

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA
DEBATES OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

DAILY HANSARD

Thursday 10 September 2026

Preliminary Transcript

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UNCORRECTED PROOF

Thursday 10 September 2026

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

QUESTIONS

Budget - Scale of Cuts

Mr WILLIE question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

[10.01 a.m.]

In a newly released report, the McKell Institute has compared your Budget with more than two decades of state and territory budgets. It found the cuts you have budgeted for in 2027-28 would be the largest spending cuts imposed by any state or territory this century. What further services will Tasmanians lose to deliver the cuts on a scale that no Australian government has attempted this century?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. It is not surprising that the McKell Institute would make a finding of that nature. Nor is it surprising that that finding was funded by Unions Tasmania. I think we can get a bit of a taste of what this study was all about. But I'm not completely biased on these things, so I'm willing to read through what their findings were. One of their findings was, according to the media release:

Both Treasury and economists state, along with the McKell Institute, that spending cuts alone are not the preferred pathway.

If you don't only have cuts, what do you need on the other side of the ledger? Some extra income. And what did the Labor opposition do yesterday? They voted against extra income - income that would have been largely paid for by international and interstate tourists. We now have this ridiculous situation where Tasmanians travelling to Victoria have to pay a 7.5 per cent levy -

Mr WILLIE - Point of order, Standing Order 45, relevance. The question is about the 2027-2028 budgeted year with negative expenditure growth and cuts that no Australian government has attempted this century.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Treasurer.

Mr ABETZ - With respect, I was being directly relevant to the institute's findings, which were that cuts were not the only answer. That is why, when given the opportunity to deal with this finding, to actually raise some extra revenue, Labor and its would-be treasurer in the other place, Ms Forrest, who wrote opinion piece after opinion piece saying we need own-source revenue, at the first hurdle, she fell. She could not bring herself to get us an extra \$32 million into our budget. Labor will be wearing that for the rest of this budget period.

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Is there a need for us to rightsize the Budget? Guess who told us that? Those people opposite sent us to an early, unnecessary, expensive election on the pretext of budget repair.

Mr Willie - Who broke the budget?

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ABETZ - So, guess what we're doing? We're engaging in budget repair, only for them to try to sabotage every single attempt, every right-sizing criticised, every attempt to get extra revenue criticised.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order, people on my left.

Mr ABETZ - That is why the people of Tasmania rewarded the Labor Party with an historic low vote.

The SPEAKER - The honourable Treasurer's time has expired.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - I'll ask the Treasurer again: his Budget contains negative expenditure growth. No Australian government has attempted cuts on this scale. What further services are Tasmanians going to lose?

Mr ABETZ - Those opposite sent us to an early, unnecessary, expensive election on the basis of the need for, in their terminology, budget repair.

Mr Willie - What services?

Mr ABETZ - We are going about that. If you don't want us to engage in budget repair, say so. If you think that savings should be made elsewhere, say so. If you think revenue should be raised somewhere else, say so. But in the absence of an alternate budget, the Labor party has absolutely no right to seek to criticise when it is unable to come up with an alternative.

Budget - Forced Redundancies

Mr WILLIE question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

[10.06 a.m.]

Tasmanians are increasingly worried that your government's voluntary redundancy program is about to become involuntary. Labor has been contacted through our 'Uncover the Cuts' website, which you wanted shut down, concerned that forced redundancies are now being considered as you pursue the rest of your \$1.5 billion of cuts. Will you rule out sacking workers with forced redundancies for the duration of your cuts program, yes or no?

ANSWER

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Honourable Speaker, I really, really do thank the Leader of the Opposition for this question because it allows me to put on the public record that the two accusations made yesterday by Labor to ministers on this side on the basis of the things they had uncovered -

Mr Willie - You tabled one because it was managed costs, so you fudged it.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ABETZ - by their website have been shown to be false. That is why, having been burnt on two separate occasions on this side, I will not tempt fate and be burnt a third time. I will check out Labor's accusations and, undoubtedly, as we found yesterday after Question Time -

Mr Willie - You fudged it. You tabled the answer because you didn't want to read it out.

The SPEAKER - Order, honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr ABETZ - the accusations may well be false. I'm not going to get on the sticky paper with that. What we need in this state is a rightsized budget. Our friends in Canberra acknowledge that and in their budget, they are predicating a reduction in their public service of 41,000 people -

Mr Willie - That's not correct.

Mr ABETZ - and there will be some Tasmanians impacted by that.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Honourable members to my left, you still have another five questions, plus supplementaries, to go today. While you may not agree with what the Treasurer is saying, you do have other opportunities of this House to prosecute your case. I'm asking the Treasurer to be heard and you can ask more questions.

Mr ABETZ - With 41,000 federal public servants over the forwards to lose their positions - and, look, the right-sizing of the federal budget has to occur.

Mr WILLIE - Point of order, 45, relevance. We are not talking about the federal budget; we are talking about your Budget and forced redundancies. Will you rule it out? You might think it's funny but workers don't.

Mr ABETZ - In relation to our budgets - state, federal, Liberal, Labor, up and down the eastern seaboard, we had a situation and we all know the history: that irrespective of political colour, COVID expenditures increased and then, after COVID, governments allowed that expenditure to continue to increase. The time for rightsizing, be it federal Labor, Victorian Labor or Tasmanian Liberal, we are all engaging in the same exercise. I back federal Labor's decision in relation to right-sizing the Commonwealth public service. I wish you would back the state Liberals' position to rightsize the public service -

Mrs Greene - Just like you sacked 14,000 public sector workers.

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The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Bass, Mrs Greene.

Mr ABETZ - These things are too important to play petty politics with. That is why -

Mr Mitchell - So, you're sacking workers.

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Lyons, Mr Mitchell.

Mr ABETZ - when a right decision is made in Canberra, I will back it. I encourage you to back the right decisions of this state Liberal government.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - You can rule out forced redundancies. Are you going to implement forced redundancies? Workers are worried about it. Yes or no?

Mr ABETZ - We have indicated a voluntary redundancy scheme that has been taken up

Mr Mitchell - The lawyer's answer.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ABETZ - by a number of Tasmanian Public Servants and we are continuing to go down that track. We have at this stage no intention to engage in compulsory or non-voluntary redundancies.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Endoscopy Wait Times

Ms ROSOL question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

[10.10 a.m.]

The Greens were contacted by a constituent who had a positive bowel cancer screen result in June. He was told by his doctor that he would be put into the most urgent category for a colonoscopy to check if he had cancer. He should have been seen within 30 days. So far, he's waited 80 days. He's been told, with 1000 people on the wait list, he's looking at a wait of 6 to 12 months. This is causing him and his family a lot of stress and it's delaying any treatment he might need. Can you confirm what the health services told Tony about the endoscopy wait times and what will you do to ensure patients like Tony get the procedures they need within clinically recommended timeframes?

ANSWER

Thank you, honourable Speaker, and I thank the member for her question. Obviously, I'm unable to comment on the personal circumstances of individual patients and their treatment,

but of course I empathise with anyone who experiences a longer wait for an endoscopy or indeed for any treatment.

We know that demand for endoscopy is increasing, which is why we have delivered the Statewide Endoscopy Services Four-Year Plan 2023–2027. The target for the number of endoscopies performed is more than 13,000. Since the commencement of the Statewide Endoscopy Services Four-Year Plan 2023–2027, record levels of publicly funded endoscopy activity have been delivered. During 2024–25 nearly 14,000 publicly funded endoscopy procedures were performed exceeding the target in the plan and representing the highest volume of endoscopy activity delivered in a single financial year. This was followed by nearly 13,500 procedures delivered in 2025–26.

Having said that, there has been several initiatives that have been implemented to improve access to endoscopy services, including additional service capacity, partnerships with the private sector, statewide referral and access policies, a nurse-led triage model and improvements to surveillance patient management, as well as the development of rural generalist endoscopist services to support capacity in the north-west.

While these initiatives have supported record service delivery, demand for endoscopy services has continued to grow. Routine statewide monitoring and reporting processes have been established by the department to monitor endoscopy performance.

All patients importantly referred for a colonoscopy following a positive bowel screening test are triaged as priority 1, and while the recommended timeframe is 30 days, wait times may exceed this due to high demand and the need to prioritise cases assessed as emergency.

Supplementary Question

Ms ROSOL - The minister shared a lot of figures there and some actions that the department have taken, but the reality is that triaging a patient for 30 days but then telling them that they need to wait 6 to 12 months is not okay and will potentially result in people developing cancer because it's not picked up early enough. Do you think this is acceptable and what will you do about it?

Mrs ARCHER - I thank the member for the supplementary question. I've just outlined to you, Ms Rosol, what in fact the government is doing and that we have exceeded those targets and reiterate the point that all patients are triaged according to their clinical presentation. If their condition deteriorates, they're asked to follow up with their GPs and also to continue to engage with their doctors.

Short-Stay Levy

Mr O'BYRNE question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

[10.14 a.m.]

Yesterday the other place unfortunately voted down legislation for a 5 per cent short stay levy in Tasmania. I didn't agree with your plan to allocate funds raised through the levy to first-home owner grants, but at least it would have raised some revenue from an activity that is having a direct impact on housing affordability and availability. Some of the arguments from

those against this bill seem to be that it did nothing to improve access to housing, but if funds raised by levy were directed to homelessness services and crisis accommodation that would make a positive difference. In May, a motion I moved calling for this very thing was passed by this House. Despite the defeat of the bill, I believe a short-stay levy remains valid, especially if it raises funds for services which support people bearing the brunt of the housing crisis. Treasurer, will your government commit to moving forward with other options for a short-stay levy that the parliament could approve?

ANSWER

As the Premier and I have indicated on many occasions in this place, we are always open to suggestions and ideas, and I thank the honourable member for Franklin, Mr O'Byrne, for his idea. I do genuinely regret the decision of the upper House, and one cannot help but think there was politics at play rather than sensible decision-making. When I find myself voting on the same side as the member for Hobart, Cassy O'Connor, something must be either badly, badly wrong or absolutely a no-brainer, and I think it was an absolute no-brainer. I am thankful that the Green in the upper House saw the sense of voting for that measure. The Greens voted for the need for budget repair. At least they put themselves down on the paper to assist in that endeavour, unlike the Labor opposition.

In relation to issues of homelessness, I would have to defer to my colleague, the Minister for Housing, Mr Vincent, for more detail on that, but as I think many people in this place know, before I entered public life I was involved in the establishment of both a women's shelter and a youth shelter dealing with the issue of homelessness. The issue of homelessness has been with me throughout my journey in public life with Jireh House, the women's shelter, and YASTAS as we called it; Youth Accommodation Services Tasmania, which has been incorporated into Pathways.

The issue of homelessness, which is growing, especially for women now, is a matter of genuine concern to the government, but as to actual details, I would have to defer to Minister Vincent. That said, if there is any indication in the upper House that one or two of the colleagues up there might change their vote, then I am more than happy to discuss that with them to see whether we can come to a resolution.

Short-Stay Accommodation Data

Ms BURNET question to MINISTER for HOUSING and PLANNING, Mr VINCENT

[10.18 a.m.]

On Tuesday, I asked what data your government collected to understand the impact of short-stay accommodation on the housing market and the response was tabled late last night. It said that the available data does not support a definitive assessment of short-stay's impacts on house prices, rents, or housing affordability, and that CBOS cannot currently identify how many properties have moved from the long-term rental market into short-term accommodation—a crucial issue in our rental crisis. Minister, if your government accepts that the data it currently collects does not assist in understanding the impact of short-stay on the housing market, will you respect the call from the House yesterday and ensure an urgent review of the *Short Stay Accommodation Act 2019* and the impact of short-stay on the housing market?

ANSWER

I thank the member for the question and understand your passion and consistency in this area. It's certainly something that has been on everybody's mind lately, especially in the upper House, with the levy debate going through there. I must admit that I have not read that full briefing yet because of taking legislation through on other things in the upper House yesterday, so I do apologise for that. However, it has been suggested that the act is something that needs to be looked at and worked through again.

I have been reading a lot of different things from every media source that I can that comes up on short-stay, and nobody seems to have the perfect answer to the growth in that area. It is a fantastic thing that we are bringing tourists into Tasmania and using a different form of accommodation and that that is putting money into the pockets of a lot of people that rent out their rooms or their houses, and that's a marvellous thing to compliment the unique nature of stays in Tasmania. I recognise the pressures that are there and your passion for this area and I am happy to have discussions that will find a sensible way forward. We do not want to stop people doing what they need to do with their house. We do not want to stop people renting out rooms and the passion of their stays, in country areas and city areas having different sort of environments for us all here in Tasmania to enjoy the beautiful state, but we do have to find a balance. We do have to find sensible ways through the housing situation, whether it's short-stay, whether it's rentals, whether it's homelessness, whether it's women's shelters or whether it's first home buyers having the passion to build their own home or buy their own home and understand that it's one of the most fulfilling moments of your life, when you can have your own home.

I do understand the pressures. I'm happy to talk to you further about looking at the act and continue the discussion. Thank you.

Supplementary Question

Ms BURNET - The minister in his answer talked about tourists and how it's important to make sure that they can be looked after. The review of the act isn't about that. My question from that is: doesn't everybody deserve a roof over their head?

Mr VINCENT - Thank you for the supplementary and, at 66 years of age in another couple of months, I have never met anybody who doesn't deserve a roof over their head. That is where my passion is in this. It has been since I started my apprenticeship in 1975 and it will continue to be putting as many roofs over people's heads as I possibly can in my role.

Health System - Impact of Cuts

Mr WILLIE question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

[10.22 a.m.]

We've just heard about a Tasmanian man who returned a positive bowel cancer screening result in June and was placed in the most urgent category for a colonoscopy, meaning he should have been seen within 30 days. Could you imagine almost waiting 80 days and being told that you have to wait between 6 to 12 months for a procedure and being in that situation? If Tasmania's health system cannot provide an urgent cancer investigation within the clinically

recommended time frame, how can you possibly cut \$700 million without making things like this even worse?

ANSWER

Speaker, the issues of bowel cancer and other things are relatively well-known to me. Unfortunately, our situation currently reflects is the reality that we continue to see beds in our hospitals not being made available when they should be for things like elective surgeries. I know that the opposition don't like it because they're terrified of upsetting their federal counterparts, but there is no doubt that the federal government's ongoing lack of action to resolve discharge delays for those awaiting aged care placements or NDIS -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order, order.

Mr WILLIE - Point of order, Standing Order 45, relevance. This is a very serious question about a Tasmanian in this situation. It's about your \$700 million of cuts. You can talk about the federal government, but they want to hear what you have to say about your \$700 million worth of cuts.

Mr ABETZ - Speaker, what the people of Tasmania want is a health system that actually works for them, and they are disgusted each and every time when those opposite play the protection racket for their federal colleagues in circumstances. They know that over the forward Estimates there is an extra \$400 million burden being placed on our Tasmanian health sector because the federal Labor government will not live up to its responsibilities in the area of aged care and NDIS.

We have three wards in our hospitals with people in them that should be discharged. Medically and for their mental wellbeing, they should be discharged. That would free up other beds, they would free up beds -

Mr Mitchell - What have you done with the \$700 million they gave you?

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Lyons, Mr Mitchell, this is your first warning.

Mr ABETZ - for exactly the circumstance of which the honourable member speaks. That is where you can try to put all the blame on the state government in circumstances -

Mr Willie - You are taking \$700 million out of the system.

The SPEAKER - Honourable members to my left, if you're not interested in hearing what the Treasurer has to say -

Ms Dow - You think it's alright. This is shameful.

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Braddon, Ms Dow, this is your first warning. We'll move on to the next question. You've asked the question. I asked that the Treasurer be heard. I ask the Treasurer to return to the question, please.

Mr ABETZ - Speaker, when beds are offline because there are other people in them, they cannot be used for other purposes.

Members interjecting.

Ms Burnet - Oh, let's blame [inaudible] -

Mr ABETZ - The member for Clark, Ms Burnet, can scoff at that, but what's the answer to that? Do you mean to say that empty beds couldn't be used?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - I'll make it very clear, because he's politicising a question about a Tasmanian in this situation. Can the federal government address that issue? Of course they can. What we are asking is about how your \$700 million worth of cuts is going to make this situation any better. It won't.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ABETZ - Speaker, we finally got the admission we've been waiting for all these months from the Leader of the Opposition

Ms Haddad - The federal government gave \$700 million to the state government and you took it right back out again.

The SPEAKER - Ms Haddad, honourable member for Clark, this is your first warning.

Mr ABETZ - that the federal government can address this issue.

Mr Willie - You're using it as a distraction from your own failings.

The SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, this is your first warning.

Mr ABETZ - Now that that has been recognised by the Leader of the Opposition, I encourage him to make representations to his federal colleagues and say, 'Please fix the situation'.

Mr WILLIE - Point of order, Standing Order 45, relevance. People are sick of the Treasurer and the Health minister using this as a distraction. It's about his \$700 million worth of cuts and how it's going to make this situation worse.

Mr ABETZ - Over the forward Estimates, we know what this is costing the Tasmanian hospital system, the Tasmanian taxpayer -

Members interjecting.

Mr Willie - People are dying.

Mr ABETZ - over \$400 million, and in relation to the savings -

Ms Brown - What a callous response that you're giving.

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Franklin, Ms Brown, first warning.

Mr ABETZ - that we are seeking in the health system the -

The SPEAKER - The honourable Treasurer's time has expired.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Veolia Contract

Mr BAYLEY question to MINISTER for MACQUARIE POINT URBAN RENEWAL, Mr ABETZ

[10.28 a.m.]

During Estimates, it was revealed that an agreement with Veolia to deliver a privately-owned thermal energy plant and network at the stadium site had been abandoned for an as yet unclear alternative power proposal. Answers provided on notice indicated that over \$660,000 had already been paid for this development and up to \$1.8 million more of reimbursements could be paid to Veolia to not deliver the energy infrastructure scheme. There has already been a multimillion dollar payout to a Melbourne developer to not build houses at Macquarie Point. This is just some of the waste and wanton disregard for taxpayer money that epitomises the stadium project and the blank cheque that your government it appears is willing to offer it. Has Veolia been paid out and if so, how much? Is this and the cost of developing and implementing an alternative energy connection part of the \$1.13 billion estimate to construct the stadium?

ANSWER

Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. There are matters of detail in that question which are not readily available to me, or I couldn't find immediately in my folder. As a result of that, I will take the question and the detail of it on notice and trust that I'll be able to come back on the adjournment this evening with specific answers.

For those who might be listening in, we should remember that the Greens have opposed the stadium from day one. What I would say to those listening in - I dare say my words will be wasted on the Deputy Leader of the Greens - there has to be a degree of expenditure for the site, irrespective of what the site is going to be used for, so no matter what your ambition is for the Macquarie Point site, there will need to be a new energy source or a ramped up energy source, so you can say that should all be visited upon the stadium. Well, you can do that or say that. What was that great project that the Greens were hoping for?

Members - The Eden Project.

Mr ABETZ - The Eden Project. You know what, I reckon that would have needed a new power supply as well. That would have needed some roadworks around it as well. The idea that you try to lumber every single potential possible cost on the stadium is a bit disingenuous because we all know that no matter what we put the site toward or use the site for, there would have been the need for these upgrades. That is, of course, unless we kept it for another 10 or 20 years as an industrial wasteland without anything else happening on it.

Mr Bayley - You had a plan for it; you paid out a Melbourne developer.

Mr ABETZ - That's not our ambition. While there will be cluster upgrade energy sources, et cetera, I can tell this House I'm looking forward to the day when Mr Bayley walks through the doors of the new stadium and watches a concert or an AFL match and then wonders, 'Why on earth did I ever oppose this wonderful proposition?'

Supplementary Question

Mr BAYLEY - I appreciate the minister taking that information on notice and I look forward to his answer. He talked about the degree of expenditure on this site. I would ask him also to come back to the House with the full extent of the additional expenditure on the site, itemised, what is it above the \$1.13 billion?

Mr ABETZ - Speaker, I can understand that he would like it. I'm sorry to say I'm going to disappoint because we are currently in an active procurement process and all those extra little bits and pieces are all part and parcel of what is being discussed at the moment. As soon as we start talking about those matters, you might score a good political point somewhere along the way, but the people of Tasmania and their finances would be substantially prejudiced if that sort of information got out, because then the creative tension and the commercial tension with two bids being considered would be denied and, as a result, we won't get the best possible value for the Tasmanian, Australian taxpayers and the AFL membership.

TasWater Fixed Sewerage Charges

Prof RAZAY question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.32 a.m.]

Resident businesses and charity groups are distressed by the TasWater calculation of fixed sewage charges. Last week it was Rocherlea business an additional \$40,000 per year, a 500 per cent increase. Today, it's Trevallyn Parks and Improvement Association, it holds that head lease on the land known as Trevallyn Parks. Three sporting - Trevelyan Cricket, Tennis and Bowls Club. The cricket club sewerage charge is up 237 per cent, the tennis club 167 per cent, and the bowls club 36 per cent. Yet the association estimated water use for sewerage is only 5 per cent. The majority goes on greens and an oval. TasWater says it's now calculating fixed charging on pipe diameters. What is being done to address this urgent, apparently very large problem?

The SPEAKER - The honourable member's time has expired.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and also acknowledge today is R U OK? Day. It was great to see Mitch McPherson in the Long Room before, of course, a wonderful contributor to Tasmania through SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY.

Thank you, honourable member for the very good question, which is hitting quite a few sporting clubs, as I understand it, and Tasmanians at this present time. I acknowledge the concern these flagged increases are having on community groups, on sporting clubs, on businesses. I've made some views known in recent times with respect to that and right across the state. We are also very concerned about them like you are indeed.

It is important to note that TasWater is primarily owned by Tasmania's 29 councils with a 10 per cent state government shareholding, so that needs to be put into perspective. This is a very important issue, and councils must also be part of the solution.

I met with TasWater yesterday and the Treasurer was also in attendance, also with the Local Government Association representatives as well, and we raised concerns regarding these areas. It was a productive meeting. Obviously, TasWater must ensure that Tasmania's water infrastructure is fit-for-purpose and we recognise there are some work to do over the course of a number of years to ensure that when Tasmanians turn on the tap, that they get clean, fresh drinking water. It also must keep up with the growth that we're seeing and our communities as well, in terms of subdivisions and housing and the like.

So, we support good growth right across the state, but these increases are large and they hurt and it's time, in my view, that TasWater look to pause these increases to consider easing the pain that they will cause. I would encourage councils also to support a pause to take the time to get that balance right in terms of cost-of-living, but also ensuring that there can be a forward plan for infrastructure development and ensure that, as I say before, we have the right infrastructure in place so we can continue to build and maintain the infrastructure our communities need, while being attuned to the very real impact increases like this have, which you've well articulated in your question.

Health System - Cuts

Mr WILLIE question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ, referred to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

[10.36 a.m.]

A Tasmanian man who returned a positive bowel screening has been told he may have to wait 6 to 12 months for a follow up procedure. Treasurer, colonoscopy is not a procedure that generally needs a bed in a ward. If Tasmania's health system cannot provide an urgent cancer investigation within the clinically recommended timeframe now, how can you possibly cut \$700 million from the system?

ANSWER

Speaker, that is very much in the Health portfolio, and I defer to the Minister for Health-

Mr Willie - It's about your \$700 million of cuts.

The SPEAKER - Order, order. Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the Treasurer can refer to another minister.

Mrs ARCHER - As I responded earlier, of course it would be not appropriate to talk about the individual circumstances of a patient, and I do empathise with anybody who is seeking medical attention right across the system as well. We do know that demand for health services is increasing and we are continuing to invest right across our health system: \$10 million every day, \$15 billion over this budget and 35 percent of the entire state budget. We have been open about the fact that we are seeking efficiencies across the budget as well. I think what is being overlooked here is that when we talk about that what we're talking about is making sure that we have a sustainable health system into the future so that people can access the health system into the future.

Ms Haddad - Sustainable, for people to wait a year for a colonoscopy?

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Clark, Ms Haddad.

Mrs ARCHER - What is having a direct impact on that at the moment, and I keep talking about it, and I would reiterate that it is not a partisan issue, it is not a political issue, and I have stood with your colleagues from right across the country to raise this issue up to the federal government. It is a really serious issue that is having a direct impact right across all of our health systems, right across the country -

Mr Willie - So is your \$700 million worth of cuts.

The SPEAKER - Order, honourable Leader of the Opposition, I'm asking that the minister be heard. You have more questions left. I ask that we continue on today and allow the minister to respond to your question, please.

Mrs ARCHER - Savings efficiencies are about sustainability and when you talk about those numbers, one of those numbers is \$432 million, which is the somewhat conservative estimate over this budget of keeping long-stay older patients in our hospitals where they don't need to be, but what is really important in relation to the example that you are giving is that they are taking these beds offline in our hospital -

Mr Willie - Colonoscopies generally don't need a bed.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. Sorry, minister. Honourable members to my left, you still have more questions that you can prosecute your case. Plus, there's other forms at this House that you can use. You've asked a question. For the sake of all of us watching and, here in this Chamber, I ask that the minister be heard in silence, please, because you have other opportunities in this House.

Mrs ARCHER - When those beds are offline or they're not available in the hospital system for a whole range of presentations, it has effect-

Mr Willie - It's not impacting this case.

The SPEAKER - Alright, honourable Leader of the Opposition, second warning.

Mrs ARCHER - It has a direct impact on all of these cases-

Ms Butler - It's day surgery.

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Lyons, Ms Butler, first warning.

Mrs ARCHER - Because it takes beds offline. Three wards of beds are offline, that impacts-

The SPEAKER - The honourable minister's time has expired.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - Colonoscopies don't generally need a bed, so you can't try and hide behind that. How will your \$700 million worth of cuts improve this situation? It's only going to make it worse.

Mrs ARCHER - Thank you. It has a direct impact right across the system. That's three entire wards of patients. What I have been repeatedly saying to you is that it is \$432 million -

Mr Willie - Stop hiding behind it and address the question.

The SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, this is your third warning.

Mrs ARCHER - that could be utilised in our health system for healthcare, not for the aged care responsibility, which is that of the federal government.

Ms Brown - Your cuts will cost lives, minister.

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Franklin, Ms Brown, your second warning.

Farmers Rally

Mr Di FALCO question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.41 a.m.]

There may or may not be a farmers rally out the front of this place today. My question for you is simple: what are you doing for our farmers?

ANSWER

I declare an interest, but can I thank the honourable member for his question and the seriousness behind the question. I have witnessed tractors, actually, outside there parked very dutifully prior to the rally, I believe at 11 a.m. today.

There is enormous investment for our farmers. We must always ensure that when it comes to easing the red tape burden on farmers, we're very much listening to them, and we are. The discussion today is around matters of red tape and matters of how farmers and entities can work together more productively. I commend Lindsay White for rallying the cause, if you like, and look forward to meeting Mr White at 12.30 p.m. today with a number of the participants, of course, outside.

We must also not lose sight of the fact of the enormous investment as a state government, and a federal government, and, indeed, of farmers themselves, when it comes to that key partnership of water development. That has changed the landscape of Tasmania, the productivity, but also provided enormous opportunity for farmers as well, as they invest in their businesses and, indeed, governments invest in communities and regional communities as well. I am very much on side of the farmers when it comes to standing up to large supermarkets and backing in our local butchers and also backing in our farmers as well, beef farmers in this case, when it comes to the brand awareness and the very strong reputation that Tasmanian producers have right across a range of agricultural and horticultural sectors, not only locally, nationally, but also interstate as well.

There are a range of areas where we are supporting our farmers, as your question alludes to, and you can see that every day as you see the transformation of the landscape across rural and regional Tasmania, particularly over the course of the last decade or more. I'm very mindful that governments need to ensure that they are working with producers and with small businesses. Everyone, of course, accepts there needs to be robust regulation but needs to be sensible and balanced to ensure that our small businesses, including our farmers, can get on with a job, do what they do best, grow the wonderful produce and support for their families and their rural and regional communities.

The SPEAKER - The honourable member's time has expired. For the sake of the Independents, I am trying to spread it around. I do keep a list of who's been asking first questions and everything else

Macquarie Point - Hazardous Waste Removal Safeguards

Mr GEORGE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.45 a.m.]

Whatever is to be built at Macquarie Point will involve disturbing and removing many contaminants and contaminated soil, including 30,000 tonnes of highly toxic Level 3 waste. My question isn't relevant to what is going to be built there, it comes from quite a few residents and constituents who express concern to me about the impact of waste removal that includes asbestos, petrochemicals and other hazardous waste. In previous estimates, we have heard confusion about the exact tonnages to be removed, and the lack of clarity from the Macquarie Point Development Corporation and the government itself about plans to deal with it. Now, with excavations underway, will you detail what safeguards are in place to protect residents from dust, soil, and liquid contaminants being taken from the site, and will you confirm that the Copping landfill can adequately and safely manage 30,000 tonnes of Level 3 waste?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for his question. I'll need to get some detail on some of those matters in terms of tonnage for you. I'm not sure if it's in the hand of our minister, but we can update the House at a later time if you'd like. Of course, there are bulk earthworks happening with local company, Hazell Bros - a \$4.5 million contract, which is fantastic. Works by Hazell Bros commenced on site in July ahead of more substantial bulk earthworks, and archaeological excavation works are underway as part of the preparatory works to meet the order requirements as well. These involve the removal of upper fill delays before targeted hand excavation. Any archaeological features and artefacts uncovered will be carefully recorded, collected and managed. Targeted remediation is also being undertaken as part of these early works.

The main bulk of earthworks are expected to commence in October and the works will involve the removal of existing in situ contaminated material to relative level 2.4 metres within the stadium footprint, and the transportation of material to waste disposal facilities and bulk excavation will continue until the main contractor is appointed for the delivery of the stadium. As part of the precinct development, the main sewer line running through the site needs to be relocated, and TasWater is undertaking the works for relocation as well.

I'll look in more detail at the honourable member's question. I can understand the sentiment behind the question and if we can find that information before adjournment this evening, we will provide it.

Supplementary Question

Mr GEORGE - Thank you for that, Premier, I appreciate that. The best that I've been able to find on behalf of constituents is site environmental management plans for 2021 and 2024. If you could provide an update to that, because I assume that with the beginning of excavations there will be a contemporary 2026 site environmental management plan.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I'm sure we can provide information. I will also make the point that whatever one builds on the site, whether it's the domes, a hotel, or a stadium, whatever it might be, there will have to be removal of contaminated material.

Mr George - I accept that, it's part of the question.

Cuts - Impact on Public Services

Mr WILLIE question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

[10.49 a.m.]

Campbell Newman's cuts in Queensland became notorious for the damage they did to public services, but the McKell Institute finds the cuts you are planning in 2027-28 are nearly 10 times larger than the cuts imposed by the Campbell Newman government. Treasurer, why should Tasmanians believe their hospitals, schools, and emergency services can absorb cuts on a scale far greater than Campbell Newman's without services getting worse?

ANSWER

Speaker, I will continue to remind the Leader of the Opposition that he and his colleagues sent the people of Tasmania to an early, unnecessary, expensive election on the back of the need for, in their language, 'budget repair'. We are setting about budget repair. Now, I can understand that if we suggest certain rightsizing in a particular area, Labor might say don't do it here, do it over there or they might say instead of making savings, how about you increase the revenue stream from somewhere, but the Labor Party if they want to have any credibility in this debate, need to come up with alternatives and there is -

Mr WILLIE - Point of order. The question is about cuts that are 10 times greater than the Campbell Newman government that did great damage to the public services in Queensland.

Mr ABETZ - Speaker, in relation to that which may or may not have occurred in Queensland, that, I confess, I'm not an expert on. What I do know is that a budget was delivered with certain forecasts and that budget went through this House and the other house without opposition. This is a budget that the Labor Party seems to like to personalise, to me, and look, does the buck stop with me? Yes, but as the honourable Leader of the Opposition might one day find out - but if he keeps going as he is, I doubt that he will- the budget is a cabinet process, then a party room process, then a parliamentary process and it's been through all those three processes -

Mrs Greene - You're not even being honest about where the cuts will be.

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Bass.

Mr ABETZ - And if the honourable Leader of the Opposition is willing to make or find fault with particular aspects of the budget, I would encourage him to put forward an alternative budget -

Mrs Greene - Be honest about where the cuts will be, Treasurer.

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Bass, Mrs Greene, this is your first warning.

Mr ABETZ - And Speaker, I confess -

Mrs Greene - Why are you cutting hours at Service Tas in Flinders Island at 10 hours a week?

The SPEAKER - Honourable Member for Bass, Mrs Greene, second warning.

Mr ABETZ - I confess that I have not made a comparison with Queensland, but what I can say is I have, as has the Cabinet, the party room, the parliament, undoubtedly made an assessment as to what the needs are for Tasmania if we are to have a sustainable health system, a sustainable education system, a sustainable emergency service system. If we want to have sustainability in our budget then certain decisions need to be taken and that is what we're doing.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - Treasurer, Campbell Newman's cuts did great damage to schools and hospitals. What makes you think cuts 10 times larger in your budget won't do the same thing?

Mr ABETZ - Speaker, if the honourable Leader of the Opposition wants to go down memory lane, he might like to go to Queensland- I'll stick in Tasmania and remind him of his predecessors in the Labor-Green government that shelved, what, 200 hospital beds? Sacked a nurse a day for nine months straight. That is the record -

Members interjecting.

Ms Brown - What do you think you're doing?

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ABETZ - of Labor and the Greens when they were in government because they lost control of the budget. I, and the Liberal government here, do not intend to lose control of the budget like those over there did.

Biosecurity - Cuts

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE

[10.54 a.m.]

Tasmania is now dealing with potato mop-top, serpentine leaf miner, H5 bird flu and varroa mite has been detected at the Port of Geelong. We know potato mop-top may have been in Tasmania for years before it was detected. Government surveillance didn't find it. A grower did. The same happened with serpentine leaf miner; a grower raised the alarm. Your government is demanding millions in savings from NRE, ending the additional Biosecurity Officers initiative and cutting future funding to keeping Tasmania disease-free. Minister, at the exact moment biosecurity threats are increasing, why are farmers paying more and why on earth are you cutting biosecurity?

ANSWER

Can I thank the member for the question and this very important issue, in fact, so important that no one, no government has invested more into biosecurity than this government. No government has invested more than this government. Stopping pests and diseases before they arrive to Tasmania has been a key priority for successive Tasmanian Liberal governments for decades. We've done so by record investment in Biosecurity, legislating reform like the establishment of the *Biosecurity Act 2019*. Successful responses to incursions, remember the fruit fly? Investment in planning for known risks of varroa mites is another one and preparation for avian influenza, which we are now dealing with.

Ms Finlay - You are cutting critical services in Biosecurity.

Mr PEARCE - Can I finish, Deputy Leader? In addition to the \$113 million in funding already committed by the Australian Government to strengthen our nation's preparedness for H5 bird flu, ministers noted that on 21 July 2026, the National Management Group committed a cost share of up to \$24.8 million to support responses activities undertaken since the first confirmed detections of H5.

Ms Finlay - What happens to the balance of the Biosecurity needs?

Mr PEARCE - Tasmania's well prepared for bird flu. This has been going on since 2023. I want to take this opportunity, and I'm glad you raised it, to thank Biosecurity for the tireless work that they do.

Ms Finlay - They don't need cuts.

Mr PEARCE - To thank the specialists, our veterinarians, our pest and disease specialists that exist within and work tirelessly within our department. I want to thank the relationship that they've formed with our farmers, with our industry, with all facets of agriculture.

Ms Finlay - They are working on such low resources.

Mr PEARCE - I want to thank the relationship which has been formed and highlight the relationship that's been formed with our logistics, with our freight, with our ports, with our airports, with our points of entry, with our risks that we see for points of entry coming in and out of the state. I want to thank the work that's being done with those agricultural lobbyists and representatives from different facets of agriculture and the relationship they've formed with NRE and with BT. Biosecurity Tasmania have a lot on their plate.

Ms Finlay - They have, and they don't need cuts.

Mr PEARCE - They haven't received cuts. We've said, and I refer you to the Premier's statement when he said in this place:

That additional resources required to coordinate the response of bird flu incursions into this state would be made available as they require.

The SPEAKER - The honourable minister's time has expired.

Supplementary Question

Ms FINLAY - Tasmanian Labor join, and I'm sure with everybody in this parliament, the great work of Biosecurity Tasmania, that was not the question. We have incredible people right across the state doing extraordinary work, but they don't deserve cuts. Can you guarantee today that there will be no frontline Biosecurity workers, that there will be no surveillance, diagnostics or disease operators cut out of your budget?

Mr PEARCE - In relation to this supplementary question, Speaker, I can confirm that there will be no operational cuts to our front line.

Ms Finlay - No operational cuts in Biosecurity?

Draft master plan for St Johns Health and Wellbeing Precinct – feedback timeframe

Ms JOHNSTON question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

[10.58 a.m.]

Yesterday you released the draft final master plan for the St Johns Health and Wellbeing Precinct, three long years after public consultation on the draft version had closed. This has unfortunately been a long-awaited development, but the consultation three years ago did result in some welcome proposed changes such as redeveloping the renal unit which currently is not fit for purpose. Minister, you would agree that feedback on the final version is very important, but you have only provided 11 days to receive it. It's wrong to expect patients battling health challenges in particular to respond so quickly. Will you extend the consultation time on the master plan to at least four weeks to allow for meaningful feedback?

ANSWER

Thank you, honourable Speaker, and I thank the honourable member for her question and her interest and her advocacy indeed on this issue. We are committed to transforming both our mental health system, but also that St John's Park precinct as well. As you identified, it has had some challenges to reach this point and certainly I am happy to say we would be pleased to extend the time for consultation.

Heath Services Access for LGBTIQA+ Community

Ms ROSOL question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

[11.00 a.m.]

The ACCC recently approved the sale of Hobart Private Hospital to Calvary Healthcare, with the handover due to take place in November. Calvary will not provide fertility services, terminations or gender-affirming care, in a policy position that is not only discriminatory but also limits service access for people with private health insurance. This will place more pressure on the public system. I understand that IVF will be available through Hobart Day Surgery, but where do you anticipate people will go to access other reproductive and gender-affirming care? Is it your plan that the public system will pick up this slack? How will this impact on public service provision? What are you doing to address this looming loss of services for people, including those who are LGBTIQA+?

ANSWER

Thank you, honourable Speaker. I thank the member for her question and, again, for her interest, and, indeed, many members across the parliament who have made representation in relation to this issue - I note Rodney in the Gallery as well, welcome. Our government welcomes the ACCC's approval of the sale of Hobart Private Hospital to Calvary Healthcare. It is a good result for Tasmanians who access private healthcare and is a positive outcome ensuring that Tasmanians continue to have access to a range of healthcare services around the

state. It will ensure the continued availability of private health services for Hobart and surrounds and help to take pressure off our public system and support Tasmanians when they need it.

I do understand the concerns raised regarding what services will be offered by Calvary, and I note that the ACCC's acknowledgement that some services would likely cease. We have been very clear that we will ensure that there is no service gap for vulnerable Tasmanians, with some services already resolved such as IVF services. We continue to work through details to resolve others, but I am confident that we are getting closer and we will have solutions for all of those issues.

The sale and transfer of operations for the hospital is not expected to be completed until late-2026. In the meantime, Healthscope will continue to own and operate the hospital. We are committed to ensuring that healthcare services will continue without disruption, as continuity of care is essential for patients and the wider Tasmanian community. We'll continually monitor developments as the sale process rolls out to support safe, effective and sustainable delivery of services. I'm advised that regulatory approvals are yet to occur, and the terms of the agreement are yet to be negotiated, including the full range of clinical services that will be provided.

I'm advised that the Department of Health will continue to consult with the health sector and negotiate terms with the new operator before the expected handover. We are absolutely committed to working closely with all partners to ensure continuity of care, patient choice and sustainability of both public and private health services.

Farming Rally - Independent Review

**Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER,
Mr PEARCE**

[11.03 a.m.]

Anger on the lawns outside parliament today isn't about one decision or one bureaucrat. Things don't escalate to tractors at parliament because farmers feel unheard just once. Farmers are dealing with unclear rules, heavy-handed enforcement and penalties that don't always reflect legitimate farming practises. TasFarmers say farmers need fairer rules, proper recognition of agricultural activity and a stronger voice in government decision-making. Concerns about red tape, regulatory cost, complexity and government processes extend right across primary industries, not just ag, including seafood and aquaculture. You can't eat red tape, Minister. These are the people in industries you are supposed to represent inside government. How much louder do they have to get before you listen? Will you support the independent review farmers are asking for?

ANSWER

I thank the member for the question and the fact that, on this side, we take this matter very seriously. The Premier's already detailed just how seriously earlier on today in his Question Time. I hear daily from farmers about the obstacles that are placed in front of them and I commit daily to reducing those red-tape obstacles and make it easier for them to access what their mission is.

There are, as you rightly pointed it out in your question, issues that cut across departments, that cut across all sorts of portfolios, and I look to the minister for forestry over here. This particular rally, this particular point today, is probably aimed at that part of -

Ms Finlay - I reckon there are all sorts of people on the lawns today with problems, Minister.

Mr PEARCE - Can you hear me out?

The SPEAKER - Order, honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I ask the minister to be heard, please.

Mr PEARCE - Thanks, Speaker. Whilst I understand that today, and the issues around the Forestry Practices Authority (FPA), extend far broader than that -

Ms Finlay - It's not just about the FPA.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr PEARCE - I get it loud and clear. Reducing red tape is one thing. Reducing effective reduction of red tape is another. There are rules and regulations; you know how precarious this is. The last question that you raised was around biosecurity and the risk of pathogens and pests that we have coming into our great state.

Ms Finlay - And there are cuts there, and you said that there aren't.

The SPEAKER - Deputy Leader of the opposition, first warning.

Mr PEARCE - We can't simply absolve ourselves of all of that responsibility. There needs to be a threshold between the responsibility aspect and allowing people to move forward in a practical way, in a pragmatic way. That's what negotiations like this are all about. That's why later on, the Premier, myself and the minister will go out there. That's why we talk to people like Lindsay White -

Ms Finlay - They have to bring their tractors to the lawns to be heard.

The SPEAKER - Deputy Leader of the Opposition, second warning.

Mr PEARCE - That's why, on a daily basis we talk with people like Lindsay White and I respect everything that he puts in front of us. I really do. That's why I've had three phone calls this morning with Tas Farmers. We are constantly -

Members interjecting.

Mr PEARCE - You smile? What's so funny?

The SPEAKER - Honourable minister, go through the Chair, please.

Mr PEARCE - Yes. My point, Speaker, is that we take very seriously the issues that the industry raises through TasFarmers, through Mr White's organisation, through farmers just being generally concerned and ringing us; through people coming into our elected offices.

The SPEAKER - The honourable minister's time has expired.

Supplementary Question

Ms FINLAY - The minister says he talks daily, and I hear lots of great feedback about the minister but, minister, there is so much red tape. There is so much lack of clarity in the systems and the rules. The decision-making is so poor that we have hundreds of farmers from across the state who have brought their tractors to the lawns, not just for the FPA, but for a whole range of reasons there are people on the lawns. When will you listen? Why does it take a day when the farmers bring their tractors to the lawns, that TasFarmers have to be on the phone to you multiple times for you to make the changes that farmers need?

Mr PEARCE - I appreciate the question. I appreciate the issue. I look forward to hearing from those farmers today. This is not something you can undo, you can wave a magic wand. This is not something we can just fix in a day, in a 24-hour period or a press release. This is a structural issue that we need to work through very carefully. We have to be careful also in fixing something we don't create another issue.

All of these things are complex and it is difficult. We've been through this whole issue of Rushy Lagoon. That has been complex. That's why we're having an inquiry to find out what has happened to that, so you can see that's not going to happen overnight but we will get to the truth.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr PEARCE - We will get to the truth of this and that's what this is all about.

Firmus Data Centres - Communication with Aboriginal Community

Mr GARLAND question to Minister for ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, Mrs ARCHER

[11.09 a.m.]

Representatives from several Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations have informed me that you have not directly consulted them on AI or on AI data centre proposals. This is despite your government knowing about at least 10 data centres proposed across Tasmania. Firmus Technologies has been based in Launceston since 2019 for a similar length of time that you have been a federal state member for Bass. Minister, what year did you first meet with representatives from Firmus? How many times have you met with Firmus in the past eight years, including in your role as minister? Since becoming Aboriginal community about their thoughts on AI and AI data centres? Will you now commit to meeting with the Aboriginal community on AI data and data centres within the coming weeks, before parliament returns on 27 October?

Mr ABETZ - Honourable Speaker, on a point of order, if I may. I understand the gist and the vibe of the question, but I thought that questions could only go to the minister's portfolio responsibilities and not in relation to matters that she may have undertaken in other roles, such as the federal member.

The SPEAKER - Thank you, Treasurer, but it is up to the minister to refer to another minister if she wants to. The honourable minister can choose to respond because part of it was relevant to the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for his questions. A couple of ones in there. Firstly, I met with Firmus as a federal MP several years ago and visited their St Leonards data centre. I have not met with Firmus since I have been elected to the state parliament. I regularly meet with Aboriginal people and Aboriginal community organisations across Tasmania about a range of issues. They have not as yet raised the issue of data centres specifically with me. I'm happy to have those conversations, as I am about a range of other issues.

It is reasonable for people to ask questions about green data centres and about all of those issues, including impacts on water use, energy use and local impacts, and we need to make sure that those benefits are shared by all Tasmanians. There are strong regulations around these things through our planning schemes, whether those are environmental standards or, indeed, the processes around Aboriginal heritage, for example. There is work underway on a new *Aboriginal Heritage Act* for Tasmania as well.

These data centres are relatively new to Tasmania. It's reasonable that people are going to ask a range of questions about that. We have regulatory processes in place, including around Aboriginal heritage. But I would always welcome engagement from Aboriginal people and Aboriginal communities about any issue they want to discuss.

Time expired.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Designated Area Migration Agreement

Ms ROSOL question to MINISTER for SKILLS and JOBS, Mr ELLIS

[11.12 a.m.]

My question is on behalf of Archana Brammall, who owns co-owns Tatler Lane and Sweetbrew, a busy hospitality business in Launceston. She asks what progress has been made on the Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) for skilled workers in Tasmania? You've promised Ms Brammall an outcome several times this year, including reassurance that all would be resolved by July. She went ahead and employed five skilled staff she would then sponsor under the agreement. But with the DAMA still not in place, she is now looking at losing three of these staff by November, despite them being key to operations. Ms Brammall is aware of many other employers in similar situations, waiting with bated breath for the agreement that will enable them to fill critical employment gaps. Exactly where is the DAMA

process up to, why is it taking so long for the agreement to be approved and when can Ms Brammall expect it to be finalised?

Health - Charge for North West Regional Hospital Accommodation Unit

Ms DOW question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

[11.13 a.m.]

My question is from my constituent Gary in Smithton. Gary presented to the Smithton District Hospital emergency department late at night, was unable to be treated and consequently had to travel to the Burnie emergency department, where he was treated, discharged and asked to present again early the next morning. He asks why he had to pay \$70 a night to stay in the units of the North West Regional Hospital. Why are already disadvantaged regional and remote Tasmanians having to pay for accommodation to access basic emergency department services that aren't available in their own town? I thought these units were provided for accommodation for people travelling from rural and remote areas so they could get timely access to care.

GM Canola Trial Site Regulatory Requirements

Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE

My question is from a farmer in my electorate quite close to Longford who had a GM canola trial site in the early 2000s. He asks what the government is doing to simplify regulatory requirements for the former GM trial sites across the state while retaining Tasmania's GM moratorium? Can the minister outline what the government is doing to reduce the regulatory burden on affected landholders?

Gynaecologist Wait Times in Southern Tasmania

Ms BURNET question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

My question is from a constituent in Claremont who recently contacted my office regarding the unacceptable wait times to see a public specialist gynaecologist in southern Tasmania. She says: Women in our community are waiting up to a year, or even longer, for basic non-urgent public gynaecological care, while jurisdictions like the Australian Capital Territory maintain far greater specialist availability and shorter wait-lists. Essential healthcare should not depend on your post code. What immediate, concrete steps is the government taking to recruit public gynaecologists to the Royal Hobart Hospital to ensure women in Claremont can access timely bulk billed specialist care?

NRE Tasmania - Complex Regulatory Processes

Mr GARLAND question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE

A constituent from Ridgley has raised concerns about navigating the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) Tasmania's regulatory processes. He has encountered application systems that were not fully in place and accreditation processes where requirements weren't publicly available upfront, with additional demands emerging during the process amounting to tens of thousands of dollars in unforeseen costs. He is now even reluctant to continue lawful selective clearing on his own property for fear of unknowingly falling foul of the rules. He isn't asking to avoid environmental or biosecurity responsibilities but he wants clear rules, transparent processes and government working with farmers, rather than dictating to them. Will you bring back generalist extension officers who can work directly with farmers, much like a GP in medicine, understanding the whole farm, providing practical advice and bringing in specialist expertise when it is needed?

Small-Scale Meat Processor Recommendations

Mr WINTER question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE

Small-scale meat producers in southern Tasmania felt the pressure of repeated closures and a loss of access to their local abattoir. Across Tasmania, producers like them face continuous hurdles due to a fragmented regulatory system, overly complex planning rules and a prohibitive waste management threshold. They're not even allowed to sell their own meat processed on their property. Your document to support small-scale Tasmanian meat processors is a big disappointment to them. Despite identifying key recommendations to address these issues, including updating outdated waste definitions, providing clear guidelines for mobile processing and securing affordable local meat safety inspector training, it then points to resourcing and funding restraints as reasons not to progress reform.

Can you outline to these producers in my electorate when action will finally be taken to implement these vital recommendations so our local small farmers can get on with business?

Queenborough Oval Improvements

Ms OGILVIE question to MINISTER for SPORT, Mr DUIGAN

My constituent in Hobart has heard about the great improvements to Queenborough Oval and was interested to know more about this project and who would benefit, for example, women's football.

Bass Highway Investment

Dr BROAD question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT

My question is from Michael in Devonport who asks: have you forgotten about the Bass Highway? People in the north-west want to know when they're going to see real investment in the roads they use every day.

Time expired.

PETITION

Vegetation Clearing and Land Management Enforcement Framework

Mr Di FALCO (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I have the honour to be the bearer of an e-petition signed by approximately 2803 petitioners calling upon the House to conduct an urgent review into Tasmania's vegetation clearing and land management enforcement framework, ensure penalties are fair and proportionate, particularly where activities relate to ordinary farming practices and land management. The petition conforms with the Standing Orders of the House.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE - ANSWERS

No. 38 of 2026 - Presentations to Emergency Department

Mr GARLAND question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

See Appendix 1 on page x.

No. 52 of 2026 - Mental Health

Ms BURNET question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

See Appendix 2 on page x.

No. 54 of 2026 - King Island Paramedics

Ms DOW question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

See Appendix 3 on page x.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS GOVERNANCE REFORMS BILL 2026 (No. 44)

UNCORRECTED PROOF

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Abetz and read the first time.

CONVERSION PRACTICES PROHIBITION BILL 2026 (No. 45)

First Reading

Bill presented by Dr Woodruff and read the first time.

SITTINGS DATES

[11.23 a.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House)(by leave) - Speaker, I move -

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, 27 October at 10.00 a.m.

Motion agreed to.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Water Charges

[11.24 a.m.]

Prof RAZAY (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, today I rise to speak about the impact of TasWater's fixed pricing structure, in particular, on community organisations and businesses. TasWater has stated that it's \$1.2 billion investment over the next four years will improve water security, protect public health and the environment, renew ageing assets, and strengthen the reliability of services that communities rely on every day. No one disputes the importance of safe, reliable water and sewerage infrastructure, but affordability and fairness must also be part of the conversation. The Tasmanian Economic Regulator's final determination for the 2026 to 2030 period approved annual price increases of 5.7 per cent, rather than 11.5 per cent TasWater originally sought. While that ruling moderated the proposed increase under Price and Service Plan 5, in 2026-27, alone, TasWater forecast the average household can expect an increase about \$80