

**Tuesday 21 August 2018**

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

### **QUESTION UPON NOTICE**

The following answer was given to a question upon notice:

#### **3. TAZREACH - OUTREACH SERVICES - NORTH-WEST TASMANIA**

**Ms FORREST** asked the Acting Leader of Government Business in the Legislative Council -

According to the DHHS website - table headed 'TAZREACH Services - North West as at July 2017' - a number of health professionals across Tasmania are funded through Commonwealth government programs to provide outreach services to people living in rural, remote and certain urban locations in the north-west through TAZREACH services. With regard to the table and the services detailed in it -

- (1) Does the table accurately reflect the number of services that have been committed to under the various funding streams?
- (2) For each of the services listed in the table -
  - (a) What services have been provided?
  - (b) How many visits to each location have been provided per annum?
  - (c) What dates were these services provided?
  - (d) At what locations were the services delivered - for example, in clients' homes, council offices, local hospitals or other health facilities, or at other locations?
- (3) Are any other service providers providing allied health services to rural areas in the north-west? If so, which services and to which locations?
- (4) How do these numbers per capita compare with the north and south of the state?

**Mrs HISCUTT** replied -

- (1) I will seek leave shortly to table the answer and incorporate the table in *Hansard*. All services listed on the table accurately reflect what was delivered in 2017-18, with the following exceptions -
  - A new visiting psychiatrist was recruited for King Island to increase the annual number of clinics available, which resulted in a temporary reduction in service levels while recruitment was completed.
  - The provider of the Neuropsychology - Early Onset Dementia service decided to cease delivery. Funding for the Neuropsychology - Early Onset Dementia service was reallocated to increase services for people with Huntington's disease in Devonport and Launceston.

- Recruitment of a service provider for community-based health promotion activities on King Island resulted in a temporary reduction in service levels while the recruitment process was completed.

From time to time service providers decide to move away from Tasmania, retire or for other reasons cease providing outreach services. TAZREACH has no control over these decisions but will always work to ensure the best possible outcomes for affected communities.

- (2)
  - (a) Please refer to attachment 1, which is a full list of services and frequency. All services in the table were operational through 2017-18 and, with the exceptions noted in the answer to question (1), have been delivering their planned level of service. In addition seven services received one or two additional visits in order to meet ongoing high demand.
  - (b) The final number of visits provided during 2017-18 will not be known until all service claim forms are submitted to TAZREACH by service providers. Available service data indicates that over 90 per cent of services will complete their full allocation of visits in 2018-19. It is not unusual for at least some services not to complete one or two of their allocated visits, due usually to holiday breaks, family leave or personal illnesses.
  - (c) Please refer to attachment 1.
  - (d) Services are mainly delivered at Tasmanian Health Service - THS - rural hospitals and community health centres. Aboriginal health services are delivered at Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre in Burnie. A small number of services are delivered at Rural Health Tasmania in Ulverstone, at Devonport GP Superclinic and at the Ochre Health medical practice in Strahan. No TAZREACH services were delivered in the home. However, professional guidelines and governance process to ensure the safety and quality of home visits have recently been developed for TAZREACH services in the event this occurs in the future.
- (3) The Tasmanian Health Service provides a range of allied health services across the north-west of Tasmania and the west coast, including occupational therapy and physiotherapy clinics in the west coast, Circular Head and King Island. These are a mixture of regular clinics that vary from weekly to quarterly depending on the nature of the clinic and the number of people waiting for the consultations. Some of these services may be provided in clients' homes if necessary, otherwise they are provided at THS facilities.

Primary Health Tasmania - PHT - funds a range of organisations, including the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania, to provide allied health services for people with diabetes, mental illness, chronic conditions and geriatric conditions.

PHT also funds Rural Health Tasmania, a non-government organisation located in north-west Tasmania, to deliver services for people with mental illnesses, cancer and other chronic conditions.

Other known service providers that are located in the north-west or visit the north-west for provision of allied health-type services additional to TAZREACH funding include St Giles; Rural Alive and Well; Youth, Family and Community Connections (youth drug and alcohol service in Burnie); and Australian Hearing.

The Government, through TAZREACH and other agencies, attempts to collect information about existing services from known service provider organisations such as RFDS Tasmania and PHT; however, these organisations are under no obligation to provide or proactively update this information when a service profile changes. As such the Government does not currently possess completely comprehensive information about the level and frequency of allied health services provided by all organisations in the north-west.

HealthWest Queenstown and the King Island Hospital and Community Health Centre employ some allied health staff, the nature of which changes from time to time depending on workforce availability. For example, this may be a mental health worker or social worker. These positions are typically only part-time. There has also been a nurse practitioner position on the west coast.

There are also privately practising optometrists, physiotherapists, podiatrists, dieticians and social workers at Devonport and Burnie, some of whom may provide visiting services to other parts of the north-west and west coast from time to time.

The location and frequency of all of these services can vary at any time according to provider availability and the organisation's decision-making around service priorities. For example, Diabetes Tasmania may provide a service to locations in the north-west if that is requested directly, but will typically only schedule an outreach visit when there is a sufficient number of referrals waiting.

- (4) All rural and remote parts of the state - and Australia generally - are subject to the same variables and indeterminacies in levels of service provision and service profiles, largely as a result of workforce shortages in areas of low population density and consequent relatively low demand compared to urban centres. For reasons of these variables, it is not possible to determine the overall level of service per capita in the north-west or to compare service levels in the north-west with other parts of the state.

An analysis of 2017-18 TAZREACH service data shows the following -

- North-west Tasmania and the west coast have so far been provided with 684 clinics across 92 services. Of those 92 services, 25 are Aboriginal health services and 67 are mainstream health services.
- Northern Tasmania has so far been provided with 644 clinics for 81 services. Of those 81 services, 31 are Aboriginal health services and 50 are mainstream health services.
- Southern Tasmania has so far been provided with 406 clinics and 48 services. Of those 48 services, 25 are Aboriginal health services and 23 are mainstream health services.

Importantly, this service distribution reflects population data for Aboriginal Tasmanians.

With the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, there are likely to be improved market prospects for private providers in regions, particularly for disciplines that did not have much of a prospect of operating privately in the past, such as occupational therapy and speech pathology.

[11.13 a.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I seek leave to table the answer to question No. 3 and incorporate the table into *Hansard*.

**Leave granted.**

Attachment 1: Table of TAZREACH Services 2017-2018 as at 21 June 2017

PLEASE NOTE:

- Dates of service delivery are based on the dates on service claim forms received by TAZREACH from service providers.
- Some services may have been delivered multiple times in any month.
- Some information may be incomplete because all claims are yet to be submitted.

MOICDP is the Medical Outreach -Indigenous Chronic Disease Program

RHOF is the Rural Health Outreach Fund

VOS is the Visiting Optometrist Scheme

BSIA is the Bass Strait Islands Agreement

HEBHBL is the Healthy Ears, Better Hearing, Better Listening program

Service type	Location	Clinics per annum	Funding Scheme	Months services provided 2017/18
Aboriginal Health Worker	Burnie	45	MOICDP	July August September October November December January February March
Audiologist	Burnie	2	HEBHBL	May
Cardiologist	Burnie	8	RHOF	October November December January

Dermatologist	Burnie	10	RHOF	July August September October November January March April
Exercise Physiologist	Burnie	20	MOICDP	March April May
Neurologist	Burnie	6	RHOF	July September October March April May
Paediatrician	Burnie	12	MOICDP	July August November December
Personal Trainer	Burnie	40	MOICDP	
Physiotherapist	Burnie	20	MOICDP	August September October November December January February March April May
Psychiatrist - Dual Disability	Burnie	6	RHOF	August September December February April
Registered Nurse	Burnie	6	MOICDP	August November February
Geriatrician	Burnie/ Latrobe	10	RHOF	July August September

				October November December January February March April
Geriatrician	Devonport	10	RHOF	July August September October November January February March April June
Neurology - Huntington's Disease	Devonport	4	RHOF	September December March
Neuropsychiatrist - Huntington's Disease	Devonport	4	RHOF	August November March
Neuropsychologist - Early Onset Dementia	Devonport	4	RHOF	Nil
Neuropsychologist - Huntington's Disease	Devonport	4	RHOF	September November March May
Orthoptist	Devonport	12	RHOF	July August September October November December January February March April May
Psychiatrist	Devonport	24	RHOF	July August September October

				November December January February April May
Psychiatrist - Forensic Mental Health	Devonport	5	RHOF	July November February March May
Psychiatrist - Geriatrics (telehealth)	Devonport	20	RHOF	July August October November December January February March April May
Dietician	King Island	12	BSIA	July August September October November December January February March April May
Geriatrician	King Island	4	RHOF	September November February April
Health Promotion	King Island	28	BSIA	July August September December January February March April

Mental Health Worker	King Island	22	BSIA	July August September October November December January February March April May
Midwifery	King Island	12	RHOF	July August September October November January February March
Obstetrics and Gynaecologist	King Island	11	RHOF	July August September October November February March
Optometrist	King Island	6	VOS	August October February March
Paediatrician	King Island	4	RHOF	September December March
Psychiatrist	King Island	2	RHOF	September December February March April May
Registered Nurse - Paediatrics	King Island	4	RHOF	September December March
Rheumatologist	King Island	4	RHOF	August



				November February May
Respiratory Physician	Latrobe	6	RHOF	October November December
Neurologist - telehealth	North West	48	RHOF	July August September October November December January February March April May
Cardiologist	Queenstown	6	RHOF	August December April
Obstetrics and Gynaecologist	Queenstown	11	RHOF	July August September October November January March
Optometrist	Queenstown	15	VOS	July August September October November December January February March April May
Paediatrician	Queenstown	5	RHOF	November March May
Podiatrist	Queenstown	6	RHOF	August October

				November February March May
Registered Nurse - Paediatrics	Queenstown	5	RHOF	August November March May
Rheumatologist	Queenstown	6	RHOF	July September November February April
Midwifery	Queenstown /Rosebery	12	RHOF	July August September October November January February March
Optometrist	Rosebery	15	VOS	July August September October November December January February March April May
Audiologist	Smithton	2	HEBHBL	June
Cancer Health Promotion Worker	Smithton	4	MOICDP	November
Dermatologist	Smithton	3	MOICDP	February
Dietician	Smithton	6	MOICDP	August September November January March May

Exercise Physiologist	Smithton	12	MOICDP	July September October November December January February March April May
Midwifery	Smithton	12	RHOF	July August September October November January February March
Obstetrics and Gynaecologist	Smithton	11	RHOF	July August September October November February March
Occupational Therapist	Smithton	18	RHOF	July August September October November December January February March April May June
Optometrist	Smithton	24	VOS	July August September October November December January February March

				April May
Paediatrician	Smithton	6	MOICDP	July September November
Podiatrist	Smithton	7	MOICDP	August September November January March May
Psychiatrist	Smithton	10	RHOF	August September October November January February March May
Psychologist	Smithton	30	MOICDP	August September October November December January February March April May June
Psychologist	Smithton	40	MOICDP	July August September October November December February March April May June
Registered Nurse	Smithton	6	MOICDP	July September November

				February May
Psychiatrist - Dual Disability	Statewide (Launceston - Hobart-Burnie)	12	RHOF	<b>NW Only</b> July October January March
Optometrist	Strahan	12	VOS	July August October November December January February March April May
Psychiatrist	Strahan	10	RHOF	July October November December February March April June
Audiologist * NEW ADDITION	Ulverstone	1	HEBHBL	June
Rheumatologist	Wynyard	9	RHOF	August September November December February March May June
Optometrist	Zeehan	6	VOS	July October January April
<b>Total number of clinics delivered</b>		<b>757</b>		

## RECOGNITION OF VISITOR

**Ms Tamara Clark**

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Honourable members, before proceeding to the business of the day, it is with pleasure I formally and warmly welcome Tamara Clark to this Chamber. Tamara is a recent addition to the staff of the Legislative Council; she took up her position as electorate officer for the member for Launceston on 25 July 2018.

She has relocated to Launceston from Western Australia and has extensive experience in marketing and event management, media and communications. She has worked with a number of high-profile public and private organisations such as the Wesfarmers Group, the University of Western Australia, the Department of Housing and Works Western Australia, *Home Design + Living* magazine and Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston. Tamara will be observing proceedings in the Legislative Council as a part of her orientation. On behalf of all members, I extend to Tamara a very warm welcome. I am sure every member would do exactly that.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

## SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS

### Justices of the Peace

[11.16 a.m.]

**Mr FINCH** (Rosevears) - Mr President, we do not hear a great deal these days about justices of the peace - JPs - but we should because they fulfil a vital role for our community. Three of them are members here, and there are probably more in the other Chamber. Here there is the member for McIntyre, the member for Montgomery and the member for Launceston. Any others?

We certainly have three JPs in our midst. One JP who lives in Rosevears is Nigel Forteath, who has been working as a JP for 15 years. He is one of nine JPs who work on a rotational basis in a temporary office in Henty House. As I mentioned before the winter break, they will be moving to designated premises in the new CH Smith building. They are pretty excited about moving down there. As a reflection of the regard in which they are held, the Attorney-General and the Government have agreed to provide that space for them to work in.

They operate a service from 10 a.m. till 3 p.m. on weekdays and they can be very busy indeed. Nigel Forteath deals with between 150 and 200 documents a day; over a year that would be about 30 000-plus documents. Interestingly all that work is voluntary. As Nigel told me on Friday, it keeps his mind active during retirement.

He was motivated to become a JP when he retired as a professor of aquaculture by his son, who is a police officer. When they were having a discussion about life in Launceston, he said, 'Dad, you really don't know what goes on out there.' So Nigel set about discovering that and he has found out - and he will keep contributing as a JP because that work is very much needed on the legal side, in northern Tasmania particularly.

You might have heard the name Nigel Forteath; he was the professor of aquaculture who set up the seahorse farm at Beauty Point, which is also in my electorate. Nigel helps a vast cross-section

of the community on many issues such as emergency travel documents, death certificates and marriage issues. An important part of his role is to explain the seriousness of documents like statutory declarations to young people who are developing an understanding of the law. He also handles a large number of police and search warrants, which is part of the process. He said he never knows from day to day what next will come through his office door.

JPs are not required to hold a law degree but they need to obtain a legal education, be a good citizen and pass police checks - and, I suggest, have unlimited patience with the number of inquiries that come through. If you have been to a JP recently, they are very meticulous in their filling out of documents and certainly take their time.

**Ms Rattray** - And undertake a course.

**Mr FINCH** - Yes, I am about to talk about that. At the moment there are only four bench justices in Launceston, and that number is expected to increase to nine next month. JPs authorised by the Chief Magistrate may perform what is termed 'bench duty'. That involves sitting in out-of-hours courts to deal with bail matters, sitting in courts dedicated to traffic and parking offences, and also presiding over the taking of depositions in respect of indictable matters to be heard and determined in the Supreme Court.

Tasmanian bench justices meet regularly to discuss any areas or issues of interest, changes that may occur in legislation developed in this place, and also procedures. Tasmanian JPs keep up to legal speed by attending regular refresher courses. One was held in Launceston earlier this month. Justices of the peace in Tasmania perform a vital role. Without them our entire justice system would be in real trouble. I salute our JPs.

### **Junction Arts Festival**

[11.21 a.m.]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) - Mr President, I speak today about a festival based on the north of the state, in Launceston. I encourage all members to come and experience what I know will be a great event, from 5 to 9 September 2018. I declare an interest in this festival, being a member of the board of Junction.

To give a little of Junction's history, the Junction Arts Festival was first presented as a one-off event annexed to the 2010 Regional Arts Australia National Conference - Junction 2010 - which was hosted and organised by the Tasmanian Regional Arts in Launceston.

The inaugural five-day event filled a niche in Tasmania and its success prompted the festival stakeholders, Events Tasmania and the Launceston City Council, to finance development and realise the creation of an annual multi-arts festival.

The Junction Arts Festival was thus established, incorporating as an independent organisation. In December 2011 Tasmanian Regional Arts completed the transition plan that successfully separated Junction Arts Festival as a discrete legal entity, with the Junction Arts Festival Inc. established on 1 January 2012 to run the Junction Arts Festival. This is run as an independent not-for-profit organisation.

Many northern members are well aware of Junction and the great event it is. The last two years have been particularly focused on showcasing Tasmanian talent and encouraging local businesses and venues to the festival, bringing far-reaching benefits to the northern region.

Junction is now in its eighth year and is described as an intimate festival of 'extraordinary experiences in unusual spaces'. We are very fortunate to have Greg Clarke as its creative director; he is also well known for his work with the Adelaide Fringe Festival and Sydney's famous Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Greg is also ably supported by the Junction board, which is led by its amazing chair, Liz Francombe, and the management team led by Frith Mabin and Ryan Limb, who are continuing the focus of presenting and celebrating the incredible talent of Tasmanian artists.

This year Junction's festival hub is in and around the stunning nineteenth century Prince's Square, featuring the Fountain Bar, showcasing Tasmania's finest musicians and bands, Tasmanian food and award-winning wines, and the Prince's Palace, which will feature children shows and award-winning cabaret.

Importantly many events are free to attend. There is something for everyone but you will need to book soon, as some ticketed events are already booking out very quickly. Some have already sold out. All the shows and events are listed on Junction's website, where you can also book the tickets. I will describe a sample of this year's events to whet members' appetites. *Breathtaking* will be staged inside Launceston's oldest church, where three extraordinary Tasmanian singers will take your breath away with the sheer beauty and power of their incredible voices. Launceston's Stompin Youth Dance Company will present, in collaboration with Theatre North, its new work *ESC* throughout the backspace areas of Launceston's iconic Princess Theatre. Taking a sledgehammer to the fourth wall, audiences will go on an intimate adventure rather than watching from the darkness of the stalls. *Making Moves*, a Tasdance retrospective, will see Jen Brown's stunning images of Tasdance's contemporary dances lighting up the walls outside the Fountain Bar. This amazing catalogue of movement and ideas will pay homage to the company's contributions to the artistic life of Launceston.

There are also events suitable for the whole family. *The Mr Spin Show*, a thrilling circus for children of all ages, mixes juggling with madcap antics, and an incredible sense of fun - not to mention a few hat tricks thrown in. *Kaput* is Tom Flanagan's multi-award winning family show that has melted the hearts of all ages around the world in its glorious brand of Japanese slapstick, acrobatics and total silliness.

*Open House Launceston* invites you to go behind the scenes of Launceston's most interesting buildings. You will be able to take a peek at how others live, work and play; look up, look inside, have a stickybeak, and see this curious city from a different angle as we explore classic examples of Victorian, Federation and colonial design that sit alongside an internationally recognised brutalist treasure - which I am sure members in Launceston know about - quintessential Art Deco detailing and an Egyptian-style synagogue. This event includes openings that require no bookings. All you have to do is turn up. An event that is truly Tasmanian.

*Nitty Gritty: True Stories told by Humans* - two unique storytelling events will occur by local storytellers over two nights, each with its own curious theme, one 'change' and the other 'secrets'. Curator of this special project and your host is comedian Rachel Berger who will bring untold stories and unfamiliar voices into the public arena, giving them social currency, reaffirming our humanity and bringing us all closer -



This diverse group of storytellers are all uniquely Tasmanian whether they were born here or arrived from elsewhere and have made Tasmania their home. Each night 6 storytellers will share their true stories in the first person and bridge the divide, creating a shared sense of the world. Their stories will connect us and diminish the sense of 'us and them' while also giving a voice to those that have not been heard.

Nitty Gritty is a powerful community event based on authenticity, commitment and trust between the storytellers and the audience.

I encourage all members to go to Junction's website for more details and to make bookings. I hope to see many of you there.

### **Biomar Australia - Fish Feed Facility**

[11.26 a.m.]

**Mr GAFFNEY** (Mersey) - Mr President, this morning I will take a few moments to bring a good news story from the Mersey electorate to the Chamber.

Members from the electorates of Derwent, Rosevears, Murchison and Prosser - then Apsley - and Mr President attended the Mersey electorate tour in 2012, and may remember our site visit to the former Wesley Vale mill, which is favourably placed 8 kilometres from the Port of Devonport and only 3 kilometres from the airport.

At the time, I had hoped highlighting the site to members might result in attracting new owners or lessees. Unfortunately this did not come to fruition, but there is a huge potential for the fully rehabilitated site and area in the future.

Approximately 1 kilometre along Mill Road, BioMar Australia has taken over the sawmill and dismantled and cleared about 90 per cent of the site, removing a significant amount of asbestos, factory buildings and old machinery.

The factory is expected to be commissioned in 2019 and the \$56 million project will result in the Wesley Vale area housing a world-class, state-of-the-art fish feed innovation and production facility.

The BioMar Group, started in 1962 by a group of Danish fish farmers, is a leader in the research and development of sustainable feed, providing high performance diets for more than 45 different fish and shrimp species in more than 80 countries.

BioMar was recently named the top-rating salmon sustainability fish feed company in the world. For 15 years, the company has held a well-established position in Tasmania as the leading supplier of high-quality fish feed for Atlantic salmon since entering the local market in 2003.

At present, one in every three farmed salmon in Tasmania is fed BioMar fish feed products exported from Scotland. That will soon change because last Wednesday BioMar's aquafeed production facility development application received the final tick of approval from the Latrobe Council, marking an important milestone into the project's future and allowing the construction phase to begin.

As part of this approval process, the Environment Protection Authority approved the development proposal and environmental management plan, ensuring BioMar's production facility meets all required environmental responsibilities and practices. This is good news and in sync with Tasmania's clean, green focus.

I attended the open day on Saturday and was pleased to hear the project will bring world-class, state-of-the-art fish feed innovation and production facilities to the state. Once operations begin, it will produce up to 110 000 tonnes per annum of aquafeed product to support our local aquaculture industry. The *Advocate* recently reported -

The Biomar Australia facility ... is expected to take up to 250 people to build over about 14 months.

This is fantastic news for the Mersey region and beyond, especially the 55 full-time jobs at the factory and additional 30 in logistics and support roles created in support of the project.

Latrobe Council mayor, Peter Freshney, said he was proud to be associated with the project and pleased at how BioMar had interacted with the council and community -

They've been exemplary. They've been upfront from day one and very professional and we certainly have a very good relationship with the company. The community has been very involved. They are pleased to see the site being used and, more widely, pleased to see more jobs. We hope the permanent jobs will be sourced from our municipality.

Further positive news is that the flow-on effects of the company's Tasmanian plant will extend to other sectors because the company has appointed a raw material purchase manager who will meet with local grain and legume growers over the next few months to make arrangements to source locally and sustainably.

Marine farming expanded rapidly in Tasmania in the 1990s to become one of Tasmania's major industries. The state's salmon industry alone is worth \$730 million a year. BioMar's fish feed production facility represents a significant investment and vote of confidence in Tasmania's aquaculture and seafood sectors.

BioMar's next step is towards awarding the civil works contract to an Australian firm, which will be done in the next few weeks. Groundworks will kick off following the contractor's commencement on site.

I congratulate BioMar on its entry into the Tasmanian market and indeed the Mersey region. I wish the company all the very best for a prosperous and long-lasting future.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

### **Neville Smith Forest Products**

[11.31 a.m.]

**Mr DEAN** (Windermere) - Mr President, I draw members' attention to a business in our community that has grown from nothing 94 years ago to being Australia's largest Tasmanian oak hardwood processing company, Neville Smith Forest Products.

In 1924, Neville Smith co-founded a small business in Victoria, importing different wares from Europe. French perfumes, expensive cigarette holders and sporting goods were a few of the items they started dealing in. Soon after the business was established, Neville decided to introduce a few lines of timber. A few months after, Neville established the business Neville Smith and Company to deal exclusively in timber wholesaling.

In 1926 he opened a timber yard in South Melbourne and in 1927 he leased a similar yard in Launceston. By 1935, there were three yards in Victoria and the one in Launceston at Mowbray, the current dry mill site - and in my electorate - and Neville had just opened his first sawmill in Victoria.

After World War II, there was a surge in building material requirements and the company started purchasing sawmills throughout Tasmania. First, it was a small mill in Forester in 1947, then Pioneer in 1948, and then Pruana, Westbury, Swansea, Ross, Camden, Que River and a larger mill at St. Helens all followed. Additional mills were also purchased in Victoria and by 1970 the business was involved in timber production, wholesale distribution and retailing.

Unfortunately, in 1975 Neville was diagnosed with cancer and passed away soon after. He left a very busy and profitable business in the hands of his son, Richard.

Over the next 40 years, the company continued to grow and evolve and has recently undertaken major capital upgrades at its Mowbray operations. The most recent is the commissioning of a state-of-the-art Italian manufactured pellet mill, which turns all sawmilling waste, previously destined for landfill, into bioenergy pellets for the domestic heating market. Previous to this Tasmania's heating products were predominantly imported from New Zealand and Geelong in Victoria. The members for Rosevears and Launceston accompanied me on a visit to the site earlier this year, which gave us a great insight into what is happening there, and what the future holds for the business.

The Neville Smith Mowbray mill has the capacity to cover the entire pellet heating demands of Tasmania and Victoria. In addition, a major upgrade to the Mowbray drying facilities is underway, which will see a new bank of custom-made German kilns commissioned in September this year. Further developments planned over the next 18 months represent an additional value-adding facility that will boost employment numbers.

I suggest all members of this House might like to visit the site one day. What is happening there is really wonderful.

**Ms Rattray** - An electorate tour?

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, the member is right. The Mowbray processing facility today comprises an automatic racking line for green timber, reconditioning chambers, kilns and, most importantly, a fully automated boiler used for generating heat and in turn drying timber in the kilns.

The company employs over 100 staff directly and at least double that number indirectly. Many people are employed through the business.

Neville Smith Forest Products is currently the largest hardwood processor in Tasmania. It supplies a vast national timber and hardware network as well as exporting timber to North America, Europe and Southeast Asia.

Although the company has grown to be a leader in the industry, it has not forgotten where it all started. On top of its 40 000-cubic metre per annum quota from Sustainable Timber Tasmania, it is now working collaboratively with some of the smaller northern Tasmanian hardwood mills and underpinning its growth plans. It is great Neville Smith is supporting the smaller mills.

The company is passionate about the forest industry and was one of the first groups in the timber industry to support environmentally friendly and sustainable harvesting. All timber processed by Neville Smith is fully certified under the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification's Chain of Custody system. They have that certification and that is how they operate.

The company is principally focused on value-adding, utilising only sustainably harvested regrowth logs. It believes that by focusing on innovation through investment in modern technology and striving to maximise the value of all aspects of the sustainable forest operation, the benefits will flow through to communities throughout Tasmania.

It is a great company, doing some great things in timber, and using a waste product for the production of wood pellets. It is great to see how it happens and how it all works - it is a very proud Tasmanian company.

### **Tasmanian Dog Training Club - Tribute**

[11.37 a.m.]

**Ms ARMITAGE** (Launceston) - Mr President, today I pay tribute to an organisation that has been active within the Launceston community for 60 years. As a patron, I am pleased to speak about the Tasmanian Dog Training Club. The club was formed in 1958 and was initially known as the Obedience Dog Club of Launceston. It then trained at Elphin Showgrounds, but the club now operates from Churchill Park.

The club was set up to provide puppy training and basic obedience training classes to about 3600 dogs each year, both new and ongoing. Approximately 345 classes consisting of puppies, tweenies, beginners, grades 1 to 3, advanced agility and Rally-O operate from the club. The club welcomes people and dogs with all levels of experience.

It is important to note that the Tasmanian Dog Training Club is a not-for-profit organisation. There are 22 volunteers providing in excess of 6500 hours per annum. If we had to pay these volunteers, the cost would be outside the means of the club.

The club is a fully affiliated member of the Tasmanian Canine Association, trading as Dogs Tasmania, the governing kennel authority in Tasmania.

The aim of the club is to provide good value training and advice to the public so that dogs in our community are well socialised and well mannered. Evidence shows that training provides mental stimulation and adequate exercise for dogs. It reduces barking and aggressive dog issues such as biting and chasing other dogs and humans. The member for Windermere might like to bring Alfie along.

**Mr Dean** - I don't think he would participate - he is not social.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Training also assists people to understand the importance of correct breed selection to suit their lifestyle and location. The club provides training to a wide range of breeds.

Anyone wanting to purchase a dog can go down to the group on a Sunday morning at any time between 9.30 a.m. and noon and see up to 90 dogs at any one time. It is a great place to go if you want to choose a dog because you can see how they act and relate to their owners.

New studies show that training makes puppies more confident. It teaches them proper behaviour and gives them an outlet for their extra energy. They learn healthy habits, how not to engage in destructive behaviours, and it sets them up for life with fewer cognitive problems.

The Tasmanian Dog Training Club provides training for a wide range of community members from young to old, able-bodied as well as for people with a range of physical and intellectual disabilities. The club offers a range of dog activities aligned with the state Government's Get Moving Tasmania program set up by the Premier's Physical Activity Council. The club is an inclusive organisation that offers, actively promotes and encourages community participation in fun physical activities.

The club also provides information on the requirements of local councils and any possible upcoming changes to dog-related legislation. They provide advice to the public about desexing, microchipping, dietary requirements and animal husbandry, and all the necessary obligations to being a responsible dog owner. A regular newsletter is produced by the club, which contains useful training advice and articles addressing a range of canine issues. Through the newsletter, the club welcomes new members and their pets and recognises those who have achieved pass or a title.

One of the core courses available through the club is puppy socialisation, a four-week course of one-hour sessions. This is an introduction to owning a dog and it teaches control and socialisation experiences, instructs owners about their responsibilities to their dog and the community and offers advice on solving puppy issues such as jumping and biting. It assists puppies to be prepared for experiences such as visits to the vet and groomer. There is a beginners obedience course, which provides an introduction to owning a dog and focuses on dog training by way of teaching a range of commands useful to owning a dog.

The course provides access to advice on solving a range of dog problems such as aggression, jumping and biting. The member for Windermere and his dog might like to come along one Sunday morning - not that the member needs help; I was thinking about his dog.

Completion of these classes enables progression to more advanced classes for increasing levels of obedience. There are higher levels of training - stages 1 to 3 - and an advanced class. Classes also provide a lead-in to other activities and sport that can be undertaken with dogs, including agility, timed obstacle courses, endurance tests, tracking, track and search and rally obedience.

The Tasmanian Dog Training Club participates in fundraising events to support, for example, the RSPCA Million Paws Walk. In May this year, club members volunteered their time to promote the club and its activities at Dog's day out at the picturesque Woolmers Estate. The club's dogs and handlers showed off their skills with demonstrations of obedience, agility and tracking.

More recently, the club's committee agreed to donate half its earnings from its August intake day and funds raised from its August training classes to the drought relief charity Drought Angels. The charity assists farming families affected by natural disasters, in particular our local farming communities. The club will hold a fundraising day on 26 August, this Sunday, with proceeds going to assist Drought Angels.

I commend the work undertaken by this organisation, which has provided 60 years' service to the community and is a wonderful group of volunteers who give freely of their time and expertise. They provide a valuable service enabling dog owners to enjoy the companionship of their pets and ensuring that dogs are sociable and not a danger in the community. They have told me at times it is the people they teach, rather than the dog. I wish them continued success in the future.

### **Ulverstone Poultry Club - Chook Amnesty**

[11.43 a.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, today I would like to talk to members about a wonderful initiative in my electorate of Montgomery, the Ulverstone Poultry Club chook amnesty.

I am a proud patron of the Ulverstone Poultry Club; I note you, Mr President, are a proud patron of the Devonport Poultry Club. This year the club has begun an interesting community service they are calling a chook amnesty. The amnesty happened a day after the annual show and will become a permanent fixture on the club's calendar.

This year the show had 457 exhibits and only one judge, who came from New South Wales and who certainly had his work cut out for him. The chook amnesty idea is the brainchild of Ulverstone Poultry Club president and fellow chook-lover Jill Weaver. Jill pursued the idea years ago after receiving many calls from local residents and farmers who had domestic birds dumped on their properties. In Jill's own amused words, she says apparently her name comes up when you google 'Where can I get rid of my chooks?'.

Sadly, there is not much for people to do with their birds when they can no longer keep them and Jill firmly believes, as a responsible breeder and fancier, the Ulverstone Poultry Club needed to put this idea into action to help prevent birds from being abandoned. Her idea is a simple one that seems effective - if people have any unwanted birds, be it chooks, roosters, ducks or otherwise, on a designated chook amnesty day they can bring their birds down to the Ulverstone Poultry Club's pavilion and leave them in the club's care for just a gold coin donation per bird. Likewise, if people are looking to add some feathered friends to their family, they are welcome to come along and make an offer of \$5 or more to adopt any available bird.

This is such a wonderful thing - to make rehoming domestic animals that simple. Inevitably there will be birds that do not go to new homes and the club ensures these fowls are cared for until they are humanely dispatched.

Just recently the Ulverstone Poultry Club held its second-ever 'chook amnesty' event and it had a fantastic result. Seventy-four roosters and many more chooks were brought in by members of the public during the day and, would you believe it, every single one of those surrendered chooks found a new home. In fact, I am told they did not have enough chooks to go round for people wanting to take one home.

There were also birds brought in by people who just wanted to know their gender, as well as some very nice roosters that will even make their way into shows. Most notably for Jill, though, was a breeding pair of rare Cream Legbar birds. When she informed the gentleman of the birds' rarity and that he would do better advertising them for sale, his response was that his wife had instructed him to bring them down, so enough was said on that matter.

An added bonus to this event is that the poultry club was able to make a tiny profit of \$360 through donations made when rehoming these birds. That money will go a long way to assisting with the cost of hosting the Ulverstone Poultry Club shows in April and August next year.

The club is planning to hold another two chook amnesties in 2019, and it will definitely be interesting to see what turns up.

## **MOTION**

### **Outcome Statement - Commonwealth Women's Forum**

[11.47 a.m.]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) - Mr President, I move -

That this House -

- (1) Notes the Outcome Statement of the Commonwealth Women's Forum (CWF) held in London, United Kingdom, from 16 to 18 April 2018; and
- (2) Further acknowledges and notes -
  - (a) That the Commonwealth Women's Forum (CWF) focused on the theme 'An Empowered Future for Women and Girls' with the ambition of finding ways to accelerate the advancement of gender equality for sustainable development, prosperity and peace for all women and girls in the Commonwealth;
  - (b) That despite the concerted efforts to transform the subordinate position of women and girls in many societies, the progress made so far towards gender equality, the advancement of the status of women and girls has been slow and uneven and investment to address the inequalities between women and men in all areas of social, civic and economic life, including in efforts to address the impact of climate change, has been low;
  - (c) That women face bias along multiple identity dimensions, including gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and age, and we must focus our efforts on those facing multiple disadvantage where progress is slowest and that addressing this is a pre-condition for the promotion of women's leadership, economic empowerment and equitable participation in all spheres, which will result in an empowered future for women and girls; and
  - (d) That the Commonwealth Women's Forum (CWF) called on the Commonwealth to lead the world by creating and strengthening an enabling environment for women's empowerment, for a sustainable, secure, prosperous and fairer society that is free from violence and coercion, focuses on actions to mainstream gender in all government programmes, policies and initiatives, including gender budgeting.

I was fortunate to attend and participate in the Commonwealth Women's Forum - CWF - in London from 16 to 18 April 2018. It focused on the theme 'An empowered future for women and girls'. I note to the House that I fully funded my own travel costs to attend this forum and was happy to do so because the amazing women I met and heard speak certainly make it worthwhile.

This theme focused on the ambition of finding ways to accelerate the advancement of gender equality for sustainable development, prosperity and peace for all women and girls in the Commonwealth. I appreciate the fact that women and girls have many more opportunities and are treated far more equitably in Australia than in some of the other countries, including some Commonwealth countries. However, there are still areas where there needs to be more effort and acknowledgement of the inequalities and inequities that exist in Australia, including in Tasmania.

In noting the outcome statement, which is available online - all members have been provided with a copy of it - I will not comment on every aspect of it. Rather I wish to make some broad comments and focus on our role in Tasmania as parliamentary representatives to ensure we play our part in progressing gender equality in our part of the Commonwealth and the world.

We must be constantly vigilant to ensure the rights, opportunities for and respect of women and girls is not undermined or eroded by state, national, Commonwealth and/or international laws or policy positions.

The forum recognised that despite the concerted efforts to transform the subordinate position of women and girls in many societies and the progress made so far towards gender equality, the advancement of the status of women and girls has been slow and uneven. Further, investment to address the inequalities between women and men in all areas of social, civic and economic life, including efforts to address the impact of climate change, has been low.

It is somewhat frustrating and also quite challenging to hear some of the stories of personal and community experiences of women in many countries who are not afforded many of the rights, privileges and opportunities we in Australia generally take for granted.

As a result of the realities faced across the Commonwealth, acknowledging the progress that has been made and following many forum discussions and presentations resulted in the Commonwealth Women's Forum calling on the Commonwealth to lead the world by creating and strengthening an enabling environment for women's empowerment for a sustainable, secure, prosperous and fairer society.

The use of a collective voice can be powerful when we take a united position. That was very evident at the forum. The collective voice is much more powerful. The Commonwealth Women's Forum called on the Commonwealth to lead a world free from violence and coercion, one focused on actions to mainstream gender in all government programs, policies and initiatives, including gender budgeting. Acknowledging women face bias among multiple identity dimensions, including race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and age, the outcome statement noted we must focus our efforts on facing multiple disadvantage where progress is slowest. Such an approach and taking a united stand is a precondition to the promotion of women's leadership, economic empowerment and equitable participation in all spheres, which will result in an empowered future for women and girls.

I will speak to a number of requests the Commonwealth Women's Forum put to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting - CHOGM - and where appropriate relate to actions



we need to be mindful of in this state. Members can read all the requests and may wish to comment on some I do not specifically mention.

The first request to CHOGM was to accelerate actions to invest in, implement and track progress of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Goal 5, and other international, regional and national instruments. This is necessary to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls in collaboration with strategic partners and the chair of CHOGM.

Goal 5 of the SDGs states 'Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls'. The Sustainable Development Goals progress statement from 2017, on the United Nations website, notes progress in most areas, but also reminds us of the need to remain focused and vigilant. The progress report notes gender inequality persists worldwide, depriving women and girls of their basic rights and opportunities. Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will require more vigorous efforts, including legal frameworks to counter deeply rooted gender-based discrimination that often results in patriarchal attitudes and related social norms.

I will comment on a couple of the progress measures that are particularly relevant to us. On the basis of data from 2005 to 2016 for 87 countries, 19 per cent of women between 15 and 49 years of age said they had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the 12 months prior to the survey. In the most extreme cases such violence can lead to death.

In 2012, almost half the women who were victims of intentional homicide worldwide were killed by an intimate partner or family member, compared to 6 per cent of male victims. We know this continues to be a matter for concern in Australia and one that needs adequate resourcing and attention to address. As noted in an Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report, *Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia 2018*, women remain at greater risk across all of these measures. That report notes -

One in 6 Australian women and 1 in 16 men have been subjected, since the age of 15, to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or previous cohabiting partner. Family, domestic and sexual violence happens repeatedly - more than half (54%) of the women who had experienced current partner violence experienced more than one violent incident. However, between 2005 and 2016, rates of partner violence against women remained relatively stable.

In 2014-15, on average almost 8 women and 2 men were hospitalised each day after being assaulted by their spouse or partner. From 2012-13 to 2013-14, about 1 woman a week and 1 man a month were killed as a result of violence from a current or previous partner. Almost 1 in 4 (23%) of women and 1 in 6 (16%) of men have experienced emotional abuse from a current or previous partner since the age of 15. Almost 1 in 5 women (18%) and 1 in 20 men (4.7%) have experienced sexual violence (sexual assaults and/or threats) since the age of 15. Women were most likely to experience sexual violence from a previous cohabiting partner (4.5% of women) or a boyfriend/girlfriend or date (4.3% of women).

In 2016, on average police recorded 52 sexual assaults each day against women and about 11 against men.

It is quite true that men are also victims of violence; however, women still suffer more frequently and we must remain focused on a zero tolerance of violence against women and men. It is simply not acceptable in any way that at this stage we continue to see more than one woman killed each week in Australia by a partner or a former partner.

In an article published in *The Conversation* on 13 August, Juliet Watson, Lecturer in Urban Housing and Homelessness at RMIT University, referring to research she had done in writing her recently published book *Youth Homelessness and Survival Sex*, interviewed 15 women aged 18 to 25 about their experiences of managing homelessness in Melbourne.

Dr Watson stated that the women she interviewed described how the poverty, social exclusion and physical danger that accompany homelessness require them to manage their circumstances with very few resources. Lack of money, welfare support and social capital meant for some their only resource was to exchange sex for somewhere to stay.

An online review of her book states -

Watson's insightful analysis of personal narratives reveals how young homeless women are exposed to situations in which survival can be impeded or assisted by playing out specific gender roles. Indeed, in identifying and contesting the dominant social discourses that young homeless women draw upon to frame their experiences or intimate affairs, Watson challenges the reader to understand how gendered subjectivities are produced and performed through heteronormative relationships. This enlightening book is vital in showing that homelessness is not a gender-neutral phenomenon and that there are gender-specific processes and practices involved in the navigation of poverty, violence, and social exclusion.

We know women comprise 42 per cent of Australia's homeless population. Women often become homeless due to family violence, and homelessness can expose them to further gendered violence. This research is showing that homeless women experience violence or feel vulnerable to it in crisis accommodation, such as private rooming houses and motels, to which housing services often refer them due to the scarcity of more suitable alternatives.

I think we know this is an issue for Tasmanian women as well. We cannot -

**Mrs Hiscutt** - Honourable member, as per our sitting schedule, would this be an appropriate moment to ask for an adjournment?

**Ms FORREST** - If I can just finish this little bit, I will be happy to do that, honourable Leader.

We cannot turn a blind eye to it; we must address the housing crisis facing many women to ensure we do all we can to end violence against women and girls.

I will continue with that aspect of this contribution when we return. I move -

That the debate stand adjourned.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **SUSPENSION OF SITTING**

[11.57 a.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I am sorry to interrupt such an important subject. I move -

That the sitting be suspended until the ringing of the division bells.

This is for a briefing on the Police Offences Amendment (Prohibited Insignia) Bill 2018 (No. 21).

**Motion agreed to.**

**Sitting suspended from 11.58 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.**

## **RECOGNITION OF VISITOR Rotary Club of Central Launceston**

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Honourable members, before we start question time, I would like to welcome the Rotary Club of Central Launceston to the Chamber. Members all know Jodie Lowe from her work in the Legislative Council. Jodie is the new president of the club, which has 48 members, five honorary members and significant fundraisers. Since 1983, it has raised around \$1.8 million for the community, a terrific effort.

The club has had over 1600 meetings with over 1400 guest speakers, and no doubt it is about to listen to a couple of speakers this afternoon. I welcome Jodie and her fellow club members; it is good to have you here.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

## **QUESTIONS**

### **Council of Australian Governments - Agreements - Consultation**

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

[2.33 p.m.]

Mr President, I extend my welcome to the members of the Rotary Club of Central Launceston. I acknowledge particularly Paula Hanson's award of a Paul Harris Fellow. It was a pleasure to be there and witness that award today, and I congratulate Ms Hanson.

Leader, in respect of the information recently received, and appreciated, regarding Council of Australian Governments agreements, that the state Government indicated it takes very seriously its responsibility to uphold the best interests of Tasmania and would not sign an agreement if it was thought our state would be disadvantaged: what consultation is undertaken with key stakeholders before the Tasmanian Government agrees in principle and subsequently signs any COAG agreements?

## **ANSWER**

Mr President, I thank the member for McIntyre for her question.

Agreements with the Australian Government cover a wide range of policy matters. Agreements are typically developed over many months of negotiation prior to being signed. The nature and scope of any consultation undertaken will vary depending on the particular agreement.

Consultation on an agreement may be led by the Australian Government, the Tasmanian Government or in partnership. Consultation may also occur on implementation specifics subsequent to the signing of the agreement. Further advice or briefings can be provided if required in relation to the consultation undertaken for specific agreements.

### **Road Upgrade - Prossers Road, Nunamara**

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

[2.35 p.m.]

My question relates to Prossers Road at Nunamara. It was referred to in the state road upgrades in the recent budget papers. This road is in poor condition and upgrades deteriorate quickly because of the gravel surface. Will the Leader please advise -

- (1) What money has been or will be made available for upgrading this road?
- (2) What will the upgrade involve?
- (3) When will the upgrade be undertaken?
- (4) Is sealing of this road being considered?
- (5) If so, at what stage is the planning?

We are talking about 9 kilometres only. It is one of the top, if not the very top, gravel roads used in this state. I am getting inundated with inquiries and issues about it.

## **ANSWER**

Mr President, I thank the member for Windermere for his question. The Tasmanian Government has committed \$2 million to commence a staged project to seal the road. The Department of State Growth will work with the City of Launceston Council to assess the road condition and the priority for the upgrade. Funding has been allocated as part of the state Budget 2018-19 forward Estimates and timing will be determined once exchange negotiations are complete.

### **Retirement Benefits Fund - Pensions - Payment**

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

[2.36 p.m.]

My question relates to the payment of pensions by the Retirement Benefits Fund - RBF - to spouses of deceased partners and specifically relative members of the Retired Police Association, and, no doubt, others who are suffering a similar treatment.

This matter has been discussed with the Treasurer's office previously, and during the election period it was confirmed in writing that a review of the act would take place within 12 months of a new Liberal government. The stalling of payments of pensions to spouses is causing unreasonable pain and suffering, and recently caused the mental breakdown of an impacted person. Will the Leader please advise -

- (1) Has the review process commenced?
- (2) If so, where is it at and when can we expect to see amendments or changes occur to have these matters addressed expeditiously?
- (3) If not started, when will the review commence?
- (4) In the meantime, is it possible to have interim pensions paid to widows/widowers/partners while pension applications are being processed within the current model?

#### **ANSWER**

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

The Office of the Superannuation Commission, which administers arrangements for the payment of pensions to surviving partners on behalf of the Superannuation Commission, recently reviewed the current administrative approaches to the application process for surviving partner pensions in consultation with the Retired Police Association and the Tasmanian Association of State Superannuants. This review was undertaken to improve the process from the perspective of members and their partners under the existing framework set out in the Public Sector Superannuation Reform Regulations 2017.

Ensuring that the correct individual who has a legitimate claim to being a surviving partner receives the benefit of the pension is important and a high level of verification is crucial to maintain the integrity of the arrangements.

**Mr Dean** - It has never previously been rorted - never once.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - The Office of the Superannuation Commission has developed a new checklist that has been made available to members to provide guidance on the early preparation of evidentiary materials required to substantiate the status of a surviving partner, and the office is reviewing the documentation requirements used to substantiate the claims of an individual being a surviving partner to ensure that they are appropriate and not overly burdensome for members.

The Treasurer wrote to the Retired Police Association in February 2018 undertaking to formally review the regulations relating to surviving partner pensions, which may create further improvements to those already implemented by the Office of the Superannuation Commission. I am advised this work has been commenced by the Department of Treasury and Finance and that Treasury has identified a number of potential changes to the way in which the interim pension arrangements operate. Consultation will take place with the Retired Police Association and the Tasmanian Association of State Superannuants in respect of the potential changes, with proposed amendments to the regulations expected to be considered by the Treasurer later this year.

**Mr Dean** - That is good news. Thank you.

## **Housing Tasmania - Sales Policies**

[2.40 p.m.]

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

Under the Housing Tasmania program, can the Leader provide the following information -

- (1) The total number of properties sold in 2017-18?
- (2) The total number of properties sold on the open market in 2017-18?
- (3) The total value of sales in 2017-18?
- (4) The total number of properties sold in 2014-18?
- (5) The total of number of properties sold on the open market in 2014-18?
- (6) The total value of sales in 2014-18?

### **ANSWER**

Mr President, I thank the member for Pembroke for her question.

Housing Tasmania's sales policy gives priority to those households that are eligible for assistance under Streets Ahead or HomeShare. Where these applicants submit an offer to purchase a home that is at or above the reserve price set by the Valuer-General, they will be sold the home ahead of any offers from private purchases, even if they are for a higher price.

During 2017-18 around 50 per cent of dwellings were sold to households eligible for assistance. Where offers were not received from those eligible under HomeShare or Streets Ahead, or in cases where a home is fire-damaged, or has structural problems and is therefore unsuitable for those households, homes may be sold to the private market.

Note in relation to property sales prior to 1 January 2016, it is not possible to identify sales types due to a change in the system.

Answers to the specific questions are.

- (1) 77.
- (2) 38.
- (3) \$11 133 798.97.
- (4) 372.
- (5) 113.
- (6) \$48 599 798.97.

## **SUSPENSION OF SITTING**

[2.42 p.m.]

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

That the sitting be suspended until the ringing of the division bells

This suspension is to allow us to continue our briefing prior to lunch.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Sitting suspended from 2.42 p.m. to 3.33 p.m.**

## **MOTION**

### **Outcome Statement - Commonwealth Women's Forum**

**Resumed from above.**

[3.34 p.m.]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) - Mr President, before the adjournment, I was talking about the impact of homelessness on some women and exposing them to the additional risk of violence when seeking to find accommodation. I will continue along this theme. I referred to a book written by Ms Watson. She notes a number of women's experiences where women made decisions we may find difficult to understand to enable them to feel as safe as they can when homeless. One experience she cited referred to a women named Hayley. The article in *The Conversation* states -

While she was sleeping rough and on her own, Hayley described hooking up briefly with a man also experiencing homelessness. Although he was unable to provide accommodation, Hayley stayed with him to feel safer from the violence of street-based homelessness. "This guy was just walking around and I was like, "Oh, do you want to come with me?" I didn't want to be by myself because I was scared.'

Ms Watson noted women's reliance on providing sex to manage homelessness makes them particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Although outsiders may consider they are entering into a mutually beneficial contract, this was not the case for the women Ms Watson interviewed. Ms Watson noted reports also suggest this practice is not limited to women. She suggests, and I quote from the report -

Due to the hidden nature and often ill-defined boundaries of survival sex, it is difficult to regulate and therefore almost impossible to offer protection for women. This places them in highly precarious situations. Until the structural issues in our housing market are addressed this is unlikely to change.

I am sure all members are well aware of the housing crisis in Tasmania; it is not limited to our major cities. We must ensure our policy discussions and decisions consider gender issues and the vulnerability of women and girls facing homelessness in Tasmania when considering the broader challenges and questions. We will fail all Tasmanians if we do not adequately address these matters of homelessness as homelessness is rarely a matter a choice and is more likely to be a choice of the lesser of two evils. We must act if we are to ensure women and girls are to experience an empowered future.

The cost and reality of violence against women was investigated in a report titled 'A high price to pay: the economic case for preventing violence against women', published in November 2015 by PricewaterhouseCoopers Australia, at the request of Our Watch and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. That report noted that the combined health, administration and social

welfare cost of violence against women has been estimated to be \$21.7 billion a year, with projections suggesting that if no further actions are taken to prevent violence against women, costs will accumulate to \$323.4 billion over a 30-year period from 2014-15 to 2044-45. So much money could be saved as well as a reduction in harm to women and girls and some men.

While it is important to focus on costs, it reminds us of the real extent of this issue. If more funds could be spent on preventative and other community building strategies, we would all benefit. Another sustainable development progress measure stated that the average amount of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work is more than threefold higher for women than men according to survey data from 83 countries and areas. Available data indicates that time spent on domestic chores accounts for the large proportion of the gender gap in unpaid work.

Mr President, I will speak more about the gender pay gap at a later time; however, this reflects on us in Australia because more unpaid domestic work continues to be carried out by women than men in this country.

Another progress measure stated that globally women's participation in single and lower houses of national parliaments reached 23.4 per cent in 2017, just 10 per cent higher than in 2000. Such slow progress suggests stronger political commitment and more ambitious measures and quotas are needed to boost women's political participation and empowerment. We can hold our heads up high on this one in Tasmania. All political parties, however, need to ensure women's participation in politics, particularly at a parliamentary level, is given proper attention. We see one party in particular has more women than men, and the other with more men than women. While this evens things up, I think more work needs to be done.

Women are still under-represented in managerial positions. In the majority of 67 countries with data from 2009 to 2015, less than a third of senior and middle management positions were held by women. I commend the Government for its focus on increasing the number of women on government boards and committees. They were, however, working off a very low base. They still lag significantly in the area of women holding chairs of these boards and committees - progress, yes, but more work is needed.

The Commonwealth Women's Forum's second request to the Commonwealth Heads of Government was to -

Build on the global movement to accelerate progress to gender equity and empowerment and to use the Secretariat's convening power to bring together a high profile visible taskforce of champions made up of both male and female leaders from political, public and private sectors at the national, regional and local levels to champion gender equality and promote women's access to leadership positions across the Commonwealth, and to hold governments and businesses accountable on reaching the global target of 50 per cent representation across all levels of decision-making.

The Government has been active in this area in the public sector and has made significant advances, although, as I said earlier, not all political parties have made much progress within their own party ranks.

The outcome statement notes -



Women's power and decision-making in the political, public and private sectors are essential to achieving gender equality, and is therefore crucial for successful implementation of SDGs. The absence of women in senior leadership positions and their lack of participation and representation restrict opportunities to create policies that will have a broader impact and greater benefit for the whole of society as a result of increased gender equality between women and men.

Of course, this includes equality for men as well as women in terms of representation, and I hope we can all play a part as champions for change. I firmly believe male champions are as important as female champions to this cause. I will speak more about this under another topic in a moment.

As Request 9 of the outcome notes, the CWF -

Reiterate the importance of involving men and boys in changing attitudes, social norms and behaviours to facilitate women's meaningful participation in the political, religious and private sector at all levels.

Request 3 states there is a need to -

Carry out a systemic review and repeal of discriminatory laws and ensure that new laws undergo a gender impact assessment on women's rights and participation in leadership and economy.

This is an area where more can be done. Some of it comes down to training and ensuring all those involved in law reform are cognisant of the need to ensure all new laws and amendments to existing laws are assessed against robust gender impact measures. All statutes should be reviewed regularly to ensure they are necessary, contemporary and meet our needs as a state. If we become aware of any legislation that does not promote gender equality, we must speak up and seek change.

Request 6 says in part -

Recommend that Heads, drawing on Commonwealth good practice and experience, develop practical strategies and legislation that increases women's access to leadership from the grassroots to national and international levels, to enable meaningful political leadership, by women.

I believe the Government is doing a good job progressing this equality measure. There is a range of initiatives from all levels of government seeking to attract more women into elected positions, and those initiatives are to be commended. However, more needs to be done to ensure women hold senior positions in these decision-making bodies, including the ministry in government, and that we promote similar actions in the private sector. You cannot point the finger at the private sector if we do not do it in the public.

Request 8 -

Call on Heads to commission an independent review of violence against women in political and public life and in the home and to establish a funded zero-tolerance national policy to prohibit and prevent the specific forms of election-

related violence (both in the public and domestic settings, and including online violence) experienced by women voters, women candidates and their teams.

This is a real challenge in many countries. We heard of many harrowing experiences some women have faced in seeking election, particularly in the developing nations. It was heartbreaking to hear what young women particularly had to endure seeking election. Many overcame those challenges and were elected, but we have no idea in this country what that is like, thankfully.

We also recall with great sadness the 2016 murder of Jo Cox, a passionate and hardworking member of parliament in England. The mother of two young children was shot and stabbed in her constituency. Thankfully we have not had to face such a tragedy in Australia in recent history, but we cannot be complacent. Attacks on social media are almost considered part of the role. I do not accept they should be, but they almost are and should not remain unchallenged. The culture of respect is where this discussion must start and be conducted.

Under the heading 'Women, Peace and Security', Request 11 -

Call for more efforts to challenge gender norms and other injustices that contribute to women's oppression and perpetuate conflict and insecurity, and to sensitise and empower women to be actively involved in all stages of conflict mitigation and peace building, from conflict prevention to the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements.

While this is perhaps more focused on a global perspective, it remains relevant at a local level. Conflict occurs at all levels, from the family home to civil unrest and war around the world. We all have a role to play in actively seeking to promote and build a peaceful world. It starts with how we conduct ourselves in our own homes, our own communities and countries as global citizens.

The outcome statement also refers to women's economic empowerment, stating -

Enhancing women's economic empowerment enables women to exercise power over their lives and results in sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The approach of gender-inclusive growth is multi-faceted and requires the ending of discriminatory norms, behaviours and legislation, and gender-based violence, provision of quality education and enabling legislation and regulations which recognise women's disproportionate roles as care givers.

There is a role for all levels of government to create enabling environments for economic participation of women and implementing and monitoring actual change.

We are fortunate in Australia to have equitable access to a minimum of 12 years of free quality primary and secondary education. This is not the case in many countries.

The CWF also requested a commitment to increasing women's access to, and use of, enabling technology - in particular, information and communications technology - to ensure women are included in the growing digital economy.

Request 19 calls on the Heads to -

create an enabling macroeconomic environment - including adoption of progressive tax regimes, gender responsive budgeting, investment in social infrastructure - promote decent and safe place for work; recognise, reduce and redistribute women's unpaid care work; address occupational segregation and the gender pay gap; promote protection against discrimination and a living wage for women in line with international agreements and human rights principles; and introduce and enforce existing legislations on women's access to, and control over land and other productive resources and services.

While many of these are not major issues of concern for us here, we need to be sure that all policy decisions adhere to the principles of this request.

Gender budgeting is often overlooked and while I will raise the matter of the gender pay gap at a later time, we must be aware of the reality and the negative impact this has on women. This is supported by Request 22, which calls on the Heads to recognise the economic value of unpaid care work - predominantly the role of women.

Under the heading 'Women and Climate Change' - I know that there are still climate change sceptics in policymaking positions; however, when you meet people and hear the real stories of the very real impact of climate change on many of our Pacific neighbours, you really cannot ignore it. Often in these nations, many of which are developing nations, women are instrumental in the solutions and must be included. The outcome statement noted that women are at greatest risk of death from climate events and bear the greatest long-term impact on food security, sanitation, life and livelihoods from the slow burn of climate change.

Request 23 urges the Commonwealth to -

commit to establish a fully resourced Commission directly addressing climate change in the small states as a matter of priority and all other countries in the Commonwealth. Such commission should incorporate business, civil society, religious communities, academia, United Nations programmes, professional bodies, local governments, individuals and all stakeholders.

I would like to think it is something we could all support and work on together.

The final area covered in the outcome statement was ending violence against women and girls, a vitally important area. The statement notes -

While many countries have made progress in adopting legislation to end Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and harmful traditional practices including child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), substantive challenges remain in preventing VAWG and in accessing justice and service provision. VAWG is one of the most pervasive human rights violations and has numerous damaging consequences for the welfare of women and girls preventing them from full participation in society. It also affects women and girls' families, their communities and states and, at two (2) per cent of the global Gross Domestic Product (UN Women, 2016), it has significant economic costs.

While in Tasmania and Australia we experience different levels of harm and damaging consequences for the welfare of women and girls when compared to some other nations, it is vital we do not allow any negative actions or impacts to go unchallenged.

In the matter I referred to previously, the Commonwealth Women's Forum calls on the Heads to recognise that intimate partner violence is the most prevalent form of VAWG in places and times of conflict, and called on the Commonwealth Heads of Government to provide technical and financial resources to end VAWG, including through development and implementation of legal reforms and changing social attitudes and structures to ensure justice for survivors.

This ongoing work is needed here as well as in the developing nations. As I noted earlier, we continue to see intimate partner violence being a major cause of harm to women and a small number of men. Governments, current and past, have done much to draw attention to family violence and the support for victims needs to be commended. Random attacks causing serious harm, injury and death to women are all too frequent, as we have recently seen in Melbourne and Queensland.

Request 25 calls on the Heads to -

support the Commonwealth Secretariat to build a coalition of governments, businesses, civil society, human rights and faith-based institutions, communities and individuals to prevent VAWG through the development of multi-sectoral tools, identification of strategies and initiatives to address VAWG, increase obligations on states to adhere to international standards and domestic laws to enhance the accountability and rehabilitation of perpetrators.

These are very important requests and I sincerely hope we can all play our part in supporting these actions to ensure our domestic laws meet the needs of those at risk, predominantly women and children.

The very welcome inclusion of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Right at CHOGM in 2018 for the first time was acknowledged. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Right are inextricably linked to other relevant universal human rights, ensuring women and adolescent girls are able to lead healthy, empowered and productive lives. Request 27 calls on Heads to -

implement and uphold comprehensive SRHR for women and young people and ensure that by 2030 they have universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes with relevant data collection, review and follow-up.

One important aspect of SRHR is access to a full range of pregnancy options for women, including those with an unplanned and unwanted pregnancy or where the life of the mother and/or the foetus are at risk. There was significant discussion regarding this topic, with many women sharing their own experiences or experiences of women in their care or communities who were denied access to quality sexual and reproductive health care. Many countries lacked the legislative framework to facilitate access to termination of pregnancy, whilst others had the legislative framework but lacked the policy framework. Sadly, this is the case in our state. Termination of pregnancy is legal but surgical terminations are not equally accessible by all Tasmanian women. We simply cannot accept that. Women should not be forced to travel upwards of four to five hours, 10 hours return, or fly to the mainland of Australia to access a simple surgical procedure that is

legal in this state. There is a need to ensure adequate health service provision is provided in accordance with World Health Organization guidelines.

The WHO guidelines for safe abortion state that providers should be aware of local laws and reporting requirements. Within the framework of national laws, all norms, standards and clinical practice related to abortion should promote and protect women's and adolescents' health and their human rights, informed and voluntary decision-making, autonomy in decision-making, non-discrimination, confidentiality and privacy.

The World Health Organization includes some practical examples of how providers can apply these principles, which include -

- Treating all women equally regardless of age, ethnicity, socio-economic or marital status et cetera in a prompt and timely fashion.
- Ensuring that abortion care is delivered in a manner that respects all women as decision-makers.
- Providing complete, accurate and easy-to-understand information respecting the dignity of the woman; guaranteeing her privacy and confidentiality.
- Being sensitive to the needs or perspectives of the woman.
- Protecting medical information against unauthorised disclosures.
- Being aware of situations in which a woman may be coerced into having an abortion against her will, e.g. based on her health status, such as living with HIV.
- When dealing with adolescents, encouraging parents' engagement through support, information and education. Do not insist on parents' authorisation unless it is a legal requirement.

I suggest the Tasmanian Government policy related to access to safe abortion does not meet the safe abortion guidelines published by the WHO because it is discriminatory with regard to women from regional areas, especially those who are also from low socio-economic backgrounds. It does not treat all women equally regardless of age, ethnicity, socio-economic or marital status in a prompt and timely way as the guidelines require.

It is incumbent on all of us to continue to work to remove this discriminatory effect of the current policy related to access to surgical termination in Tasmania. The outcome statement also comments on female genital mutilation and cutting, highlighting 200 million women and girls globally are living with the impacts of FGMC and a further 3.9 million girls are at risk of being cut every year. The CWF urged Heads to take decisive actions to develop resources and implement holistic national action plans in alignment with the sustainable development goals to deliver on the international and Commonwealth commitments to eliminate this practice.

With regard to the SDG 5 referred to earlier - Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls - one progress measure relates to female genital mutilation and cutting. It notes that the harmful practice of female genital mutilation and cutting has declined by 24 per cent since around

2000, which is good news. Nevertheless, prevalence remains high in some of the 30 countries with representative data. In those countries, survey data from around 2015 indicated more than one in three girls between 15 to 19 years of age has undergone the procedure compared to nearly one in two girls in around 2000.

This is a barbaric practice. While unlawful in our country, we need to remain vigilant to ensure young women and girls are not taken overseas to have this awful practice carried out. This does happen. The CWF also called for more resources to support the Commonwealth Secretariat to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to consider the complex drivers and data of child early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation and cutting to inform strategies and actions, including supporting schemes for women of all ages and to prioritise early programming to respond to and prevent female genital mutilation and cutting and child forced marriage, particularly in emergencies and in armed conflicts.

The CHOGM communique released following the meeting considered gender equality and inclusion with the Commonwealth Heads of Government committing to ratifying and implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women - CEDAW - through legislation, policies and programs that mainstream and promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in social, economic and political life. The Heads were also encouraged by continuing action by member countries and two Commonwealth bodies to prevent and eliminate sexual and gender-based violence, child early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation as barriers to the development and full realisation of girls' and women's human rights and to sustainable growth and development.

Heads also encouraged support for already married girls, adolescents and women who have been affected by these practices. It is somewhat disappointing to note SRHR was not noted in the CHOGM communique. It is important this area remains on the agenda to ensure best possible outcome for all women and girls, in addition to the above actions.

The issue of human trafficking was also raised in the outcomes statement. I will cover this important area very briefly. The statement in part reads -

Highlight that women and girls are also disproportionately affected by human trafficking, domestic slavery, servitude and child exploitation which is a human rights violation affecting close to 152 million children engaged in child labour, almost half of it in its worst forms, while over 40 million people worldwide are trapped in slavery and forced labour, the majority of whom are women and girls.

Request 32 -

Urge strengthening of gender sensitive collaboration and cooperation with governments, businesses, civil society and development partners at the national and international level to end human trafficking and child exploitation.

There is a call to encourage endorsement of the Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. It is pleasing to note the federal parliament is currently addressing a modern slavery bill, which I hope will gain the full support of the federal parliament.

I recently asked the Leader whether Tasmania would need to enact a state-based statute as New South Wales already has in this regard to ensure Tasmania complies. The answer was that we need

to wait until the bill has progressed through the federal parliament, so I will be following that up at a later time.

In closing I wish to refer specifically to paragraph 2(d) of the motion before us, noting the Commonwealth Women's Forum call for the Commonwealth to lead the world by creating and strengthening an enabling environment for women's empowerment. This call was made to ensure we work together to achieve -

a sustainable, secure, prosperous and fairer society that is free from violence and coercion, focuses on actions to mainstream gender in all government programs, policies and initiatives, including gender budgeting.

While we in Australia have made significant and important advances in meeting these expectations, including at all levels of government, we need to remain focused on matters that need more attention. We have seen many examples around the world, and closer to home, where many women and girls have not been afforded the privileges many of us take for granted. It is vital that all decisions we make in this place are considered through a lens of inclusion, gender equality and respect. If this is the default position, we will continue to see change to achieve these aims. It is up to us to be and to lead the change we want to see in our local communities in this state, the nation and the world. The erosion of rights or opportunities for women and denial of any issues that women and girls face is what poses the greatest risk. We must remain vigilant and ensure that known inequities are addressed and support is provided. We also need to work with our sisters in other countries facing even more challenging situations to ensure women and girls around the world can reach their full potential.

Mr President, I am grateful to have had this opportunity to participate in the Commonwealth Women's Forum and meet so many amazing women doing their bit to achieve these goals. I will continue to do what I can to promote an empowered future for women and girls. That is one of the reasons I wanted to move this motion and discuss it - I think we need to keep these things on the agenda and at the forefront of our thinking. If we do not, complacency slips in, rights are eroded and equity is challenged. I commend the motion to the House and look forward to other members' contributions on this important matter.

[4.02 p.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I thank the member for Murchison for bringing this motion forward. The Tasmanian Government is strongly committed to gender equality in Tasmania and supports the Commonwealth Women's Forum delegates for raising these important issues, such as increasing the number of women in leadership positions, raising women's economic participation and ending violence against women.

Women can face a number of barriers to economic security, such as interrupted careers due to caring responsibilities, less time than men in the paid workforce, receiving lower pay, working in casual and part-time employment and poverty in retirement.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to creating a more inclusive Tasmania that empowers and enables women and girls to fully participate in our economic, social, political and community life. This includes the 2018-19 Budget, which is making record investments into health, education, housing, infrastructure, economic growth and jobs, which all benefit women and girls.

Through the Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2018-2021, the Government is taking action to promote gender equality through a focus on women's safety, leadership and participation, financial security, and health and wellbeing. For example, the Hodgman Government acknowledges barriers that have held back Tasmanian women and girls from fully participating in sport, which is why we support the development of high-quality and well-planned sport and recreation facilities as well as increased opportunities for women and girls to participate in sport, recreation and physical activities. To break down these barriers, the 2018-19 Budget includes:

- investing \$10 million over the next two years to upgrade female sports facilities across the state, the largest investment per capita in girls' and women's facilities by any state or territory government - I am pleased to say that I am a big supporter of the Penguin Two Blues girls' teams, which is wonderful;
- increased support in grassroots and development pathway opportunities for Tasmanian women and girls through partnership with the Collingwood Football Club, Magpies Netball Team and the Tasmania-North Melbourne joint venture AFL women's teams.
- a 'ticket to play' sports voucher system which offers \$100 towards club fees for young Tasmanians aged between five and 17 years who need it most to assist them into sport.

The Government has also announced \$120 000 to connect, support and celebrate rural women through the voluntary organisation Tasmanian Women in Agriculture - a fine group of women - over the next four years, and \$75 000 to develop a new workforce development plan for the IT industry, with a particular focus on encouraging women and diversity in the sector.

Like the Commonwealth Women's Forum, the Tasmanian Government recognises that despite much work being done in this area, gender inequalities still persist in our community, as they do around the world. The Government knows equal participation of all members of society is critical to reducing economic disadvantage, enhancing economic growth and democratic governments, and increasing the wellbeing of women, girls and their families.

I would like to address women in leadership. Since the Tasmanian Liberal government has been elected, there has been a whole series of firsts, including -

- the Tasmanian first female Speaker, the honourable Elise Archer MP
- the first female governor, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner AC
- Jacquie Petrusma, member for Franklin, assigned as the first dedicated minister for women since 2006
- first female head of the Magistrates Court, Chief Magistrate Catherine Rheinberger.

In 2016, Madam Speaker and her Standing Orders Committee amended Tasmania's House of Assembly Standing Orders to enable women to breastfeed their children in the Chamber and granted MPs 12 weeks of maternity leave.

Tasmania is making history by becoming the first Australian state to return a female majority lower House parliament, with 13 women and 12 men elected to the House of Assembly earlier this year. Tasmania's lower House now has the highest level of female representation of all Australian states - 52 per cent. Furthermore, with the election of the Jane Howlett MLC, member for Prosser,



the Parliament of Tasmania now has a ratio of 50:50 members of parliament, with 20 women and 20 men.

**Women in governance:** the Government is committed to increasing gender balance in leadership and decision-making, such as introducing processes to increase the number of women on government boards and monitoring the success of these processes. This included the release of the Government's Women on Boards Strategy 2015-2020 which the Minister for Women, Jacqui Petrusma, released on 1 July 2015. In August 2015, the Government also determined all appointments to government business boards must comply with the Government's policy of gender equality. In July 2015, women held 33 per cent of all board positions. As of June 2018, that percentage was at 41.2 per cent; as at the 24 May 2018, 53 per cent of government business enterprise directors were women, while 43 per cent of the directors of state-owned companies were women.

This increase in overall numbers demonstrates change can happen when there is greater awareness of gender equality issues and a concerted effort is made to identify suitably qualified and experienced women for appointments. The Government will continue this work to achieve its target of 50 per cent representation of women on government boards and committees by July 2020.

**Gender diversity in the public sector:** in August 2016, the Tasmanian State Service launched its Gender Diversity in the Tasmanian State Service strategy with a commitment to having equal representation of men and women in the senior executive service. The State Service Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the supporting Diversity and Inclusion Framework launched in May 2017 include priorities such as workplace flexibility policies and inclusive employment practices to build gender equality in the Tasmanian State Service. The heads of departments have established a goal to achieve gender equality in the senior executive service, with a target of at least 40 per cent of senior executives to be women by 2020. The target has almost been achieved well ahead of that time frame. As at March 2018, 39.19 per cent of the senior executive are women, a 10 per cent increase in women in the senior executive since March 2014.

**Eliminating violence against women and children:** living free of violence is everyone's right and gender equality in public and private life is essential to end violence against women and to promote respectful relationships that benefit the whole community. Nearly one in three women - that is 30.5 per cent - in Australia have experienced physical violence and nearly one in five, which is 18.4 per cent, have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15 years, so it is decreasing.

In 2016-17, 84 per cent of sexual assaults reported to Tasmania Police were committed against females and 67 per cent of those assaults were committed in residences. That comes from the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management in 2017. The Tasmanian Government has committed to addressing gender violence through Safe Homes, Safe Families, a five-year action plan with direct action to address family violence in Tasmania across three priority areas - changing the attitudes and behaviours that lead to family violence; supporting families affected by violence; and strengthening legal responses to family violence to hold perpetrators to account for their violent behaviours.

The Tasmanian Government is investing over \$20.2 million in the 2018-19 Budget to address this scourge. This includes -

- extending our \$26 million nation-leading Safe Homes, Safe Families, Tasmania's Family Violence Action Plan 2015-2020, with a further \$6 million per annum provided to implement the Family Violence Action Plan stage 2
- \$1.5 million into additional funding for the Safe at Home service systems to address increased demand following the release of Safe Homes, Safe Families
- planning for a new women and children's crisis shelter in the south with associated mapping of the need of family-style crisis accommodation in the north and north-west
- \$200 000 to comprehensively research and develop a whole-of-government action plan against sexual violence, which will include a review of multidisciplinary models operating across Australia and provide recommendations regarding the best approach for Tasmania
- \$450 000 over three years for the family violence primary prevention project to help drive generational and attitude change by backing rural young women to become change-makers in their north-west coast communities; the project will provide workshops on mentoring, leadership empowerment and digital inclusion for at-risk young women who have experienced or witnessed family violence.

Key achievements in the implementation of Safe Homes, Safe Families to address gender violence include -

- development and implementation of respectful relationships education in all Tasmanian government schools, a program which supports students to build healthy, respectful and equal relationships and addresses the attitudes and behaviours that lead to family violence
- opening of the new Hobart Women's Shelter in March 2018, providing a purpose-built consolidated crisis facility that is close to a range of essential services and increases capacity by over 30 per cent
- the Keeping Women Safe in their Homes initiative, which provides security upgrades for women and children experiencing family violence so that they can remain safely in their own home or a home of their choice
- development and establishment of Safe Choices, a statewide family violence service which provide non-crisis support, including practical information, advice and referral to people experiencing family violence and to those who want to leave a violent relationship
- establishment of the Safe Families Coordination Unit to bring together government agencies in a combined statewide unit to provide timely responses to family violence
- rollout of the White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Program across Tasmanian government departments, promoting respectful relationships and gender equality within the workplace and demonstrating a culture of zero tolerance of violence against women. The Tasmanian Government is also a signatory to the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022, called the Safe Homes, Safe Families action plan - the Tasmanian Government's primary response to the national plan.

Tasmania's implementation of the national plan will also be delivered through the Women's Strategy and the new family violence action and sexual violence action plans, with planning for the whole-of-government sexual violence action plan commenced.

The Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2018-2021: on 24 May 2018, the Government released the Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2018-2021, building on the achievements of its predecessor, the Tasmanian Women's Plan 2013-2018. Some examples of the achievements of the previous women's plan include preparing a women's workforce development plan that will be actioned through the Women's Strategy and the launch of the Tasmanian Government's women's website, an online resource that features information about programs, services, policies and events for women and promotes opportunities for women and girls to participate in political, social and economic aspects of life by having all the information in one place.

Nearly 1400 Tasmanians contributed to the new Women's Strategy. The Women's Strategy calls for a united approach from government, private and community sectors with the wider community to work together to achieve gender equality. The Tasmanian Women's Strategy seeks to address gender inequalities by focusing on four identified strategic priority areas for action - financial security, leadership and participation, health and wellbeing, and safety. These priority areas were identified through an extensive consultation process, but they also align with international priorities such as those set by the Commonwealth Women's Forum and the Tasmanian Women's Council. The latter champions the rights and interests of women in government decision-making and advises the Government on issues of importance to women, and it will also play a key role in monitoring the implementation of the Women's Strategy.

Financial security for women: under the Government's Building your Future, First Year Agenda, the Financial Security for Women Action Plan will be launched in the second quarter. A key deliverable for 2018 under the Women's Strategy, Financial Security for Women Action Plan will address outcomes for women in paid employment, increasing the number of women and girls in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine in the STEMM area. There are areas of trade, building financial capabilities and increasing opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

The Tasmanian Government is also addressing the gender pay gap by role-modelling best practice in the State Service. It is doing this through its Diversity and Inclusion Policy, which addresses unconscious bias in recruitment and promotion, and encourages flexible work arrangements across all agencies to increase the representation of women in its senior executive.

There are federal government initiatives such as superannuation catch-up measures and support for financial literacy, as well as ongoing funding for women in STEMM. These initiatives will also help drive change to ensure more women can achieve financial security.

We again thank the member for Murchison for raising the motion on the Commonwealth Women's Forum; similarly to the forum, the Tasmanian Government's objectives include supporting and empowering women to reach their full potential in economic, social and cultural spheres and the Government will continue to make gender equality a priority for Tasmania. The Government acknowledges there is more work to be done, and the Hodgman Government will continue to work to reduce economic disadvantage, enhance economic growth and increase the wellbeing of Tasmanian women, girls and their families.

[4.19 p.m.]

**Mr VALENTINE** (Hobart) - Mr President, I thank the member for Murchison for raising this issue because obviously there is a need to ensure gender equality exists, but also gender equity. The

difference needs to be understood. The best way is to describe it is to imagine three individuals looking at a football match. There is a solid fence in front of them and the first individual can see over the fence, the second one is right at eye height and the next one cannot see over at all because they are too short. You have three boxes and if you give each of those individuals a box -

**Ms Forrest** - The same size.

**Mr VALENTINE** - The same size. The first person is really right up there - they can absolutely see everything - the second person might get to see, but the third person is too short to see even with the box under them. Equity says you give the shortest person two boxes, the middle person who can just about see over the fence gets one box and the person on the end who can see anyway does not get a box. It is very simple.

**Ms Forrest** - So the member for Mersey gets two boxes?

**Mr VALENTINE** - It is a very simple description. It demonstrates the difference between equality and equity. The equity process is where you give one person two boxes, another one, and the final none so everybody gets to see the football match. To give them equality is different. By giving them all one box, someone is still disadvantaged. Bring that back to a place like the parliament or indeed our general community when it comes to how we treat people in our society. It is important we concentrate on equity, more so than equality. We can have a 50:50 parliament; and you might say that is equality, but is it effective equality? It really needs to be equity; we need to ensure those in parliament, for instance, have the opportunity to participate in the full gamut of parliamentary activity regardless of what their family circumstances may be.

Because women have far greater caring roles, there may have to be more consideration given as to the timing of certain activity in parliament. I am not focusing on any one particular thing, but those sorts of things need to be taken into account. There are single fathers as there are single mothers - I do not have the statistic, but there are probably more single mothers than single fathers in terms of the role of caring for children.

In my own circumstances, I recall that back in the 1970s my wife had to resign to have children, but I continued to be employed and to be able to add to my superannuation. My wife was not in that position because she had to resign. She was disadvantaged in that regard. We have to think of all aspects of things like parliamentary activity and the work environment to make sure we are allowing individuals regardless of gender the same opportunities. I thank the member for bringing this matter forward. I have raised those two issues for us to consider, making sure we understand fully what the difference is between gender equity and gender equality.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **MOTION**

### **National Redress Scheme - Sale of Anglican Churches**

[4.25 p.m.]

**Ms HOWLETT** (Prosser) - Madam Deputy President, I move -

That the Legislative Council:

- (1) Commends the Anglican Church for their decision to participate in the National Redress Scheme.
- (2) Notes that the Anglican Church intends to fund their participation by the sale of 109 properties across the state.
- (3) Notes the concerns raised in regards to the potential adverse impacts of this decision on local communities.
- (4) Calls on the Anglican Church to consider these concerns, and to assess the suitability of adopting alternative funding methods, such as selling their commercial properties, or borrowing against the properties proposed for sale.

First, I thank Ron and Trish Sonners for travelling so far this morning to watch this debate. Unfortunately, we were running quite late today so they could not make it.

There is considerable concern in many of the communities I represent regarding the plan by the Anglican Diocese of Tasmania to sell 108 of its properties.

I commend the Anglican Diocese's decision to partake in the National Redress Scheme, and the community agrees that paying redress to the victims of abuse by the Tasmanian Anglican clergy is the right thing to do.

In order to fund its obligations under the redress scheme, the Anglican Church is planning to sell properties that are of great significance to local communities. Among these properties are more than half of Tasmania's Anglican churches, 76 in total, the bulk of which are situated in rural and regional areas around the state, and many of which are located in my electorate of Prosser. Eight of the nine churches in the Southern Midlands are listed for sale along with the only church in the Tasman municipality, and many country towns in Prosser will become churchless.

All the 76 churches listed for sale are historic buildings, each one with its own unique and long history.

An example of this is St Martin's Anglican Church in Dunalley, which is the only structure in the town that survived the devastating 2013 bushfires that destroyed the whole town. The church now stands as the only physical connection between old Dunalley and the phoenix-like new Dunalley that has emerged from the ashes.

**Mr Valentine** - Forty-five per cent of homes in Dunalley went in that fire.

**Ms HOWLETT** - It is heartbreaking, member for Hobart, and you grew up in Dunalley. It is a symbol of the town's resilience but the locals are heartbroken the church is on the list to be sold.

Most of the churches were constructed on land donated by local landowners and the funds for construction were raised by donations from the community. Since their construction, the churches have been maintained using funds and time donated by parishioners and community members.

Last month I attended a meeting in Woodsdale to discuss the proposed sale of St Matthias' Anglican Church, a quaint weatherboard church maintained and cared for by generations of

Woodsdale-Levendale residents. It is only very recently that the community came together to raise funds to fix the church's decaying guttering. A high proportion of locals regularly attend mass at this church and it is filled to its maximum capacity for its Easter and Christmas services. Most members of the rural communities have a connection to their local church: people were baptised in them, married in them and have attended the funerals of family and friends in them.

These churches are very sacred places. In rural and regional areas the local church is an important part of the community and if a community were to lose its church, it would have similar ramifications to that community losing its school. Churches play a significant role in the spiritual, mental and social fabric of small communities.

The sale of these churches could also have practical ramifications because parishioners in many towns would be required to travel great distances to attend services in churches out of their jurisdiction. This is especially apparent in rural and regional Tasmania, where public transport is less frequent and the distances between communities are much larger compared to those in metropolitan and suburban communities.

In the Southern Midlands, parishioners would have no choice but to embark on a round trip that would take a number of hours to travel to attend a service in either Oatlands or New Norfolk. They would be unable to attend mass in nearby Bothwell. In the Central Highlands, St Michael and All Angels Church, nicknamed the 'Country Cathedral', is also going to be sold. Nor will they be able to attend a service in Buckland because every church in the Buckland Parish is also to be sold - and who knows where Anglicans from the east coast and Tasman will attend church? Triabunna, Orford, Spring Beach and Koonya are set to lose all their churches. Anglicans from these areas will have to travel either to Sorell or Swansea to attend mass. For some people this will be a round trip of almost 100 kilometres!

Since the plan to sell churches was announced, I have been inundated by correspondence from constituents and mayors raising their concerns over the sale of these churches. The people I have spoken to regarding this issue believe that the sale of churches is not necessary to fund the redress scheme.

We also know the sales are intended to fund more than the expected cost of redress, which many people have found hard to accept. This is something Anglican Bishop Richard Condie has openly discussed in the media. On 25 July in an interview on ABC 936, Bishop Condie conceded that the Church is proposing to sell more properties than it needs to fund the redress scheme.

When asked by the interviewer, 'So all up, you'll be raising almost three times more money than you need to?', Bishop Condie replied -

We need to raise \$5 million for the redress fund, but we also need to make sure that the Ministry of the Anglican Church in Tasmania is sustainable into the future. So, we could have sold fewer church buildings and retained full proceeds of the sale ...

Madam Deputy President, I am concerned and the constituents I represent are very upset by the process the Church is undertaking, when local communities are being asked to raise funds and justify why their local churches should not be sold.

Some parishes have been told that if they can raise a certain amount of money and give it to the Diocese, their church will be taken off the sale list. This is something that St Matthias' Church

in Windermere was able to recently accomplish, because parishioners and residents were able to successfully raise \$45 000 to have their church removed from the sale list. Unfortunately, most churches do not have the ability to raise these sorts of funds, and it is not right that they should be forced to do so in the first place.

Interestingly, Bishop Condie appears to have conceded that the Church's proposed sale process is likely to be significantly watered down. When asked in the interview on 25 July, 'Why do we have to sell 76 churches and graveyards, why sell all of those? Why not sell some and meet the redress obligations and leave the rest alone?', the Bishop replied, 'Well, that will probably be the outcome of this process.'

Speaking for my constituents, I implore the Anglican Diocese of Tasmania to closely consider the concerns held by members of their parishes and the broader community and to assess the suitability of adopting alternative funding methods, such as selling their commercial properties or borrowing against the properties proposed for sale.

The Anglican Diocese of Tasmania must consider alternative options for raising the funds for redress and not sell these churches. Members will be aware that the Government is not able to halt these sales, but where cemeteries are a part of a property identified for sale, there is a regulatory role for the state. The state Government has initiated a legislative review of the Burial and Cremation Act 2002. The Tasmanian Government is committed to preserving, protecting and, where appropriate, strengthening both the rights of community members and the obligations on cemetery managers. The Government is reviewing the legislative and regulatory provisions that apply to Tasmanian cemeteries to ensure -

- the continued appropriate, safe and responsible management of cemeteries
- the honouring of exclusive burial rights
- continued public access for relatives and friends of the deceased.

This is an important body of work, particularly given many properties of concern to the community also include cemeteries.

Ultimately, however, the potential sale of these properties sits with the Anglican Church. I call on the Anglican Church to consider the concerns of the community, and to assess the suitability of adopting alternative funding methods. I call on the members of this Chamber to support this motion.

[4.37 p.m.]

**Mr FARRELL** (Derwent) - Madam Deputy President, I support the motion brought to this Chamber by the member for Prosser and thank her for doing so. I am normally a big fan of separation of church and state and keeping the interference of one with the other to a bare minimum, but the situation that has arisen is an issue of community concern, particularly in rural Tasmania.

Over the past couple of weeks I have attended public meetings - one on a very cold, believe it or not, blustery night in Ouse, and another one on a very cold blustery night in Bothwell. Both meetings were very well attended; and I notice that in the Chamber today is Alex Tay, the Director of Local Government, who was also present at both those meetings. I know the member for Prosser has been keeping in touch with various church communities throughout her electorate and more widely. Jen Butler, a Labor member for Lyons, has also been fairly active on this front.

It has been quite an exercise and a lot of learning for me to go around these small communities, seeing town halls packed with passionate people who are worried about, in some ways, the death

of their small towns - it can be churches, schools or hospitals. People in regional parts of Tasmania are doing it pretty tough as far as services go. In this whole issue, one must congratulate the Anglican Church for joining the redress scheme - it is very important that they have - but from listening to many people in the small communities we have travelled to, it is not the churches that have been targeted that were at the root of the issue. It seems very unfair.

Madam Deputy President, although many people at the town hall meetings have admitted they have not been the most regular churchgoers over the years, they still have strong links with their church. As the member for Prosser mentioned, there have been many births, deaths and marriages celebrated in those church buildings and people hold on to that very important heritage of their community. I looked in the dictionaries for the definition of church and it appears at the moment you have the church wanting to sell the church upsetting the church. That is because you have the church body as a whole, the administrative church selling the physical body of the church which has greatly upset the church community. It seems that the members of communities targeted to lose their churches have not been properly consulted with about this matter. I probably should admit also I have a slight conflict of interest as some years ago -

**Ms Rattray** - You attended church.

**Mr FARRELL** - Well, that was some years ago. Some years ago I purchased a former Anglican church, which resides in my backyard. I do not do any services; I do not run some sort of occult practice out in the back parts of New Norfolk. It was a church that was sold and had not been used for a long time. I do own a former Anglican church but there is no great concern. It is interesting because we still have people coming to our house and saying that their great-grandma was married or baptised in the church and they would like to look at it. We say, 'Yes, of course', so they come and look at the church and will often tell a story about it.

This church has been moved three times. It was built beyond New Norfolk, in Black Hills, another warm wintery spot in the Derwent Valley. It was moved into Magra for some time, then it was moved across the river when the church sold the land. A local fella who used to move hydro villages and sell them bought it. Originally he was going to sell the bits and pieces off, wreck it and sell it, but he could not bring himself to do that. There were all sorts of problems with the local council so we purchased it and moved it to our place. It has had quite a travelling history - they probably should have brought a caravan in the beginning and it would have been much easier for the church.

From the meetings, it is obvious that in most cases the churches were built on blocks donated by local people, largely built by local people and maintained by local people for a number of years. The church owns the title, but one could question whether they own the right to sell these buildings.

Last weekend I attended a performance by local choirs of Vivaldi's *Gloria* in St Matthew's Church, New Norfolk, which is not up for sale. It is a tremendous piece performed to a very high standard by local choirs backed by people flown in from Sydney. It was a big deal and people absolutely packed this church to hear this wonderful recital. The recital was held to raise funds to maintain the church. The community group had put together the performance; the choir group had covered the cost and whatever of getting extra tenor, bass and contralto singers and all sorts of people. I know, Madam Deputy President, that you are well aware of all those particular types of voices. However, that community group got together to raise funds to maintain St Matthew's; I do not think the Synod or the Diocese had any input. It shows the ownership the community has of their churches, particularly in Bothwell - they call it the 'Country Cathedral', and people go to



Bothwell to look at this historic town and part of the value of it is having a church that is a church sitting there,. It is not a residence, it is not a coffee shop - it is a church. Whether it is being used or not, it is part of the fabric of a fairly historic village, and many villages are exactly the same. The one at Ouse sits on a hill and while it might make a lovely coffee shop or a tearoom or someone's summer getaway house, to keep the fabric of the small community and the historic value of the town, it needs to remain a church.

I was contacted by Dr Caroline Miley, and I would like to read the document she sent to me into *Hansard*.

**Ms Armitage** - It is fairly long.

**Mr FARRELL** - It is very long, yes. Other members may have received this. It is worthwhile because it notes a number of things. I asked Dr Miley if I could read this into *Hansard* because it covers the issues we are talking about; she states in a covering email -

I am an art, architecture and cultural historian who grew up in Tasmania. I have undertaken substantial research into Tasmanian churches and arts and crafts. I am dismayed by the proposed loss to the State and the nation of such a large proportion of the State and national heritage and its impact on local communities.

...

I attach a summary of the significance of the 76 churches and the 42 cemeteries included in the proposed sale.

I will read through this. It starts with a summary of what is to be sold -

- 76 churches
- 32 heritage listed
- 42 cemeteries
- 6 listed historic organs

**The sale of these properties will severely affect:**

### **Religious use**

1. Numbers. The churches listed for sale may not have large congregations, but those who do attend value them highly and are often very long-term members. The particular church is closely bound up with their spirituality, which is not easily transferred to a new place some considerable distance away. It is a known fact in the church that every time you close a church you lose members. A few here and a few there may not seem significant to those who count figures, but taken in the aggregate over the 76 closures, they will add up. And people, especially in the country, wish to be married, buried and baptised in the family church, even if it's the only time they enter it.

2. Diversity. A large number of small churches has the potential for much diversity of worship and community. The removal of this huge number of churches must have a massive effect on diversity of worship and spirituality in

the State, especially if they are to be replaced by large worship centres on the Sydney model.

### **Community Use**

Despite low attendances, most small country churches play a significant role in their local communities. They are frequently the only place that belongs to everyone and is freely available. They often offer the only convenient meeting hall, utilised after bushfires or for local groups to gather. They form the symbolic centre of many villages, even for those who don't enter. They contain the honour boards and memorial of citizens who have died, including at war; they hold Anzac Day and other important services; they offer an occasional refuge for those in trouble; they run op shops and co-ordinate community activities. The church hall is where the local scout or ballet group meets, where the CWA holds its meetings. At least one, there is a Cultural Centre and Avenue of Honour. Many Tasmanians have expressed the view that if the church is closed, it will be the end of their community. They have already lost the bank and the Post Office, perhaps. They should not have to lose their church as well.

### **History and Heritage**

In heritage circles, it is understood that the artefacts held in any one museum or site in a country form part of what is called 'the distributed national collection'. They may technically belong to that individual museum or community, but in a broader sense they belong to the nation as a whole. The early history of Tasmania in the nation's story means that a disproportionate quantity of Australian history is located in Tasmania. Tasmania's history and heritage of the colonial and pioneering era is the Australia's history.

It is unconscionable that such a massive number of buildings, artefacts and precincts should be lost to the National Estate in one fell swoop. The single fact that 32 out of the 76 churches proposed for sale are already Heritage Listed tells its own story of the recognized significance of these buildings. These premises, in the first instance, should be completely exempt from any sell-off.

These are buildings built and attended by convicts and their jailers. They were built on land donated by early State Governors, notable pioneers, State politicians. They were built with funds donated by these colonials and opened by the likes of Sir John Franklin. The grounds of one is one of only two sites in Tasmania where the rare plant *Leptorhynchus Elongatus* can be found.

You will probably know them. You trip over them all the time.

They contain the Honour Boards, memorials and graves of those who fought and died in conflicts from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

In private hands, all this will pass out of the National Estate. Their significance is indelibly associated with their nature as a church, complete with its fittings. The removal of this purpose and furnishings will negate the heritage nature of the building. What is left is a mere shell, not accessible by the public.

## **Cemeteries**

There are 42 cemeteries whose loss will impact severely on local communities and on the country as a whole.

1. Local families have their relations buried in them and visit their graves. It is an important part of local identity. Locals wish to be buried near their relations and in some cases have already bought plots. People do not wish to have to be buried among strangers far away, and respect for the dead means that the possibility of graveyards being closed or resumed is totally unacceptable.

2. Local history: These cemeteries contain much local history and heritage, recording family history and the history of the districts in their headstones and burial registers. Because of early settlement dates, many of the graves are among the earliest in Australia and are therefore of a national significance. They are a resource for historians and genealogists for years to come. They must not be privatised for this reason alone. Among the nationally significant burials are those of Sir Richard Dry, Premier and early opponent of the convict system, Elizabeth Flexmore, a First Fleeter, VC winner Lt-Col John Bisdee and noted artist Tom Roberts, as well as numerous individuals important to Tasmanian history.

## **Architecture, art and craft**

The loss to the State's (and nation's) architectural, arts and craft heritage would be immense, comprising:

- 2 churches by James Blackburn,
- 4 churches by Henry Hunter,
- 4 churches by Alexander North,
- 3 churches by Alan Walker,
- 1 connected with William Butterfield,
- 1 by Robert de Little

as well as others by Tasmanian and international architects such as Crawford Cripps Wegman of Sussex England. Many of these are of an early date in Australia's history and some are in the rare (in Australia) Georgian style or in idiosyncratic Tasmanian Carpenter Gothic.

Art and craft include:

- a rare painted altarpiece by Arthur Boyd;
- a dozen significant, mostly large-scale woodcarvings by Ellen Nora Payne,
- a suite of rare woodcarvings by Marjorie Wilson, the only large-scale works known by her;
- stained glass by UK artists Michael O'Connor and Hardman's, and Australian artists Auguste Fischer, George Dancey, William Montgomery, Mathieson & Gibson, Brooks Robinson, J Radecki and Ferguson and Urie, etc;
- an internationally important set of communion plates by UK architect William Butterfield, among other important works.

Two of the churches have very rare stone altars; there are numerous carved Honour Boards; wood, brass and stone memorial plaques, including many war memorials; carved furnishings of local timbers, including rare use of Huon Pine for fittings; numerous examples of work by local craftspeople and overseas firms.

There are six listed heritage organs by important makers.

Together, the loss of this wealth of art, craft and architecture that is the historic churches of Tasmania - 32 of them heritage-listed - from the National Estate will be a devastating blow, a loss that can never be made good.

### **Tourism**

Tasmania has two great drawcards for tourists which are emphasised in advertising tourist literature: its natural environment and its colonial and convict history. The latter is promoted through heritage trails, local museums, signposting and history-based activities and artefacts. Overseas, historic buildings and their contents, including churches, form a staple of tourist visiting and in Tasmania historic churches such as St Michael and All Angels, Bothwell are rightly listed as tourist destinations. At present this valuable resource is somewhat under-utilised as a tourist draw, and could be substantially increased with targeted promotion. The removal of 50% of all such churches and their contents from public access, plus the associated pioneer cemeteries, must strike a serious blow not only to individual communities' potential to exploit their resources, but to the future of Tasmania's credibility as a destination for tourists interested in early Australian history and heritage. It would seem short-sighted in the extreme to remove at one blow dozens of significant heritage buildings, memorials and art and craft, not to mention seriously compromising many of the picturesque village and country streetscapes and landscapes Tasmania is famous for.

The demands of the Tasmanian tourist industry alone require that these churches remain in their current situation.

...

In conclusion, I beg that you will investigate the proposed sale and act to prevent this mass destruction of so much of the State's, and the Nation's, heritage.

Thank you

Dr Caroline Miley

There is a lot more to this than just selling off churches - it really is about Tasmania's heritage, which is well represented by these buildings. As the member for Prosser said, the sale will generate far more than is required by the redress scheme.

I support the part of the motion that urges the church to look at other options to raise the funds. It is a very important need, but it is not just important to the Christian community - these churches

are part of Tasmania's wider heritage. For the sake of most of our country communities where it impacts on so many people, I am very happy to support the member's motion.

[4.59 p.m.]

**Ms ARMITAGE** (Launceston) - Madam Deputy President, I too support the motion of the member for Prosser and I thank her for bringing it forward. I am sure we have all spoken to many people in our electorates who are very concerned with what is happening. I note on the Anglican Diocese of Tasmania website a comment by the Right Reverend Dr Richard Condie, Bishop of Tasmania which says -

As Bishop I am deeply sad about the situation we face. I do not want to close or sell any churches in Tasmania and it brings me no joy. But I am compelled by compassion for survivors of abuse. We must raise \$8 million for redress, and we have to do this through realisation of our assets.

Apart from churches, we know they have many commercial premises that possibly could have been sold off. I read in the *Sunday Tasmanian* of 3 June that while Bishop Condie told the Synod there was no other viable way to raise the money needed, the church owns 14 commercial properties across Tasmania and has more than \$34 million in shares, but money-making properties were quarantined by church authorities. You have to ask yourself about a Church, about religion, where their priorities lie: is it in the money they make or is it actually in the people they care about who go to church? We hear all too often that not enough people are going to church, that it is something that has fallen away. I guess it has in some ways, but in other ways I know the member for Windermere and I have had many people contact us, particularly about churches in his area.

It has made some people realise that perhaps they need to go to church and need to maybe spend some time in the areas to make sure these churches are not sold. The criteria that helped to decide which churches will be sold included having at least 30 households in the church, financial viability, weekly services and paid clergy. Probably about three weeks ago I went to the Church of the Apostles for the six o'clock mass on a Sunday night. I am not sure whether there were 30 households there, and it is a large Catholic church in Launceston. It was a freezing cold night. I thought I had not been for a while, so I would go on a Sunday night. Just because people do not regularly go to church does not mean they do not have faith. It is really important we do not set a precedent that perhaps some of the other religions might see this as a good way of raising some money and selling off our churches.

I also agree with the member for Derwent. A large number of these churches are heritage buildings and they are amazing. Reading through the myriad of media articles I have here about it, many people are concerned about the grave sites. Many people have children and other family members buried in these cemeteries and have bought plots themselves. It is all very well to give them the money back for the plots they may have purchased, but what about the fact they have family members buried in those places? To them, it is sacred.

I agree sexual abuse victims need to be acknowledged and need to be compensated for their hurt, but maybe the Church should be selling its commercial assets. I understand the Anglican Church, like many others, does much good work in the community, apart from their churches. They have nursing homes and all sorts of financial responsibilities. I certainly ask they look to other ways to raise the money. They are raising far more money than they actually need. It was interesting to see only 25 per cent of the sale of the churches will go towards the scheme, while the rest is going towards the parishes affected by the property sales.

If they only need 25 per cent, sell some commercial properties and keep the churches, rather than tearing the heart out of some of the areas. Of the 108 properties the Church is selling, 76 are churches, many in rural areas. In rural areas, the church is one place where people get together; whether for weddings, funerals or christenings, the church is a mainstay in those communities and it is sad the Anglican Church has found it fit to sell them. I could read many letters to the editor, editorials pretty much all saying the same thing - everyone believes sexual abuse victims need to be acknowledged and compensated. They are all, however, pleading with the Anglican Church not to sell these churches and to look at another way to contribute to the redress scheme.

This has been going on for such a long time. Northern Midlands mayor David Downie is the chair of a newly formed group, the Save Our Community Soul group. Its first agenda item is to approach the state Government to clear up legal issues about whether the Church has a legal right to sell assets owned and maintained by local communities but held in trust. That certainly is a question - whether they can legally do it, but also whether it is morally right to do so. I believe they are separate questions. We all have such a respect for religious figures and for our churches. I am sure this decision of the Anglican Synod will undermine some people's faith.

Much of this was clearly and succinctly covered by the letter read out by the member for Derwent. I thought that letter clearly and succinctly addressed many of the issues. Even in the editorial in the *Mercury* on 2 June, the anger is easy to understand. In this case, the church hierarchy has set criteria of at least 30 households regularly being involved in the church, financial viability of weekly services and paid clergy. Many of these churches remain the site of cemeteries where family members are buried. I believe it is a wrong decision. I do not believe that the Church should be selling off the churches and I hope that this motion by the member for Prosser rings some bells with the Anglican Synod so that they may change their minds.

[5.05 p.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre) - Madam Deputy President, I support the motion brought by the member for Prosser and thank her for doing so. It has brought communities together and if that was what the Church was aiming for, it has hit the nail right on the head. It has certainly rallied the troops in every community that I know of that has a church in its area. As we all do, we go through the list of 108 assets, some churches, some not, of which 26 belong to the McIntyre electorate.

Interestingly, I have no issue with the sale of vacant land, whether at Avoca, Elizabeth Town, Fingal, Gagebrook, Gormanston, Kempton, Lebrina, Pontville, Rosebery or Triabunna.

A number of rectories around the state where there is no longer a parish minister in residence that have possibly been rented out to members of the community. I have no issue at all with that - sell them all. And the Deloraine saleyards - by all means, sell them. But to sell community churches, particularly those with cemeteries, is certainly something that is not supported by the communities nor the broader Tasmanian community. I think it is something broader than just the communities in which those churches are actually placed.

**Ms Armitage** - For many people, it doesn't matter what their religion is - it doesn't matter whether they are Anglican or a different religion, they don't believe these churches should be sold.

**Ms RATTRAY** - For instance, the member for Derwent knows the Pyengana church only too well.

**Mr Farrell** - Yes, that is where I had my first marriage.

**Ms RATTRAY** - St Michael and All Angels Church at Pyengana is the only church in Pyengana so it makes no difference to that community what faith you belong to. That is the church you go to, and when you go to a wedding or a christening or a burial, that is the church. That is also where the cemetery is; it is outside the church. Can you imagine a clothesline sitting in the middle of that cemetery? No, I cannot, and I do not want to.

**Mr Farrell** - A big turnout.

**Ms Howlett** - I believe the member for McIntyre spoke at that meeting.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I did - at least 200 people, and they were not all residents from the Pyengana community; they were residents from the Mathinna community and residents from the entire far north-east and east coast. They came from St Helens and from Launceston because their loved ones are buried at that cemetery or the church there has been part of a significant event in their family's life. They came to support the church. I can replicate this particular story right around the state. The members for Derwent, Prosser and Launceston have articulated well that the concern is right around the state.

I find it interesting that the Church has come back on a number of occasions and said that it was supported by the Synod. My understanding is that the question put to the Synod was: does the Church support the redress scheme? That was the question. There was not the piece on the end of it, 'But in doing so, you will have to sell the churches'. It depends on the question you ask what answer you receive. I know that there were people at the Synod - I did not go to the Synod, but people have informed me that had that piece been put on the end of that question, there would not have been almost majority support because they would have known that there would have been those repercussions in their communities for the support they provided to that motion at the Synod on that day.

It was quite disingenuous of the Church to tell the wider Tasmanian community that the Synod supported this approach. That is wrong and it should be rectified by the Church. As we know, 25 per cent of the funds intended to be raised will go to the redress scheme, and the rest of it to ministry. I suggest that if this process continues to unfold, the Anglican Church is not likely to need 75 per cent of the money to continue ministry because, as the member for Launceston said, there will be people in this community who might not attend a church service on a weekly basis but consider themselves to have faith, who will lose some faith.

**Ms Armitage** - They will be disenchanted.

**Ms RATTRAY** - They will be. That in itself is a concern because at times when you are struggling, whether through a family issue or personal life, or whatever, that faith can pull you out of a situation. That is not for everybody and I completely understand that, but I do know it can certainly make a difference in people's lives.

I looked carefully at the notice of motion and the four points. I certainly support (1), (2) and (3). I agree with point (4) - that we call on the Anglican Church to consider these concerns and assess the suitability of adopting alternative funding methods, such as selling their commercial properties or borrowing against properties that are proposed for sale - yes, but my concern is that this issue will continue to come back to communities because obviously the Anglican Church is having an issue with generating ongoing funds.

I have indicated with a number of the churches I have been involved with, that if they can, at this time, as a community make an offer to the Anglican Church for their church - for instance, Pyengana or Mathinna - I suggest they make it. Do what the Windermere church has done and get your church now because I feel in my heart of hearts that this matter will continue into the future. Whether it is right now, through this process of the redress scheme and selling off these other churches and generating this extra 75 per cent of funds, I think this will come back. Therefore I suggest that if you can, as a community, buy your church now, buy it if it means that much to your community. It is not going to be easy for every community to do that, I understand that. But it is amazing what these powerful GoFundMe pages can do now in securing their church or their building into the future.

**Ms Armitage** - Perhaps they could seriously continue to lobby their church and the Anglican Church.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I particularly have concerns around churches with cemeteries and graveyards adjacent to them. There are 12 on the list that I could pick up, but I noticed the Pyengana church I spoke of, St Michaels and All Angels Church, does not list the cemetery. The cemetery is right outside the front door. The member for Derwent will agree. It does not list that on here, so I do not know how many of these other churches actually have graveyards right beside the church and within the church grounds. I picked out 12, but I know there is already one which has a cemetery. I am not quite sure how accurate the list is. There could be others that have cemeteries.

In Pyengana, people have plots reserved so they can be with their loved ones in the future. Imagine the angst they are going through, particularly if their loved one has passed more recently. You are still raw from grief and I suspect grief for some people never goes away. In this case, I know of a person who lost her husband, and is still raw with grief, who has her plot reserved and now there is a for sale sign pending. I can assure members that a for sale sign would last three minutes on that property - as long as it took for somebody to put it up and move on because it is not going to happen for that community. I am not sure how able the others are in securing their churches and building.

There is a lot more work to do here. I sincerely hope this motion moves the Anglican Church to reconsider. If it wants to unload these churches, offer them up to those communities at an absolutely reasonable price. I am using the Pyengana church because I know that one well. It apparently has a value of \$65 000; it is on the Tasman Highway on a fairly small plot gifted by a member of the community, a church that has been maintained and repaired over the years by the community.

About three years ago, the community raised \$35 000 to repair the church. It has new windows and cladding; luckily it is not heritage-listed or we would not have been able to do any of that. It looks great and it is well maintained; the grounds are perfectly manicured on a regular basis. The community loves and cares for the facility, for this integral part of their community. So it is \$65 000 minus what the community put in, \$35 000, and I reckon \$2 000 is a fair price considering what the community has put into that church over the years. It certainly would not be worth \$65 000 had the community not put the effort and work into looking after that building.

The Mathinna church is not in such good repair, but it is the only church at Mathinna. Fortunately for that community, the cemetery is away from the church so it is maintained by the council and well looked after. I recently attended a burial at the Mathinna cemetery about two months ago for a long-time resident of Mathinna, Mr Arty Parsons. It was a celebration of his life



but he would not have wanted to have been anywhere else but buried at Mathinna, where he had lived, worked and raised his family and been part of the community for all those years. The history that was read out by the member for Derwent is replicated right across the state.

As a parliament we do not want to get involved in this but we are involved because we represent our communities and we have no other choice in this matter than to urge the Anglican Church, that if they want to unload some liability when it comes to maintenance in the future and participate in the redress scheme, they need to go to every individual church community and ask them how they can achieve this. If they need to onsell the building, then come to a realistic price for communities to be able to purchase. At the end of the day, they will have to work out how they can manage those facilities in the future or else we are going to be back to where we started from with not being able to maintain them are one of the issues.

At Pyengana, they have a very active hall and recreation committee that will be able to take over the ownership and management of the Pyengana church. The Mathinna community also has a community organisation that could take over the management. Obviously Windermere has an active committee that probably already has the paperwork down pat.

We do not need to reinvent the wheel, but we do need to work with those communities to work out how they can still maintain the building, but also have the proper processes in place for the future. We know that those people who are now saying, 'Please do not sell our church' are obviously going to get older and circumstances change. We have to make sure the younger generation has the same commitment to that facility.

I support the motion and thank the member for Prosser for the work she is doing, and thank all members who have been active in their community in supporting their church communities. It certainly has rallied the troops. One good thing to come out of this difficult situation is that it has reignited those people who may not have thought about their connection to the Church and their faith for a while.

I look forward to being able to continue to support my communities. With 26 on the list, that is about a quarter - 26 of the 108 on the list belong to the electorate of McIntyre. But everyone has a significant number. Those with not so many on their list have been lucky. This will not go away and I encourage any community who possibly can to purchase your church now and work out how you are going to look after it in the future. The Springfield community purchased their church about three years ago. Robert Smith, chair of the Friends of St Paul's at Springfield, spoke at the Pyengana community meeting a few weeks ago. He gave those at the meeting some indication of what you need to do to manage your facility. This was very valuable and much appreciated. It will not be plain sailing as there are things that need to be done. They have certainly galvanised the community and I suggest the Anglican Church needs to take notice and have a rethink on this matter.

[5.25 p.m.]

**Mr DEAN** (Windermere) - Mr President, I will make a brief statement in relation to this matter. I support the motion. I have concerns with the fourth point in the motion and would have preferred to see that removed. I am not sure I can support it with that there. We will have a look at that.

I would like to talk briefly on the St Matthias' Church and what has happened in that situation. Prior to doing that, it is clear why the Anglican Church has gone down this path, we understand all of that and indeed it is commendable.

When I raised this issue at a meeting at St Matthias' Church and made the comment that unfortunately the communities are paying for the activities of these paedophiles and the atrocious behaviour that occurred throughout the church organisation, the Tasmanian bishop at the time corrected me and said, 'No, Ivan, you are not paying for that. What the community is paying for is for those senior people who made the decisions to try and cover it up. That is what you are paying for, the senior people in this situation, the ones who tried to cover it up and tried to pretend it was not happening. That is the issue and what has created and caused all of this'. I think he is right.

The church is a critical structure to communities. I remember when I was a young lad that the church in Levendale was a very important part of the community. You had the church, the school, the hall, the shop and the post office. You then had some sporting facilities, an oval that was a bit of a dome where we used to play cricket and football. Gradually these things are disappearing and to see their church go on top of this to some communities is the last thing that could happen to them.

I remember walking two kilometres to go to church every Sunday, we were made to go, and there were four or five of us in the pack, my brothers and sisters. We were each given a sixpence or a shilling, I cannot remember exactly what it was now. We would get to church, and two or three of us, if not all of us, would try to plan how we could avoid the plate when it was coming around so we could keep the shilling or sixpence in our pocket and not get caught.

**Ms Rattray** - I bet your mother would have clipped you under the ears if she found out.

**Mr Finch** - I am surprised you did not put your hand in to pull some out.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, we would be thinking up ways we could avoid putting money in the plate. The point I am making is the churches are very important to these areas and to see some of them in the process of being sold is upsetting. We are told of the ones with the cemeteries around them, and we are told of recent burials at a lot of these cemeteries and so on.

The issue members raised about the extra moneys is being questioned by a number of people. It was questioned at the St Matthias' meeting. Why does the church need to get all of this money when there is only a certain amount they need and there will be all of these extra funds? What they say will go into the Anglican Church's funds -

**Ms Rattray** - For ministry and maintenance.

**Mr DEAN** - Why is there a need for all of that? There are many question marks about the plan or the strategy the Anglican Church is taking. Why the Anglican Church would put up for sale these churches that are extremely significant to an area with extreme heritage value amazes me.

The St Matthias' Church is listed by the Tasmanian Heritage Council, which has registered it as a statement of cultural significance. The church has been maintained by the local community since it was built in 1843. I have made a financial contribution to the church over a number of years to ensure maintenance is kept up to date. The church is the oldest existing Anglican church in northern Tasmania and is the oldest rural Anglican church in Tasmania. It was the first church in northern Tasmania consecrated by the first Anglican bishop of Tasmania. It remains unaltered or extended in a rural setting. It is our heritage and is worthy of a future as a growing Christian centre to service the spiritual needs of the East Tamar.

**Ms Rattray** - It is quite beautiful.

**Mr DEAN** - It is a beautiful church in a beautiful setting on a piece of land that is extremely valuable. Sadly, because it has a cemetery attached to it, who is going to buy this church? The value of it is \$200 000. I think the land is worth that. It is on a point, a very nice spot, on the Tamar River at Windermere.

**Mr Finch** - Opposite the Rosevears Hotel.

**Mr DEAN** - Opposite, yes.

**Mr Finch** - Historically people were married at Windermere and then went across the river by boat to the Rosevears Hotel for the reception.

**Mr DEAN** - They did. Interestingly, the meeting I went to was absolutely packed. I am not sure how many people were there, I think around the 200 mark, but people were outside the door. As the member for Derwent said, it was a blustery, cold day, which was unusual for the north of the state.

**Mr Valentine** - It is frequently cold in Hobart, I can tell you.

**Mr DEAN** - The emotions of these people were running high; they were very upset and distressed at what could happen to their church. People decided there and then that their church was not going to be sold. I was a part of that group making some statements as well and they set up a fund there and then. They had worked out what they were going to do. I applaud the people who were involved in setting all this up and who worked out how they were going to raise the \$45 000. It was valued at about \$200 000. The \$45 000 was raised within a matter of a few weeks.

**Ms Rattray** - I told you to use GoFundMe, didn't I?

**Mr DEAN** - I made quite a sizeable contribution to that. That is how quickly the funds were raised, and that is how much it meant to those people to retain their church. I am not sure how other areas will go, but other people may not have the same opportunities to do that.

It is sad, and I thank the member for bringing the motion forward. We have to move forward. I think the Anglican Church has now extended the time for these sales. That might have been mentioned. I guess it is also concerned about some of the things that are happening and some of the feedback the Church is getting.

I understood the state was going to bring some legislation forward relating to the preservation of the cemeteries. Do I have that wrong? I thought there were some suggestions by the Treasurer that the Government would do that to ensure the cemeteries are protected. It would be sad if they are sold and bought privately. Would the buyers then have the right to destroy those headstones and flatten the area? Would they have that right?

**Mrs Hiscutt** - I will address that in my contribution.

**Mr DEAN** - The Leader will address that, and I thank her for that. It is really quite horrific if you think about some of the things that could happen, but legislation would be welcomed and might satisfy the concerns of a lot of people.

Having said that, I support the motion. I have some concerns about the fourth part of that motion. The Anglican Church has gone down a certain path and I am not sure we ought to put that kind of pressure on the Anglican Church. I have some concerns but I will listen to the remainder of the contributions.

[5.34 p.m.]

**Mr FINCH** (Rosevears) - Mr President, I will make a small contribution with a story about the St Matthias' Church, which is quite a magnificent historic landmark on the River Tamar in my electorate of Rosevears.

I attended a wedding there many years ago. Member for Windermere, you will be interested in this. A colleague of mine at the ABC was marrying a friend. I will say this, the acoustics were beautiful in that church. John de Jong, a wonderful tenor singer up north, sang *The Twelfth of Never*, the old Johnny Mathis song.

**Mr Valentine** - You are not going to give us a version of it?

**Mr FINCH** - It is not beyond the realms of possibility. I will just see how the emotion builds in me. If you listen to the lyrics of that song, it is an absolutely beautiful love song and it figured beautifully in the ceremony.

**Ms Forrest** - The acoustics are no good in here so you do not need to try.

**Mr FINCH** - No. The point was, when it came to the stage where the minister said 'Anybody who has anything to say against this wedding, speak now or forever hold your peace', the bride fainted at that precise point. I had to give evidence later on to a Catholic inquiry. They divorced and she wanted to marry a Catholic and I had to give evidence that it was a message from on high that made her faint at that point. Anyway, it is a wonderful church. I recently spoke with Alan Virieux at the Rosevears Hotel. For tourists who come to have an evening meal at the Rosevears Hotel, the view across to that historic church is quite magnificent. I said to Alan that we should really get a fund together to provide lighting at the St Matthias' Church so that you can see it more prominently on the river. I was informed by the church when I made investigations that they did in fact have lighting there, but that the candle power is not very high in those lights. We must pursue that.

**Mr Dean** - Tamar River Cruises were at that meeting at St Matthias' I talked about, and they said that most people on their tours want to see St Matthias' Church. They want to see the church. That is what they are going for - to see that church. That is how important it is.

**Ms Rattray** - The takeaway message is to get a stronger light.

**Mr FINCH** - The takeaway message - 'Let's light the place up and make it more prominent on the river' because it is a wonderful historic feature. Did the member for Windermere mention the date it goes back to - 1838 or something like that? It has been there for a long time. That has to be retained in the people's hands so that we can enjoy the beauty of it.

[5.38 p.m.]

**Mr VALENTINE** (Hobart) - Mr President, just to the member for Rosevears, I do not think the Church is looking at demolishing it. I think it is looking at selling it.

**Mr Finch** - You never know what might happen if someone took it on privately.

**Mr VALENTINE** - It is possible it might change its image. Nevertheless I support this motion, but like the member for Windermere, with a little bit of - not concern - but understanding that for this Chamber to be telling an organisation like the Anglican Church what it should be doing is not really something that we should do. The Church is a private organisation in that sense. All the motion is doing is expressing concerns of the people who have contacted us. It says 'Calls on the Anglican Church to consider these concerns, and to assess the suitability of adopting alternative funding methods ...'.

We are not saying to the Anglican Diocese or Synod, 'You must do this.' We are not doing that. We are expressing the views we have heard from people coming to us and giving us their thoughts and feelings about what they are faced with. I have to say I have had very little contact from people in my electorate. Mind you, there is only one church in my electorate which is affected, St Andrew's Church in Lenah Valley, which along with the assistant's house and the church hall is being sold. The church, the hall and the assistant's house are on that list. No doubt there are parishioners of that church who have concerns. They may have resigned themselves to the fact their church is going to be sold, but the fact is many people have a connection to place. I have had connection and contact with people at Dunalley where I grew up about the impending sale of St Martin's Church, which was pointed out by the member for Prosser. I was down there at the time of the Dunalley fires; we have a shack down that way, and I was doing preparations to make the place safe, thinking the fire might come this way. Low and behold, an afternoon later and the following morning, 45 per cent of the houses in Dunalley were razed by the fire. Think of your town losing 45 per cent of its houses.

The church did not go; it is one of the older properties in the town. It is a touchstone for many people in the community. They have been through a tremendous upheaval as a result of all of those houses, shops and other structures being burnt as a result of that terrible fire, in a place you would never think would be open to fire threat. Now a lot of the older members of the community are faced with losing that touchstone. It is not just any Anglican church, because they used to share it. The Catholics and the Anglicans used to share the particular property. I am not sure if they still do. At this time it has some problems with its flooring which have to be fixed.

The fact is it is a focus for the community. Whenever you go to the Dunalley flower show you think to yourself, 'This is a fishing village; it has a flower show; it has a tremendous history and they are raising money for the church.' Not just at this particular time to buy the church, but I am talking about church activities and things that have happened over time. They raise money at the flower show and it is one of the really important events in the town of Dunalley. It is part of the fabric of the community. This is what the Synod needs to understand.

Churches are all about the spirit and soul of people. Over time these places become the soul of the community; the Church has to understand it is causing distress in these communities with this idea of selling these churches. The hard part, which has already been mentioned, is that these communities gathered the money together to build those places in the first place. They gathered the money together to see them furnished. They gathered the money together to see the plaques put on the walls for family x and family y. They have been around for generations and people there have a connection to place. This needs to be understood.

Some care has to be taken because the Synod might find, yes, it sells these churches, but people might walk. They might concentrate on buying the church with other members of the community

and not continue with the church. I do not think this would be the Anglican Church's intention at all. It is yet to make these decisions - let us make sure they understand because they have not made the decisions yet. The Church has put up the list and it has asked people for input. From the feedback I am getting from people, it seems that people in rural areas more than in the city, for some reason, have more connection with place. I am sure there would be others in our town areas who would be just as passionate about their church. It seems that rural churches have a lot of connection with them - that sense of place I was talking about. I think the Church needs to understand that.

I too have heard from people that if it was the clergy that actually committed the offences, why should the people pay yet again? Unfortunately it is an organisation and the Synod are representatives of that church community. That is something they have to work through; it not for us to be telling them what to do. In selling this fabric, I think there is a danger that people will have second thoughts about it. It might damage the church community and they need to think that through.

As I said before, the motion simply asks the Church to consider the concerns. I voice the concerns of some who have come to me, those who see these places as touchstones and part of the fabric of their communities, not just the bricks and mortar or the stones, but what it means to individual families. I think that is what has to be taken into account as much as anything else. They can say, 'Churches should not be about buildings, it should be about people'. That is right, but I think they will find that people value the connection they have to fabric, and that is the rock and a hard place that the Anglican Church probably finds itself in at the moment. I wish it well in making its decisions and I hope that whatever decisions are made, the wellbeing of the communities that these churches are in is actually considered and considered well.

[5.47 p.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, just before I move to the Government's response, I will make a couple of comments about my own electorate. Montgomery has three only listed in my electorate -

**Ms Rattray** - How come I always seem to get hit -

**Mrs HISCUTT** - It is a bigger area, but having said that, it certainly does not lessen the significance of the upset it has caused. I have St Barnabas' Church and hall in Sheffield and I also have a vacant block in Preston. I attended and chaired a meeting recently with St Stephens Church and hall in Penguin. I note there is only a small group of parishioners there, but when the meeting was called, over 100 people attended, so it touched many within the community, as well as the parishioners who were there. Things said at that meeting were similar to things I had already heard - that significant moments in people's lives were held here. One of the councillors from the local council said that this is the place he was married in and every time he goes past it he says, 'God bless that church.' He is still happily married so that is his opinion of that particular church.

The church in Penguin is also heritage-listed and the Government has a few comments on that too, but the heritage listing goes with the church so people who buy these places have to be aware of that.

St Stephens Church at Penguin also had a very rare situation. It is a small suburban block; it has the hall at the back and the church at the front and not much room in the middle, but in the middle is the cemetery of the man, Mr Clerke, who bequeathed the land to the people to start with. That is a very interesting scenario they will have to look at.

During the meeting, there was a good mood to try to raise the money and to make an offer for their church -

**Ms Rattray** - Tell them not to make too big an offer.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - That is a bridge we are looking at crossing at the moment as a community.

Mr President, the proposed sale of churches and other properties that include cemeteries is causing significant community concern. Outside of cemeteries, the sale of churches and other property is a matter for the relevant religious organisation and the Government has no role or power to intervene in sale considerations. However, there are likely to be issues and limits on the use of property that prospective buyers should be aware of - for example, many churches may be heritage-listed. This may restrict the use and adaption of church buildings if sold into private ownership.

The Government understands that in the case of the Anglican Church, it is consulting local parishioners and communities on proposed sales. Concerns, questions and feedback should rightly be put by local parishioners and communities directly to the Anglican Church. The deadline for community feedback, originally 1 September 2018, has been extended by the Anglican Church to 1 October 2018 to allow more time for community groups to consider their options. Public submissions made to the Diocesan Council, overseen by an independent probity adviser, are invited under two categories. The first one is asking that a building be retained by the church; and the second is asking for the ownership to be transferred to a community group. The council is expecting to make its final decisions on potential church sales in December 2018.

In the case of cemeteries, community members are rightly asking questions about how cemeteries that are sold will be managed, whether members of the public will continue to be able to access the gravesites of deceased relatives and friends, and what will happen to any existing exclusive rights of burial in a cemetery that is sold.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to preserving, protecting and, where appropriate, strengthening both the rights of community members and the obligations on cemetery managers. The Government is undertaking a review of the legislative and regulatory provisions that apply to Tasmanian cemeteries to ensure the continued appropriate, safe and responsible management of cemeteries, the honouring of exclusive burial rights, and continued public access for relatives and friends of the deceased.

In particular, potential amendments will be examined and assessed which -

- (1) Provide greater clarity regarding the fit and proper person test that is applied to prospective cemetery managers to ensure that the community can be confident that purchasers can and will meet their significant obligations under the Burial and Cremation Act 2002.
- (2) Increase sanctions for the failure of cemetery managers to perform their legal duties and allow for the issuing of infringement notices to support compliance and enforcement.
- (3) Clarify how the rights of community members and religious and cultural organisations interact with the rights of cemetery owners on a range of matters following the sale of a cemetery.

Mr President, a draft amendment bill will be circulated for public consultation prior to the introduction of final legislation to the Tasmanian Parliament during the 2018 spring session. It is important that both buyers and sellers of properties are aware of these potential changes and consider how they may impact upon them. While the Government cannot intervene with regard to the sales, we encourage the Anglican Church to explore all options available to it to minimise the impact on the community while also ensuring it meets its obligations under the National Redress Scheme.

The member for McIntyre asked one question. The Anglican Registrar has advised that at the end of its consultation process, it will then be in a position to confirm which churches have cemeteries that are part of the prospective sale. It is not clarified yet.

The Government supports the motion.

[5.54 p.m.]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) - Mr President, I will make a brief contribution to this. I thank the member for Prosser for bringing this motion forward. It has raised much concern in my community, which is a big electorate too.

I am going to raise a few points as it is important we separate church and state and we do not interfere with the Church's business as such in terms of what they can and cannot do with their property, same as churches should not interfere with what we do in our role here. Unfortunately we do not always see that being the case.

We need to remember at the outset, the reason this is even being considered is because many children were abused. Honourable members have talked about losing faith if the churches disappear from the community. I lost faith when children were abused continuously and repeatedly and it was covered up. Honourable members might have read a report that was recently released about the Pennsylvania church issue. If you have not go and read it. It is an absolute disgrace.

We cannot unfortunately hold the perpetrators to account here to make them pay, because they are the ones who should be paying. These children have paid the ultimate price - a lot of them, the young people.

I do not have too much sympathy for the Church having to find a way to pay for this. They should be paying for it. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind they should be paying. I believe the member for McIntyre said they asked the parishioners if they support it. I would be horrified to think that a church body would not support it, regardless of the circumstances that might be required to do so. If they are true to their convictions and their faith, surely they would support paying compensation to these really unfortunate people.

I do not have the concern the member for Windermere holds in that we are not telling them that they can or cannot sell particular properties. It is encouraging them to look at other opportunities and the consultation process referred to by the Leader has been extended.

We need to remember that many of these churches and church halls in some cases, or cemeteries in other parts of the land on which the church sits, are used by the community quite regularly. In fact, some of them contain museums and things like that in the church hall. It might not be that there is a whole heap of parishioners turning up to go to church on a Sunday, but they are being used and being used all the time. I know that some church properties on that list fit into



that category. The churches need to have a good hard look at themselves and remember what these buildings mean to the community. Let us not do the community over again when they have already done over some of the children in those communities.

I know they are pretty harsh words, Mr President, but we must not lose sight of the fact of the reason they are even having to raise this money. Let us not lose sight of that. I hope they can find a way to fund it without selling these churches, particularly the ones that have real and genuine significance to their communities, which I would suggest are most of them.

**Motion agreed to.**

**POLICE OFFENCES AMENDMENT (PROHIBITED INSIGNIA) BILL 2018 (No. 21)**  
**TERRORISM (RESTRICTIONS ON BAIL AND PAROLE) BILL 2018 (No. 20)**

**First Reading**

Bills received from House of Assembly and read the first time.

**ADJOURNMENT**

[5.59 p.m.]

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

That the Council at its rising adjourn until 11 a.m. on Wednesday 22 August 2018.

**Motion agreed to.**

**The Council adjourned at 5.59 p.m.**