas for improvement, as we go into the next phase of irrigation development in Tasmania.

As highlighted by both members who spoke, and as I indicated earlier, self-management and providing pathways for irrigation schemes to determine their future were clearly important issues discussed during the inquiry.

Given it is relevant to the current debate and to assist members, I reiterate part of a response previously provided to a question without notice from the member for Windermere on this particular subject -

Both the 2016-17 and the 2017-18 statements of corporate intent prepared by Tasmanian Irrigation reflect the Government's longstanding policy to support local self-management of irrigation schemes, where appropriate and feasible.

In 2016-17, this was reflected in the strategic direction section of the statement of corporate intent -

prudently and responsibly manage existing irrigation, river improvement and drainage schemes, and seek to transfer the operation and management of schemes to local communities where feasible and appropriate.

In 2017-18 this was reflected in the business overview section of the statement of corporate intent, which said it would -

develop, own and operate irrigation schemes in Tasmania and, where feasible and appropriate, to -

- facilitate local community management of these schemes.

The Government's formal response can provide further information on this finding and the inquiry's broader recommendations.

I welcome the contributions of honourable members here today. As I indicated earlier the Government will table a formal response in due course.

[6.21 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Mr Acting President, I acknowledge the members of the committee who provided input into the noting of this report and again I thank them for that. I trust I did not take all the members' information and make them decide not to provide any input.

The committee sincerely thanks the input from the 15 submissions and a number of individuals and representatives of organisations that came. It was not a large stakeholder input, but the input that we received was extremely valuable. I acknowledge that and also the Government, through DPIPWE. I also acknowledge Mr Mark Sayer, the Deputy Secretary of AgriGrowth, who also provided some information. We very much appreciated that. He came and presented and, as well, we received some additional information for questions.

I know the member for Windermere is still seeking an answer to one of his questions. We received some information back and that was again very much appreciated. I also acknowledge the CEO of TI, Nicola Morris, and also the chair of the board, Samantha Hogg. They came on a number of occasions before the committee and were happy to share their information. They had work to do and they put their best foot forward. I expect they are still working on improving the organisation and its communication channels.

As the member for Windermere articulated, the inquiry was established due to concerns raised by customers and users. It was not an initiative of any one of us; we continued to have people come to us as individual members and say they felt that there was a need to look at this organisation, which had been formed in 2011 and six-and-a-half years on needed an inquiry into it.

All the valuable information contributed to the body of work the committee brought together. I note we may receive a formal report from the Government as a Christmas Day gift but I will not be waiting for it on Christmas Day. I hope I receive it before then because I will be cooking lunch.

Ms Forrest - It will be out of time then like all the rest.

Ms RATTRAY - I will not be reading it Christmas Day, but I look forward to reading it in January when there is an opportunity to drill down into where the Government sees the future of TI

and the important work it does in the community for water development. I very much encourage all members to support the noting of the report.

Motion agreed to.

Report noted.

MOTION
Government Businesses Scrutiny Committees - Establishment

[6.25 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) (by leave) - Mr Acting President, I move -

That two Government Businesses Scrutiny Committees be established to inquire into Government Businesses in accordance with the schedule detailed below and rules as set out in the Standing Orders at part 22.

That the Committees have leave to sit on Tuesday 4 and Wednesday 5 December 2018 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. and at other times as necessary for the purpose of relevant stakeholder and deliberative meetings.

For 2018 Government Businesses are allocated to the Committees as follows -

Committee 'A'

Tuesday, 4 December 2018

Aurora Energy Pty Ltd, Motor Accidents Insurance Board, Tasmanian Public Finance Corporation, and the Tasmanian Water and Sewerage Corporation Pty Ltd

Committee 'B'

Wednesday, 5 December 2018

Metro Tasmania Pty Ltd, Tasmanian Irrigation Pty Ltd, Tasmanian Railway Pty Ltd, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority, and Tasracing Pty Ltd

And that -

Mr Finch,
Ms Forrest,
Mr Gaffney,
Ms Lovell,
Mr Valentine and

Mr Willie

be of Committee A

and that -

Ms Armitage,
Mr Armstrong,
Mr Dean,
Mr Farrell,
Ms Howlett,
Ms Rattray and
Ms Siejka

be of Committee B

And that the Committees report on the Government Businesses by no later than Wednesday, 19 December 2018.

If the Legislative Council is not sitting when the Government Businesses Scrutiny Committees complete their reports, those reports may be presented to the President or if the President is unable to act, to the Deputy President or other Office holder and in that event -

- (a) the reports shall be deemed to have been presented to the Council;
- (b) the publication of the reports is authorised by this Resolution;
- (c) the President, Deputy President or other Office holder, as the case may be, may give directions for the printing and circulation of the reports; and
- (d) the President, Deputy President or Other office holder, as the case may be, shall direct the Clerk to lay the reports upon the Table at the next sitting of the Council.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

[6.28 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) -
Mr President, I move -

That at its rising the Council adjourn until 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday 21 November 2018.

Motion agreed to.

The Council adjourned at 6.29 p.m.