

**PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA**  
**DEBATES OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

**DAILY HANSARD**

**Tuesday 27 October 2026**

**Preliminary Transcript**

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# UNCORRECTED PROOF

**Tuesday 27 October 2026**

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

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

### Member for Braddon - Mr Ellis

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Premier) - Honourable Speaker, minister Ellis is absent from the Chamber today. I will answer any questions relating to the portfolio of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, and the Treasurer, Mr Abetz, will answer questions relating to the portfolios of Business, Industry and Resources, Skills and Jobs, and Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy.

## QUESTIONS

### Ambulance Response Times

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

Over the weekend, a Zeehan man with chest pains waited nearly 80 minutes for an ambulance to come from Burnie because the Zeehan station was unstaffed. Tragically, he was already dead by the time it arrived. This is now the second Tasmanian to die waiting for an ambulance this month. Just last month you said, 'I want to be really clear with Tasmanians: if you call an ambulance and you need an ambulance, you will get an ambulance.' Minister, he called. He needed an ambulance. Why didn't he get one?

## ANSWER

I thank the member for the question. First of all and most importantly, I want to extend my condolences to the patient's family, friends and loved ones at what is a very difficult time for them, and would like to reiterate the importance of dignity, compassion and privacy for patients in relation to any circumstances.

In relation to the specifics of the incident, as members are no doubt aware on Saturday 24 October 2026, Ambulance Tasmania responded to a call on the west coast of Tasmania where, sadly, the patient was found deceased after paramedics arrived. The call had been triaged as a priority 1 and a Burnie crew was assigned to the case straight away, given that crews in Queenstown and Strahan were already attending to other cases at the time.

I can confirm that the Zeehan ambulance station was not staffed at the time of the incidents due to staff leave. I'm advised that the vacant shift had initially been allocated through overtime arrangements, however, this was cancelled several days beforehand. Further attempts were made to fill the vacant shift for the usual well-established backfilling processes, but unfortunately, these attempts were not successful.

Importantly, a comprehensive investigation is underway into the circumstances surrounding the incident and to identify any actions that may be required. As I've said previously, it is important that in relation to these matters that those processes are allowed to take their course. We will, of course, respond to any findings from an investigation, but it is important to acknowledge the dignity and the respect of the people and the families concerned as well.

### Supplementary Question

**Mr WILLIE** - Minister, Tasmanians deserve to know whether this is a once-off. How many shifts have gone unstaffed at Zeehan, Queenstown, and Strahan this year? And if you're unable to answer, will you take it on notice and provide the House with the information by the end of the week?

**Mrs ARCHER** - I thank the member for the supplementary question. Ambulance Tasmania has three stations located on the West Coast: Zeehan, Queenstown and Strahan. These stations are crewed by a paramedic and a volunteer seven days a week working on a four-day on, four-day off rotation. I'm advised that Ambulance Tasmania undertook a recruitment process for the west coast in 2025 and from this process two paramedics were successfully appointed to Zeehan, and there is, in addition, a remote allowance to west coast stations introduced to incentivise paramedics to take up these positions.

Like all workplaces, roster vacancies can arise from planned and unplanned leave or changes in staff arrangements, which can impact rostering and overtime levels. Ambulance Tasmania actively monitors all vacant shifts, and where vacancies arrive, these shifts are advertised for cover and where necessary, staff are redeployed to areas of critical need to ensure service continuity.

### West Coast Ambulance Stations - Staffing

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

[10.06 a.m.]

The paramedics' union says west coast ambulance stations go unstaffed regularly. Your department claims it is backfilling and recruiting. How many paramedics have you added on the west coast since you've been the Health minister? Will the Zeehan station be staffed this weekend: yes or no?

### ANSWER

I thank the member for his question, and I refer to my previous comments in relation to the west coast paramedic coverage. As I said, we have three stations located on the west coast - Zeehan, Queenstown and Strahan - and the stations are crewed by a paramedic and a volunteer seven days a week working a four-day on, four-day off rotation.

Ambulance Tasmania undertook a recruitment process for the west coast in 2025, and from this process two paramedics were successfully appointed to Zeehan. The addition of a

remote allowance to west coast stations was introduced to further incentivise paramedics to take up these positions.

**Mr Willie** - Will it be staffed this weekend?

**Mrs ARCHER** - They are challenges that are well understood in terms of recruiting permanent staff to remote areas, but we will continue to do everything we can to bolster coverage. In the time that I have been the minister in this year, we've recruited 64 paramedics to Ambulance Tasmania. Indeed, I'm going out to welcome another 11 experienced paramedics at Cambridge tomorrow.

We're continuing to recruit paramedics right across Ambulance Tasmania. We're continuing to invest in infrastructure in Ambulance Tasmania. We've committed some \$776 million to Ambulance Tasmania across this Budget. We'll continue to focus on workforce. Those paramedics are being deployed right across Tasmania and, of course, we continue to support our volunteer ambulance officers as well.

### Supplementary Question

**Mr WILLIE** - The minister didn't answer the question. Will the Zeehan station be staffed this weekend? If people need an ambulance in Zeehan this weekend, what should they do, minister?

**Mrs ARCHER** - Thank you for the supplementary question. Like all workplaces, roster vacancies can arise from planned and unplanned leave or changes in staff arrangements, which can impact rostering and overtime levels. Ambulance Tasmania actively monitors all vacant shifts. Where vacancies arise, these shifts are advertised for cover and where necessary, staff are redeployed to areas of critical need to ensure service continuity.

**Mr Mitchell** - Will it be staffed?

**The SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mrs ARCHER** - What I will also say, very clearly, is that if people are experiencing an emergency, they should call triple-zero. What I would also say is what I have said recently - and we have announced a public awareness campaign in relation to this issue - people need to understand their treatment options and their care pathways as well. So, if it is not an emergency - and we know that up to one-in-five calls are not emergencies - we encourage people to know what their treatment options are that are available.

**Mr Willie** - Will the station be staffed this weekend or not?

**The SPEAKER** - Order. Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the time has expired for the honourable minister, and I remind members of the House you do have other questions that you can be asking.

## Ambulance Tasmania - Services and Budget

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

[10.09 a.m.]

The deaths of two Tasmanians who couldn't get an ambulance when they needed it were devastating. Unfortunately, these tragic situations are no surprise. Under this government, there's been consistent deterioration of ambulance services. Each year Tasmanians are experiencing longer and more frequent delays in emergency situations: their lives are being put at increased risk. The government allows this, despite extensive evidence of clear solutions. The ramping inquiry has been largely ignored, and ambulance staffing is way below the recommendations of your own expert report. What's truly disturbing, though, is the state budget's plan to cut the ambulance budget from this year to next year. Ambulance services need much more investment, not less. Minister, will you rethink this approach? Will you review the budget and make sure the budget for ambulance services keeps going up each and every year?

### ANSWER

Thank you very much, Speaker, and I thank the member for her question. I would like to reiterate the comments that I made at the beginning, extending my condolences to the families of the people that you're talking about. I think it is very important to remember that we are talking about people and that we extend dignity, compassion and privacy to people in relation to these issues. I say that because there are active investigations underway into both of these matters, which you would expect, which is the appropriate process, and it is also the appropriate process to allow for that to be concluded before speculating or to draw conclusions in relation to that.

In relation to some of the other issues that you raised, of which there were quite a few: firstly, I would also like to say that I'm really proud of the team at Ambulance Tasmania and the dedicated ambulance officers and volunteers that work tirelessly in our communities every day. We are backing in Ambulance Tasmania through increased funding and resourcing. We invest \$776.6 million for ambulance services, over three quarters of a billion dollars across this Budget. We're investing into new ambulance stations. We're continuing to recruit paramedics; as I've said, 75 new paramedics this year. We employ more ambulance officers for every 100,000 people than any other state; 80 FTE when the Australian average is 64.7.

By comparison, when we came to government, that was 49.7 FTE per 100,000 people, when we came to government in 2014. Despite a record increase in demand, and it goes to the point that I made earlier about demand. We've seen more than 7000 more calls in the 2025/26 year, but we see some 120,000 calls in a year to Ambulance Tasmania.

I would also say we have been committed to our Transfer of Care Protocol and that has now, since its introduction, saved nearly 40,000 hours of ramping at hospitals, meaning that those paramedics are back on the road for 40,000 more hours providing lifesaving care in the in the community.

We need ambulances to be kept for emergencies. That's an important public campaign that we will continue to roll out. But people need to also have confidence that if they are in need of emergency care, they should call 000.

**Supplementary Question**

**Ms ROSOL** - Minister, everyone can see that the ambulance service isn't meeting demand at the moment, and the numbers are clearly written in the State Budget in Budget Paper No. 2, pages 102 and 103. Funding for ambulance services goes down from this financial year to next. Spending for ambulance services goes down from this financial year to the next. That's a cut. It's in black and white. Minister, our question is simple: will you commit to ensuring the budget for ambulance services goes up every single year?

**Mrs ARCHER** - What I will commit to is what I've consistently committed to as I've stood here and answered questions over time in this year, which is that it is important that we have a sustainable budget. It is important where savings can be made, that they are made so that we can continue to invest them in the frontline services that Tasmanians need. We need - and I've said this before - we need every single dollar that we are able to have to go into those essential frontline services that Tasmanians need.

**Ms Rosol** - Then guarantee the funding goes on.

**The SPEAKER** - Order, honourable member for Bass.

**Mrs ARCHER** - That means that we have to find efficiencies and savings where it is appropriate to do so. For example, if -

**Members** interjecting.

**The SPEAKER** - Order. The honourable minister is answering. I ask that she be heard, please. Honourable minister.

**Mrs ARCHER** - \$54 million saved in locum and agency costs that have then been able to be -

**Ms Rosol** - Ambulance funding has been cut.

**The SPEAKER** - Honourable member for Bass.

**Mrs ARCHER** - recruiting permanent staff.

**Health Budget - Paramedics**

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

[10.15 a.m.]

Right to Information documents obtained by Labor shows that keeping ambulances on the road took 125,725 hours of paramedic overtime last year, at a cost of \$12.7 million. This year, you've only budgeted \$7.1 million, which is a 44 per cent cut on what was needed. If you were hiring the paramedics needed to fill those shifts, spending less on overtime would be

a good thing, but you aren't. That leaves two outcomes: either the same exhausted paramedics are pushed even harder, or even more shifts go unfilled and fewer ambulances are on the road.

Instead of standing up for paramedics, like you should as Health minister, you're backing the Treasurer's cuts all the way. Minister, how many more Tasmanians have to die before you stand up to Treasurer Abetz's cuts?

### ANSWER

Thank you, honourable Speaker. I thank the member for the question. I think that that question that you have asked is beneath you, Mr Willie. All Tasmanians deserve the right care, in the right place, at the right time, especially when they need dedicated paramedics and ambulances.

**Members** interjecting.

**The SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mrs ARCHER** - As I've said, we continue to invest in Ambulance Tasmania: three quarters of a billion dollars across this budget. We have FTE that is above that of most other states. We're continuing to recruit paramedics: 75 paramedics have been welcomed into the service in this current year.

We're continuing to invest in ambulance infrastructure as well. As I've said, we will continue to respond to overtime as required; I gave that answer to you earlier. We are also recruiting new permanent staff to the service. That's what people would expect us to do. We don't want to continue to rely on overtime if we don't need to.

We want to continue to employ those paramedics terminally to the service; as we are right across the health service with new permanent nurses, permanent doctors, saving some \$54 million in locum and agency costs, for example. That is how we build a stronger health system, how we build a more sustainable health system, and how we can reduce our reliance on overtime. But it is a demand-driven system and so, at times, where that overtime needs to be extended, of course it will be. That is true right across the healthcare system.

Of course, our budget is going to seek to recruit more permanent staff and to reduce the reliance on overtime - that's what you would expect us to do - but where it is needed we will of course provide that resource to Ambulance Tasmania as well.

### Supplementary Question

**Mr WILLIE** - Minister, you stood in this place a couple of months ago and you said you believed in Eric Abetz's \$700 million worth of health cuts. Do you still believe in the \$700 million worth of cuts while Tasmanians are literally dying waiting for an ambulance?

**Mrs ARCHER** - What I commit to is exactly what I have stood here previously and committed to; which is you must have a sustainable budget, you must find the savings where you are able to. I don't think anybody would reject that \$54 million worth of savings on locum and agencies is not a good and worthwhile thing because that means that there is more money available to reinvest into the frontline services that Tasmanians rely on, that Tasmanians are

going to rely on into the future. We need to have a sustainable budget to do that. It's not about, as the Treasurer has said, a trophy of surplus on a shelf somewhere; it is about making savings where we are able to do that, such as in that area, so that we can reinvest it into the essential services that Tasmanians need.

### **Virtual Emergency Department - Delivery**

#### **Ms BURNET question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.19 a.m.]

I want to also extend my condolences for those people who have died waiting for healthcare. Premier, your government promised a virtual emergency department to provide video-enabled clinical assessments to reduce pressure and wait-times at our overstretched Emergency Departments (EDs). In September 2025, you told this House the service was being developed to start in 2026. Last year's budget allocated several million dollars. You recommitted to it in your March 2026 state of the state address then in June, your Health minister said implementation was on track for this year. I've spoken to the director of Victoria's Virtual Emergency Department, who has told me that the system is ready to go and it should have started on 15 October, but it still hasn't. Why has the Virtual Emergency Department failed to commence this plan? Why is it preventing rollout? Will you guarantee Tasmanians a commencement date for this urgently needed service?

#### **ANSWER**

I thank the honourable member for the question and note your condolences to the circumstances of the grieving family. I extend, on behalf of all of us, my condolences to the family as well. I also want to pay tribute to the very hard work of all our health professionals at the front line, particularly our paramedics who, you would appreciate, work under very arduous and stressful circumstances.

What I can point to in terms of the broader picture is that when it comes to investment in our ambulance services, we've actually doubled the paramedics per capita since 2014, the second highest of any state, as I understand it. And since 2022, there's been a 67 per cent reduction in the number of hours ramped. All these, and the policies around primary health care, places for aged care and also people waiting for an appropriate setting with disability following discharge are all part of the access and flow importance that you speak of. Again, I thank our hard-working team and staff, who continue to do an amazing job and care for our community, particularly those in our emergency departments and the high-pressure environment that it is.

With respect to your question, our Department of Health is also collaborating with Northern Health and Victorian Department of Health to progress the integration of the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department model into Tasmania's healthcare system. I understand that's the subject you are speaking of. The Virtual Emergency Department is a Victorian government program that supports health professionals, paramedics, nurses and GPs with access to an emergency medicine specialist. The Virtual Emergency Department will provide 24/7 video-enabled emergency clinical assessment for non-life threatening conditions, as your question pointed to. Work is underway, as I understand it, to formalise the agreements, governance and operational arrangements, with implementation expected this year.

Right now, the contract is with the Victorian government to sign, where it's been for a few weeks, as I understand it. All the work has been done. If my information serves me correctly, we just need a final signature from the health minister, as I understand it, when it comes to this matter.

## Supplementary Question

**Ms BURNET** - I thank the Premier for that answer, but I didn't ask about investment in ambulance services. It was very specific to the Virtual EDs. I know that Tasmanian health professionals are ready to go to work on this. They see it as a priority. Why aren't you picking up the phone to your counterpart in Victoria to make this happen and deliver these services?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I know that our Health minister has been pushing for the contract to be signed. Her advocacy has been, like with everything our Health minister does, outstanding. It is sitting on the health minister's desk for signing. Our Health minister has requested it. I understand our head of the State Service is also engaged when it comes to the signing. We're ready to sign that contract today. In fact, we've been ready for some time. Victoria have advised that they are unlikely to sign this agreement before they enter caretaker. That is disappointing. Officers of the Health minister, I understand, have reached out to the Victorian minister and I sincerely hope they do change their mind and get this signed before caretaker officially so we can move on.

## Ambulance Tasmania - Standdowns of Paramedics

**Mr O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Ms ARCHER**

[10.26 a.m.]

A key plank of your government's budget repair strategy is finding efficiencies in the public sector. There are few more inefficient and costly aspects of our public sector than lengthy, unnecessary staff standdowns. The Health and Community Services Union recently highlighted an incident where a paramedic was stood down for eight weeks for not trying to resuscitate a patient who had been deceased for seven hours. The union said this was an example of an unjust disciplinary system that lacked common sense.

Paramedics are essential frontline workers. We don't have enough of them and we hear weekly accounts of Tasmanians waiting far too long for ambulances. Do you agree that the standing down of this paramedic was not only unnecessary but costly, both in human and financial terms? And what are you doing to ensure that this kind of action does not occur again?

## ANSWER

I thank the member for the question. I'm committed to regular ongoing engagement with unions to ensure that we are working closely together to resolve any concerns, and also so that we can identify and collaborate on opportunities to build a better health system. That goes to the question that you have asked. Of course, we continue to talk with unions around industrial arrangements more generally. Many of these issues and the issues that you raise sit within the sort of regulatory frameworks, so I don't think it's quite as simple as just being able to say, 'Yes,

that seems like there should be a more common-sense approach to that'. I think it is a bit more complicated than that. But certainly, I commit to continuing to work with all of our workforce, including with our unions and industrial advocates around all of these sorts of matters.

## Supplementary Question

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Thank you, minister, for the answer, and I understand the respect that you've shown towards the unions, but ultimately this is not a union issue. This is a paramedic leadership issue in terms of Ambulance Tasmania and an approach they're taking to staff, which is costly, unjust and is adding more cost to the bottom line for Tasmanian public sector services. Will you take action to ensure that more appropriate leadership is applied in these circumstances that doesn't add to the bottom line?

**Mrs ARCHER** - As I said, I'm certainly happy to look at the individual circumstances. I think it would be remiss of me to just agree here on the floor of parliament, to say, 'Yes, that situation needs to be addressed', without looking at the substantive detail of it. But certainly, more than happy to continue to do that.

## Ambulance Tasmania - Budget

**Mr WILLIE question to the MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER**

[10.28 a.m.]

Earlier this month, a Hobart man died after his family had to drive him to the Royal Hobart Hospital because no ambulance was available. The paramedics union says three ambulances were ramped at the hospital at the time. The Premier promised Tasmanians he would ban ambulance ramping in 2024. Minister, why are you and Treasurer Abetz cutting \$700 million from Health while people are dying and ambulances are still stuck on the ramp?

## ANSWER

Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. I would reiterate the comments that I have made previously about the importance of providing dignity, compassion and privacy to patients. I also reiterate that I -

**Mr Winter** - They couldn't get any service at all.

**Mr Willie** - It's not an excuse not to have questions.

**The SPEAKER** - Order. The honourable Leader of the Opposition has asked a question. I ask that the minister be heard, please.

**Mrs ARCHER** - I can also confirm that a comprehensive investigation is underway through the Tasmanian Health Service and Ambulance Tasmania, which will investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident and to identify any actions that may be required. This investigation will include the patient's entire care pathway, including emergency call handling, clinical prioritisation, resourcing and any broader health system factors. That is a priority for the department, and an initial update will be due in mid-November. I commit to publicly

sharing as much as possible through this process and following the investigation's conclusions, including the findings and any actions required, except where it impacts on the privacy of the patient's family, which does need to be respected. I can also say that the investigation has been referred to the coroner. I will not pre-empt any findings, but what I will say is that if there have been any systemic failings, we will absolutely resolve them in the best interests of Tasmanians.

In relation to your broader question, which goes to the issue of transfer of care delays, our transfer of care protocol, as you referenced that we're committed to, has been successful in freeing up paramedics so that they can -

**Mr Willie** - They're still on the ramp.

**The SPEAKER** - Order, honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**Mrs ARCHER** - spend more time helping Tasmanians in the community, where they belong. Since its introduction, the transfer of care protocol has saved nearly 40,000 hours of ramping at major hospitals. That means 40,000 more hours that were available for paramedics -

**Mr Willie** - 'Ban' means stop altogether.

**The SPEAKER** - Order, honourable Leader of the Opposition, that is your first warning.

**Mrs ARCHER** - to be providing life-saving care in the community. There will always be fluctuations day to day, but these results are making a difference even where we are seeing record demand. That is why we remain absolutely committed to delivering the next stage of that protocol. We are already achieving 73 per cent of patient transfers within 45 minutes. That's why we're committed to that next stage of transfer of care.

Implementation of that next phase of the protocol has been delayed due to the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) lodging an application to suspend implementation with the Tasmanian Industrial Commission. A hearing in July resulted in the proposal for an independently chaired panel -

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

### Supplementary Question

**Mr WILLIE** - You stood in this place a couple of months ago and said you believed in the \$700 million of cuts. The health system is clearly in crisis. Will you stop the cuts?

**Mrs ARCHER** - I reject the assertion that you have made in your question. Health spending increases across this Budget.

**Members** interjecting

**Mr Willie** - Real term cuts.

**The SPEAKER** - Order. The honourable Leader of the Opposition has asked a question. The honourable minister is answering the question. I ask that the minister be heard in silence, please.

**Mrs ARCHER** - I will reiterate the comments I've repeatedly made in here: where it is important to have a sustainable budget so that we can deliver essential services for Tasmanians now and for future generations, we expect our departments to run efficiently, we expect our departments to find efficiencies where they can. That is what we have said. We have also said that the purpose of that is not to have that sit on a shelf somewhere; it's so that we can continue to reinvest that into the essential services that Tasmanians rely on.

**AMA Tasmania Call for Commission of Inquiry into Health Crisis**

**Prof RAZAY question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER**

[10.33 a.m.]

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) Tasmania last week called for a commission of inquiry into the state health crisis. It centres around emergency congestion, bed-blocking and ambulance ramping. Two people died in the last fortnight after waiting for an ambulance. At any given time, around 93 people are in acute beds waiting for accommodations elsewhere. Negotiations with the federal government to fix this problem have been going on for a year without success. Recently, the federal and state governments found \$200 million to secure the Bell Bay aluminium smelter, why can't you apply the same positive collaboration to address the hospital bed-blocking? And what is the government's view of establishing a commission of inquiry?

**ANSWER**

Thank you, Speaker. I thank the member for Bass for his question and for his ongoing interest in relation to these issues. I'm certainly aware of the AMA Tasmania proposal for a commission of inquiry into Tasmania's health system. I meet regularly with the AMA, and I'll be meeting with them soon on a range of matters. I'll look forward to discussing this matter further with them. I appreciate their commitment to their members and to improving health outcomes in Tasmania. We share the ambition of delivering a stronger, more sustainable health system, and we acknowledge all of the dedication of our healthcare workers who continue to care for Tasmanians in need.

However, I do not believe, and the government does not believe, that a commission of inquiry is in the best interests of Tasmanians seeking health care. A costly, years-long inquiry would not help a single Tasmanian patient get the care they need when they need it, while also replicating the work of past and current inquiries, including one that's currently underway through the Legislative Council.

Since coming to government, we have delivered record investment into Tasmania's health system. Health spending has increased from \$5.8 billion in 2014 to \$15 billion today, an increase of 159 per cent, massively above inflation over the same period, and it accounts for 35 per cent of the entire state budget. The workforce has grown significantly, with more nurses, doctors, paramedics and allied health professionals, and we've expanded hospital capacity with more beds and statewide infrastructure upgrades.

But we also acknowledge that, alongside our investment, demand for health services has grown. The challenges associated with this are well known and not unique to Tasmania. They have been identified through numerous reviews, reports, audits and parliamentary investigations over many years, and we have invested significantly to act on recommendations and to resolve concerns. Indeed, the AMA itself has stated that Tasmania has had enough reviews. It recognises that patients aren't served by inquiries; they're served by additional frontline staff, like those 75 paramedics that I talked about earlier, more hospital and health services capacity, better technology and improved access to care. A commission of inquiry would take years and potentially cost in excess of \$30 million, with no guarantee it would identify solutions that are not already known, one of which you raise. That is the issue of long-stay older patients in our hospitals and the access block created as a result of that. We certainly are taking action on those issues. The government has made moves to set up transitional beds for those patients, and we certainly would seek the collaboration of the federal government in relation to that matter.

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### Recognition of Visitors

**The SPEAKER** - I'd like us all to please welcome in the Gallery the students attending their Reconciliation Tasmanian Youth Speak Out event that'll be held during the day, but especially at lunchtime for members to attend. Welcome to parliament. It's lovely to have you all here and enjoy the day.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

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### Macquarie Point Stadium - Payment to Unsuccessful Bidder Webuild

**Ms JOHNSTON question to MINISTER for MACQUARIE POINT URBAN RENEWAL, Mr ABETZ**

[10.38 a.m.]

Has, or will, Webuild receive more than \$250,000 from the government or the Macquarie Point Development Corporation (MPDC) for their participation in the AFL stadium tender process. If so, how much?

### ANSWER

Thank you, Speaker. I'm not sure as to the exact amount, so I'll take that on notice. But it should come as no surprise that when there are major developments with major tenders, there is, as part of the tender process, an agreement for those companies that are unsuccessful in the tendering process to be reimbursed some of the monies occasioned for putting forward that tender. With propositions such as the stadium, as you might imagine, putting forward a tender costs millions of dollars, I would assume. It requires expertise, bringing in staff and working on the proposition that you want to put forward. To encourage as many as possible to come forward, it is part and parcel of the normal process for expressions of interest and then request for tender that those that are going to submit a tender have an indication that there will be some reimbursement of costs.

We are still, as we speak, in a live procurement process, therefore I'm not going to talk any further about the details. Suffice to say that that which has been indicated in the media as

some sort of news story, if you deal with these things, you know it's common practice. The simple fact is, in Tasmania we don't have projects of this size normally, and therefore some people are somewhat surprised. If you go to the mainland and other places where there are these major projects, this is business as usual, and it is no surprise that this is the approach we adopted in relation to the exact figures. When they become available, of course, I will make them available as, indeed, when there was a price increase for the stadium, or an indicative price increase, I was told on the Monday, announced it publicly on the Tuesday. Once we have exact figures, we're out of the live procurement process.

Of course, the government will be advising the Tasmanian public about this wonderful, wonderful new stadium that will provide a new, iconic gateway to our city and be a real economic enabler. I understand the member for Clark has always been against the stadium. I understand that, accept that. But as a government, as a parliament, we have voted for it and we are proceeding.

### Supplementary Question

**Ms JOHNSTON** - In his response, the Treasurer indicated that the payment would be normal payment under reimbursement of costs involved with the tender process. The tender documents under 1.5(d) state that a maximum of \$250,000 plus GST could be paid to the unsuccessful tenderer. Can the Treasurer confirm that Webuild will receive no more than \$250,000 as according to the tender documents? When will he table the amount that they will be paid?

**Mr ABETZ** - We are still in a live procurement process -

**Dr Woodruff** - Yes, and they're out of it.

**Mr ABETZ** - The Leader of the Greens interjects and says the other ones are out of it. What a misunderstanding of the situation - embarrassing. In your relentless negativity towards the project, you don't understand the circumstances of the way that the tender is operating. The tender is operating - we now have a preferred tenderer. It means we have another tenderer in reserve in the event that we cannot ink a deal with a preferred tenderer. That is normal commercial practice, but for some people it seems as though this is all strange and new. Those of us that actually know about these things realise that this is just normal business, normal practice, and there is nothing to be concerned about in relation to that.

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

### Macquarie Point Stadium - Costs Cap

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

[10.43 a.m.]

It's obvious the government is now set to break another stadium cost cap promise. Today we've heard that failed tenderer Webuild could receive more than provided for not to build the stadium. While you initially denied the Middle East conflict would drive up construction costs, it's now a new talking point, and if asked if he'd stick to the stadium cost cap promise, the

Premier has conspicuously refused to answer. Meanwhile, critical public service jobs are being slashed across a system that cannot cope already.

The Premier committed to the parliament to limit spending on the stadium to \$875 million, and you've said you have a duty to be transparent. This is your moment. If the costs exceed the promised cap, will you seek parliamentary approval for this extra spend before the contract is signed?

### ANSWER

Speaker, again, a question from somebody that has been opposed to the stadium from day-one. Can I, with the indulgence of the House, quickly revert to the question by the other member for Clark, Ms Johnston, I think you may be dealing with outdated information there, but I'll get back to you on notice. I think in April there was an update in relation to that limit, but I'll come back to that.

**Mr George** - It always changes.

**Mr ABETZ** - And Mr George interjects and says it always changes, and you know what?

**Mr George** - No, your story changes.

**Mr ABETZ** - Of course, it changes. We live in a dynamic world, in a dynamic economy, and things do change. Things -

**Mr George** - Your story changes.

**The SPEAKER** - Order. Honourable member for Franklin, Mr George.

**Mr BAYLEY** - Point of order, 45, relevance.

**Mr Abetz** - That's fair enough, too.

**Mr BAYLEY** - Please, bring yourself back to the question: will you bring the inevitable cost blowout back to this parliament?

**Mr O'Byrne** - And that wasn't AI.

**Mr ABETZ** - Speaker, I was provoked by my fellow member for Franklin, Mr George, and I should not have been and so I -

**The SPEAKER** - Speak through the Chair, honourable Treasurer

**Mr ABETZ** - Speaker, I will respond. As the honourable member for Clark, this one being Mr Bayley, knows, we are in a live procurement process. I'm not going to say anything. I cannot, nor should I, say anything that might in any way, shape or form prejudice the live procurement process and announce figures, et cetera, which will have an impact on trying to ensure we get the very best possible deal for the very best possible stadium so that we can have an iconic gateway to our capital city and an economic enabler like no other. What I have committed to, the government has committed to, is being transparent - as transparent as possible

keeping in mind the commercial realities of being in a live procurement process. We will not prejudice that, despite the pursuit of the Greens. Our concern is for the benefit of the people of Tasmania to get the very best possible deal, and that requires us to go through the process, especially as required by probity.

### Supplementary Question

**Mr BAYLEY** - I didn't ask about the figures. I didn't ask him to reveal the figures or detail anything about the procurement process. I asked him about a basic principle, which is that there was a price cap made to this parliament in order to secure its vote, and the project was approved on the basis of that promised \$875 million cost cap. If you can't keep a commitment that was made, why shouldn't the parliament be asked the question as to whether they accept the additional cost. It's pretty simple: will you be bringing the additional cost blowout back to this parliament?

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

**Mr ABETZ** - Speaker, hypothetical question from the Deputy Leader of the Greens, and he's already described it as a 'cost blowout', if I heard your words correctly at the end of the question. You've already made your mind up about this. So, if it's a dollar over, it'll be a cost blowout, according to the honourable member for Clark, without doubt.

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr ABETZ** - What we will do is advise the people of Tasmania as to the costs when and as we are able to, but we are not going to prejudice anything in relation to the negotiations that are currently underway -

**Dr Woodruff** - Sure, but will you come back to parliament with it?

**The SPEAKER** - Order, honourable Leader of the Greens.

**Mr ABETZ** - So that we can ink a deal with the preferred tenderer, should everything go in the direction that 70 per cent of the parliament is hopeful for, and I accept 30 per cent of the parliament isn't hopeful for.

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

### AI Data Centres - Energy Generation

#### Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.48 a.m.]

Firmus are already here and other data centre developers are following. Tasmania can benefit from data centre investment, but only if strong guardrails are in place to make sure those benefits are captured in Tasmania. Developers like Firmus want to use Tasmania's renewable energy to power their data centres, but that can't come at the expense of Tasmanian power bills. Premier, will you mandate that all data centre projects must include new renewable energy generation to match their load, built in Tasmania?

**ANSWER**

I thank honourable member for his question, and I'll point you to our policy. I can't point you to your policy, because you don't have one. I would suggest that what you do, Leader of the Opposition, is develop your own policy in relation to these matters so Tasmanians have a very clear understanding of what the alternative government will do in this circumstance.

**Ms Haddad** - You're in government, this question is to you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I missed that, Ms Haddad, but I'll catch up later on. We welcome that investment and we welcome investment coming into this state across a range of areas. Just last night we opened The Kingfisher, the new establishment at the pier there. It was great to see Dr Broad there, Mr O'Byrne, Ms Ogilvie, Ms Howlett, and our minister, Mr Jaensch, as well. A very positive -

**Mr WILLIE** - Point of order, Speaker. The question is about on-island energy generation. He's talking about a new establishment on the Hobart waterfront. I want to hear, and Tasmanians want to hear how he's going to make sure that there is new energy generation on-island?

**The SPEAKER** - I ask the Premier to return to the points raised in the original question, please.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. The link that I was providing by that very good example was that there's considerable discussion from the investors about the stadium build. I would also point to Kangaroo Bay, on which we stayed the course. We used to have bipartisan support, that dropped off. Kangaroo Bay has been approved, and there's been crickets on the other side.

**Ms HADDAD** - Point of order, 45, with respect, he is really stretching it now. The question was very clear. It was about renewable energy and the requirements put on data centre proponents. The Premier is talking about every other development under the sun other than this one. Can he get back to the question?

**The SPEAKER** - Honourable Premier, I ask again that you do return to the points raised -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, and there are a lot of developments under the sun under this government. We expect proponents to pay their way and meet the infrastructure and network costs associated with development, help grow Tasmania's energy supply, supporting new renewable generation and additional energy capacity located in appropriate industrial precincts away from urban areas, protect consumers, ensuring the water and power demand does not compromise supply security and does not raise costs for other users.

Also, can I say, we expect transparency and have mandated quarterly power and water usage, which were released in the last 10 days or so, following our initial release of expectations. We further expect proponents to contribute to Local Community Benefit Fund to ensure those communities who host major AI and data centre projects share directly in the benefits, publicly report, again, their water and energy use -

**The SPEAKER** - The honourable Premier's time has expired.

**Supplementary Question**

**Mr WILLIE** - This is about on-island generation. Tasmanians want to know how the Premier is going to get new renewable energy generation on-island to match the new load of these data centres. He should explain that to Tasmanians.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I thank the honourable member for his supplementary question. My understanding is in the committee, and I stand to be corrected if I haven't got this information quite right, is that Firmus committed to doing just that and given that they'll be part of the contract process.

**Ms Finlay** - Firmus aren't the only player in town. Will you commit to it being on-island?

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**Recognition of Visitors**

**The SPEAKER** - I acknowledge in the Gallery former honourable member for the Legislative Council, Hank Petrusma, in the gallery, so welcome to the Chamber.

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**Feral Deer Management Strategy**

**Mr Di FALCO** question to **MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE**

[10.53 a.m.]

Last week you announced the consultation on the next deer management strategy. There was a common theme around the partially protected status. While I support consulting on calibres, permits, zones, tags, seasons, reclassification is a slippery slope for infringing on private landowner rights, which we have seen in other states. I will always support landowners' right to manage their farm or property how they see fit. Minister, have you considered the unintended consequences of changing the deer's partially protected species?

**ANSWER**

I thank the honourable member for his question and his ongoing interest in this matter. In fact, it's very serious matter. Those numbers, as you would have seen from that aerial deer survey that came out last year, were unsettling at best in terms of what we've got in front of us. It is serious. In excess of 71,000 of those fallow deer all over the place, not just in zone 1 but all over zone 2 and zone 3. They are in peri-urban areas. I'm constantly receiving photographs of wild fallow deer on the lawns in suburbs around capital cities, around Launceston and Hobart. It is not good enough. It is also only a matter of time before one of those is struck by a vehicle and some occupant is either severely injured or killed. This is a very serious matter.

We need to bring those populations under control, and we need to do it quickly, methodically, and it's going to take a team effort. I congratulate, acknowledge and commend the people that you represent in terms of your hunting fraternity. We are going to need every single one of them if we're going to get these deer numbers where they need to be.

In terms of the consultation process, I urge everybody - including the people that you represent - to make representation and I will clearly consider that.

In terms of - and I think you used the term 'unintended consequences' - then all consequences, be they intended or unintended, will be considered in detail before making a plan. But I can tell you now, this is a serious matter that I'm going to take very seriously and the fact that we've already turned the heat up on that deer population is one thing. I tell you what, we're also going to need all hands to the pumps. That legislation isn't going to shoot one deer. It's not going to reduce the numbers at all unless we have a team effort, unless everybody concentrates on the outcome of reducing those deer numbers in Tasmania.

**Mr Di FALCO** - A quick question, how does the minister intend to control the in excess of three million wallaby that we had the count on prior?

**The SPEAKER** - Your original question was on deer, wasn't it? That is a new question because you're going into a totally new animal species. The original premise of this was on deer and the strategy.

### **Tasmania Fire Service - Resourcing During Bushfire Season**

**Mr GEORGE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.57 a.m.]

Can I first welcome back the member for Bass, Mr Rob Fairs. Welcome home. Good to see you here.

Premier, members of the Tasmania Fire Service briefed MPs yesterday on what is clearly a deep concern that the forthcoming bushfire season gives ominous signs of becoming extreme, given protracted dry weather across the state and temperatures expected to be well above the average. They also made clear that people and organisations that will confront the potential danger in support of the fire service are already stretched and tired, in part because of their work on bird flu and managing the fuel crisis. On top of this, Premier, are job cuts and collapsing public service morale as a result. What guarantee will you give and what efforts are you taking to ensure that the right numbers, the right people in the right place, are there to deal with a potentially catastrophic fire season?

### **ANSWER**

I thank the honourable member for his question. It's a very important question, and prior to that, I will add to an answer that I gave previously. I failed to mention - Mr Di Falco was also at the function last night in celebration of private investment.

Thank you for the question, and I believe we've had a very similar briefing about the fire season, and the risks should it not rain. There has been reasonable rain more recently which has been very welcome, but it can dry out very quickly as you would appreciate.

When it comes to the services on the ground, there are a range of collaborative services across the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE). Parks and

Wildlife is one of those, of course, as are the department of emergency services, the fire service, and the volunteers, work together and respond to needs that arise.

What also happens, as you'd appreciate, is resources are shared across other states. When we had the west coast bushfires, I remember being in Tullah, where the New South Wales fire brigades were there on the Tullah footy oval. They were just packing up after their main role had been done. There are a range of resources which we employ from various areas, including across other states and including equipment as well - such as water bombers and the like - to ensure that we do have those resources as they're required.

What does challenge that, from time to time, is if other states also have emergencies at the same time, and it hasn't been uncommon, unfortunately, for there to be floods in one part of the country and fires in the other and the need for those services as well.

When it comes to the matters that you speak of, I'm very confident that the emergency response capability, operational readiness and the community safety remain the highest priority for the TFS and its partner agencies in their continued preparedness work for the bushfire season. That is very, very clear in terms of the weather monitoring, the level of expectation around weather patterns and the like. All the response is there to ensure, based on data and evidence, but also our emergency system, which we've invested in significantly over the last few years, is also a significant investment that will help in these cases, as is fire detection.

**The SPEAKER** - The honourable Premier's time has expired.

### Supplementary Question

**Mr GEORGE** - Premier, you haven't addressed the core of the problem. This is actually a serious risk of catastrophic fire, and it is a serious risk that if you don't have the right people in the right places, capable of doing the job, then we are going to fail; the TFS will fail, because they won't have the right back-up. What guarantee can you give that you have made sure that the right people are in the right places, given the cuts that are going to be implemented to the public service?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I thank the honourable member for the question. I will point to my previous answer, but I can add to some of the cross-agency collaboration that I've mentioned: Parks and Wildlife Service, I've mentioned the fire service, police service as well and, of course, STT. All come together in a very collaborative way with various areas of responsibility. I know a number of us have most likely seen that in action as they've visited particular sites. West Coast is a very good example of that cross-agency collaboration and that responsiveness; Dolphin Sands 12 months ago is a very good example as well. I do have confidence that the resources are there and the collaborative resources are there and we're able to draw on mainland resources, should we need them.

## Firmus AI Data Centres - Payments to Community Fund

**Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[11.02 a.m.]

Communities across Tasmania are worried about what data centres will mean for their power bills, their water and noise next door. After rolling out the red carpet for Firmus without any guardrails, you're now trying to mop up the mess with a community fund. But your own announcement says data centres are only 'expected' to contribute. Premier, how much will Firmus be required to pay into your fund each and every year, starting with St Leonards? When will the first payment be due?

**ANSWER**

Of course we want communities who host AI infrastructure to be able to see and feel the real benefit of major investments in their region. That means local infrastructure, of course, skills and training, community organisations, initiatives that improve the liveability and economic participation in those communities. AI and data centre proponents will be expected to contribute to this fund. I've actually gone further than that in my media presentations and say they will be contributing.

**Mr Mitchell** - Where's the detail?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm more than happy to provide the detail, Mr Mitchell.

**Mr Mitchell** - We don't need the brochure.

**The SPEAKER** - Honourable member for Lyons, the Premier is responding. I ask, for the sake of Hansard, that interjections cease.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm more than happy to provide the detail. We are working through this.

**Ms Brown** - Working through it once again; that means there's nothing written.

**The SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr Willie** - It's like TasInsure.

**Ms Brown** - It's like Building Tas. Like everything else you do.

**The SPEAKER** - Honourable member for Franklin.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. Yes, we're working through the details now on how that will be implemented. The irony of your interjection is that you don't even have a policy on this issue - no detail. None. Zero. So, thank you for the continued interjections, because we want -

**Dr Woodruff** - You don't, it's a draft policy. You don't have one.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Oh, dear. I'm happy to brief you on it. Cross-collaboration. We want communities to share directly in the benefits. This approach reflects key issues raised through the parliamentary inquiry. It's about setting clear expectations from the beginning so all Tasmanians can embrace these industries of the future and be better off.

Yes, we want the investments in Tasmania. They are going to incur elsewhere if they're not in Tasmania. This has been a national discussion. National Cabinet have also agreed on a set of principles and guidelines. We have our own in Tasmania. We welcome investment, wherever it comes from, and I believe it aligns very well with Tasmania. And the fact that they're interested in coming to Tasmania is for our renewable energy, and the value of that brand proposition to them as well.

### Supplementary Question

**Mr WILLIE** - Starting with St Leonards, Premier, how much is Firmus going to pay into your fund, and if you're going to require data centres to pay into this fund, are you going to legislate that? How are you going to make them do it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My understanding is that submissions, which closed in mid-October, received during the draft expectations consultation period, are now being reviewed. The statement of expectations for data centres and AI infrastructure for developers will be finalised and released within the current 100-day period.

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### Recognition of Visitors

**The SPEAKER** - Order, honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Before I give the call to the honourable member for Lyons, Ms Badger, I'd like us to please acknowledge the students from Queechy High School who are also here for the event today. We hope that you, too, enjoy today.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

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### AI Data Centres - Transparency

**Ms BADGER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[11.07 a.m.]

Your government's problematic and secretive approach to AI data centres has again been in the spotlight following Firmus's IPO flop. But Firmus aren't the only ones looking to build facilities in Tasmania. Last week, the Acting Coordinator-General confirmed a proponent is looking to build a data centre near Nook. Greenwing is considering AI infrastructure on the west coast, there's discussion of infrastructure at Bothwell, and yesterday, Hydro Tasmania told the Energy committee that they're speaking with an unnamed data centre proponent on a possible power deal. Tasmanians deserve transparency about these plans. They shouldn't have to rely on the Greens and others to find out what's planned for their community. That information should be available. Premier, will you finally tell Tasmanians the location and details of all data centres currently proposed in Tasmania and who the proponents are behind these plans?

## ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for your question. Again, we welcome investment - that creates Tasmanian jobs, like Kangaroo Bay - and we will continue engaging with the proponent. This proposal was included in information previously tabled in parliament, as I understand it. We understand it remains under consideration by the proponent -

**Ms Badger** - Which proponent, sorry, Premier?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - And no final site has been confirmed. We encourage the proponent to engage early and openly with the local community. Any development would need to meet relevant planning and approval requirements. This is what I'm advised. The Office of the Coordinator-General is aware of a proponent discussing land with landholders in the Nook area. The project is at a very early feasibility stage. The proponent has advised it is yet to decide whether to proceed and will undertake due diligence, including community consultation, before making that decision.

Our draft expectations call for proponents to locate in appropriate industrial precincts away from urban areas, you'd be aware of. Any proposal would need to work through the usual planning and environmental processes, including consideration of the state policy and protection of agricultural land. I'm not going to pre-empt those processes. Our draft expectations are clear: our proponents should support additional renewable generation, meet the infrastructure and network costs associated with the development, and ensure water and power demand does not compromise supply security or raise costs for existing users. I've mentioned the transparency in terms of quarterly water usage and power usage.

We also expect proponents to deliver Tasmanian jobs, skills and training and local procurement opportunities. Under our draft approach, major proponents also would contribute to a local community benefit fund, which was spoken about today. I understand the proposal remains under consideration by the proponent and we will continue to engage, but any development must be assessed on its merits.

## Supplementary Question

**Ms BADGER** - The Premier just mentioned 'the proponent', but I listed several proposals, so we actually don't know who the proponent is. I want clarity that you were speaking specifically about the Nook one. The question was quite simple. Why won't you tell Tasmanians all the details at hand? They're having to dig around to find different documents that are publicly on display to find out which one of these proposals might be proposed for their backyard. Your draft expectations are very clear about trust and community consultation. You actually need to lay that out to them. The lack of transparency in this is unprecedented. Even when we're talking about the EOI to privatise the parks, you say who the proponent is.

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

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I thank the honourable member for the question. My previous answer was in relation to Nook, as I'm advised. I'm happy to provide information when that is available and comes to hand.

**Ms Finlay** - It must be at hand now, Premier.

**The SPEAKER** - Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

**AI Data Centres - Transparency**

**Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[11.11 a.m.]

You're paying almost \$100,000 to a Sydney consultant so they can assess an unsolicited proposal from a private developer. When questioned by the *Mercury* about the tender and the nature of the proposal, the government refused to tell Tasmanians what it was. Why the secrecy around this project? Tasmanians deserve better than this. Will you release the proposal so Tasmanians can see what you're spending \$100,000 on assessing? Is it a proposal to build another data centre?

**ANSWER**

I thank the honourable member for his question. The unsolicited proposal guidelines, as I understand it, are on the Treasury website, and they are being followed, is the advice that I have. What I can say is that we welcome the opportunity these investments provide. I'm sure you would, too, if you saw the bigger picture on this -

**Mr Willie** - I want a good deal for Tasmania and transparency. There's nothing wrong with that.

**The SPEAKER** - Order. Honourable Leader of the Opposition, I ask that you allow the Premier to finish his response, please. You still have another supplementary.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - and to take more notice of Dr Broad when it comes to these matters. I won't put words in Dr Broad's mouth, but he is certainly, at face value, positive about people investing in Tasmania. I was at Certex the other day, metal and steel, a very big development, just up the road there at Brighton, a wonderful brand-new facility. I was there with Hazell Brothers' asphalt facility as well, a \$15 million investment, private investment. That is because those private investors have confidence in the economy moving forward for Tasmania because we do say yes -

**Mr Mitchell** - A bit like Rushy Lagoon.

**Mr Willie** - Gresham House.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We do say yes, like Kangaroo Bay.

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - And I know you're sensitive over there about Kangaroo Bay, members for Franklin.

**Ms HADDAD** - Point of order, standing order 45, relevance. Is it a data centre? That was the question.

**The SPEAKER** - Honourable Premier, I ask you to return to the main points raised in the original question.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I actually answered the question in my first 23 seconds. But I wanted to highlight the importance of saying yes and being open-minded to investment, like Kangaroo Bay, which we had bipartisan support for, is my understanding, a number of years ago. Then it got a bit hot in the kitchen and you opposed it; and now it's gone through the process and you are nowhere to be seen. You need to embrace -

**Members** interjecting.

**The SPEAKER** - Order. Honourable members to my left, if you're not interested in what the Premier has to say, we'll move on to the next question.

### Supplementary Question

**Mr WILLIE** - Can the Premier see that the secrecy around this is a problem? And can he just answer a very simple question: is it a data centre?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'll point to my first answer, Leader of the Opposition, around Treasury guidelines on unsolicited proposals. My understanding is that they are being followed.

### Tasmania Fire Service - Fleet Replacement

**Mr GARLAND question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[11.15 a.m.]

The north-west coast has just one Tasmania Fire Service hazardous materials response truck. It is 35 years old, struggles to exceed 80 km/h and cannot even reach the speed limit on some of the roads it is required to travel. I'm advised by the firefighter's union that best practice is to replace frontline emergency vehicles every 10 to 15 years. A fleet replacement policy is of little value if it is either ignored or cannot be implemented because of inadequate resources. Is the Tasmania Fire Service failing to implement its fleet replacement policy, or has the government simply failed to provide the resources necessary to do so?

### ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for the question. I know our minister would be able to answer this in considerable detail should he have been here. He'll be here tomorrow, is my understanding. I take very seriously your question and where the information came from - the grassroots and on the ground. I'll take the question on notice and have an answer for you on the adjournment debate tonight.

## CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

### **Loreto Housing Development - Noise Reduction Barriers on Brooker Highway**

**Ms HADDAD question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT**

[11.17 a.m.]

My question is from my constituent Jenny in Claremont. When Jenny and other residents moved into the Loreto housing development that backs onto the Brooker Highway in Claremont, she and other residents were advised that noise reduction barriers were to be installed along the highway. It's now been many years, and no such barriers have been installed. There is considerable traffic noise 24 hours a day from the highway. Jenny and her neighbours would like to know what happened to the commitment to noise reduction barriers and when they'll be installed.

### **El Niño - Measures for Heightened Bushfire and Heatwave Risks**

**Ms BURNET question to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT and CLIMATE CHANGE, Mr BARNETT**

This is a question from Skye, who's a resident of Clark and a year 12 student concerned about Tasmania's environmental future. The Bureau of Meteorology has warned that a strong El Niño is expected to peak later this year, bringing increased bushfire risk and more intense heatwaves to Tasmania. These pose serious risks to both communities and the environment. Skye's question is specifically about adaptation, not emissions reduction nor climate mitigation. Minister, what actions will you take to help Tasmanians and Tasmania's natural landscapes prepare for and adapt to the heightened bushfire and heatwave risks forecast for this summer?

### **National Parks - New Booking System Omits Free Campsites**

**Mr GEORGE question to MINISTER for PARKS and HERITAGE, Mr DUIGAN**

My question comes from Dominic James of Lindisfarne, who's concerned about the new Parks online booking system due to begin in November. Dominic notes that ghost camping is often reported at free camping locations such as the Bay of Fires and Cockle Creek, yet the first phase of the new booking system is being introduced to campgrounds that already require payment. Can the minister explain why this is, and what safeguards will be put in place to ensure private commercial operators cannot secure a disproportionate share of campsites in national parks at the expense of Tasmanian families?

### **Tasman Arch and Devils Kitchen - Accessibility Improvements**

**Ms HOWLETT question to MINISTER for PARKS and HERITAGE, Mr DUIGAN**

My constituent Gemma has seen some recent coverage relating to work undertaken at the Tasman Arch and Devils Kitchen, which I know is popular with both locals and visitors. Can

you please explain how the government is making this part of the region accessible to even more people?

**Trevallyn Primary School - Apology for Christmas Social Media Posts**

**Ms ROSOL question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

My question is on behalf of the Trevallyn Primary School, who are unable to defend themselves. Premier, two weeks ago, Pulse Media published an article claiming Trevallyn Primary School was ditching Christmas. Despite this being patently false and a total misrepresentation of the beautiful work of inclusion and listening at the school, you amplified the story with a social media post claiming schools were removing all references to Christmas in end-of-year celebrations. The result was a torrent of abuse and threats against the acting principal and school. The school community has suffered enormously as a result of your posts. Rather than apologise, you have tripled down with more misleading social media posts. Will you acknowledge the pain and distress you caused the staff, students and parents at Trevallyn Primary School? Will you apologise for your posts and for using schools as collateral in your efforts to shore up your standing with members of your party and conservative voters?

**Police Resourcing**

**Mr WINTER question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr ELLIS**

My question is on behalf of a constituent in Kingston. At the 2024 election, you promised 50 additional police across the state. Given 10 per cent of Tasmanians live south of Hobart, my community would have expected five of those to arrive in our southern division. You've broken that promise and our local police remains severely under strain from a lack of resources.

You also promised a new emergency services hub. Following on from the farcical delivery of a fire truck that had pink flashing lights, incorrectly fitted tyres and missing mud flaps, can you confirm your government has also advised Kingborough Council that it is walking away from its promise of a new emergency services hub and will instead provide funding separately to police and fire facilities? What is this apparent funding for? What facilities will be improved? When can our community finally expect some action?

**Marinus Link Tasmanian Government Contribution**

**Mr GARLAND question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr DUIGAN**

Jan from north-west Tasmania asks the question: the government maintains that Tasmania's equity contribution to Marinus Link is capped at \$103.5 million. However, Tasmanian electricity consumers will be responsible for 27.6 per cent of Marinus Link's annual costs and the Australian Energy Regulator has approved arrangements that allow additional costs arising from construction overruns to be passed on to consumers. Minister, does the \$103.5 million equity cap provide any protection whatsoever against additional costs being

passed on to Tasmanian households and businesses through their electricity bills? If not, what is the maximum financial exposure of Tasmanian electricity consumers to Marinus Link, and will the government make that figure public?

### **Government Support for Representative Sportspeople**

#### **Mr FAIRS question to MINISTER for SPORT, Mr DUIGAN**

We love nothing more than seeing our young people striving for excellence and representing Tasmania on a national stage. But for some families, the cost of this can be challenging and, in some cases, prohibitive. Mandy of Launceston and a few others have asked me: what is the government doing to help Tasmanian families support their children to take up representative opportunities?

### **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE - ANSWERS**

#### **No. 46 of 2026 - xxx**

#### **Ms ROSOL question to MINISTER for JUSTICE, CORRECTIONS and REHABILITATION, Mr BARNETT**

See Appendix x on page xx.

#### **No. 49 of 2026 - Workplace Protection Orders**

#### **Mr MITCHELL question to MINISTER for SMALL BUSINESS, TRADE and CONSUMER AFFAIRS, Mr BARNETT**

See Appendix x on page xx.

#### **No. 51 of 2026 - *Retail Leases Act 2022***

#### **Mr MITCHELL question to MINISTER for SMALL BUSINESS, TRADE and CONSUMER AFFAIRS, Mr BARNETT**

See Appendix x on page xx.

#### **No. 37 of 2026 - xxx**

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

See Appendix x on page xx.

**No. 79 of 2026 - xxx**

**Mrs GREENE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER**

See Appendix x on page xx.

**RESPONSE TO PETITION**

**No 11 of 2026 - x**

**Mr PEARCE** (Braddon - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Honourable Speaker, I table the response to petition No. 11 of 2026.

**Paper tabled.**

**TABLED PAPERS**

**House of Assembly Select Committee on Caretaker Conventions - Report**

[11.28 a.m.]

**Ms BADGER** (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I have the honour to bring up the Report of the House Assembly Select Committee on Caretaker Conventions. I move -

That the report be received and printed.

**Report received and printed.**

**Public Works Committee - Report - North West Support School Burnie Upgrade -  
Final Report**

**Public Works Committee - Report - Redevelopment of Dodges Ferry Primary School -  
Final Report**

**Public Works Committee - Report - North West Support School Devonport Upgrade -  
Final Report**

Reports tabled with the Clerk of the House of Assembly on 16 September 2026 pursuant to Standing Order 321(2).

**Public Accounts Committee - Report - Proposed Sale of Wilkinsons Point - Final Report**

**Government Administration A - Report - Inquiry into the Community Protection  
(Offender Reporting) Amendment Bill (No. 61 of 202) - Final Report**

# UNCORRECTED PROOF

Reports tabled with the Clerk of the House of Assembly on 5 October 2026 pursuant to Standing Order 321(2).

## MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

### Assent to Bills

'A Bill for an Act to repeal the Mt Lyell Acid Drainage Reduction Act 2003'. (Bill No. 53 of 2025 (*Act No. 12 of 2026*))

'A Bill for an Act to regulate residential parks and agreements between park owners and residents in those parks and for related purposes'. (Bill No. 2 (*Act No. 13 of 2026*))

'A Bill for an Act to amend the Police Offences Act 1935 and to consequentially amend the Sentencing Act 1997'. (Bill No. 5 (*Act No. 14 of 2026*))

'A Bill for an Act to amend the Occupational Licensing Act 2005, the Building Act 2016 and the Residential Building Work Contracts and Dispute Resolution Act 2016'. (Bill No. 6 (*Act No. 15 of 2026*))

'A Bill for an Act to amend the Residential Tenancy Act 1997'. (Bill No. 59 of 2025 (*Act No. 16 of 2026*))

'A Bill for an Act to amend the Police Offences Act 1935'. (Bill No. 50 of 2025 (*Act No. 17 of 2026*))

having been presented to the Governor for the Royal Assent, she has, in the name and on behalf of His Majesty the King, assented to the said Bills.

*Government House, Hobart, 11 September 2026.*

Caroline Wells, Governor  
Government House, Hobart  
11 September 2026

### Assent to Bills

'A Bill for an Act to amend the Statutory Holidays Act 2000'. (Bill No. 14 (*Act No. 18 of 2026*))

'A Bill for an Act to amend the Duties Act 2001, the *First Home Owner Grant Act 2000*, the Land Tax Act 2000 and the Taxation Administration Act 1997'. (Bill No. 21 (*Act No. 19 of 2026*))

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

'A Bill for an Act to amend the Collections for Charities Act 2001 and the Associations Incorporation Act 1964'. (Bill No. 65 of 2025 (*Act No.20 of 2026*))

'A Bill for an Act to amend the Integrity Commission Act 2009'. (Bill No. 69 of 2025 (*Act No. 21 of 2026*))

having been presented to the Governor for the Royal Assent, she has, in the name and on behalf of His Majesty the King, assented to the said Bills.

Caroline Wells, Governor  
Government House, Hobart  
9 October 2026

### **TASMANIAN HOMES AND HOUSING BILL 2026 (No. 48)**

#### **First Reading**

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

### **ELECTORAL DISCLOSURE AND FUNDING AMENDMENT (SPENDING LIMITS) BILL 2026 (No. 49)**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill presented by Ms Haddad and read the first time.**

### **MOTION**

**Joint Sessional Committee on Gender, Gender-Based Violence and Equality -  
Notice of Own Motion Inquiry**

[11.33 a.m.]

**Ms BROWN** (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, in accordance with the joint resolution regarding the Joint Sessional Committee on Gender, Gender-Based Violence and Equality, I advise the House that the committee has commenced an own-motion inquiry into the Tasmanian government's response to the recommendations of the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission's Yearly Report 2025.

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

#### **Debate Motion Forthwith**

[11.34 a.m.]

**Mr BAYLEY** (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That so much of Standing Orders and Sessional Orders be suspended as would prevent the following:

- (1) Private Members' Business in accordance with Standing Order 42 not taking place on Wednesday, 28 October 2026.
- (2) Debate on the Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2026 (No. 45 of 2026) ('the Bill') taking place immediately after the Matter of Public Importance on Wednesday, 28 October 2026.
- (3) If debate on all stages of the Bill does not conclude on Wednesday, 28 October 2026, the Bill having precedence over other business after the Matter of Public Importance on Thursday, 29 October 2026.
- (4) During debate on the Bill, the time limits in accordance with Standing Order 115 applying.
- (5) The rotation for Private Members' Business in accordance with Standing Order 42 re-commencing from Week One on Wednesday, 18 November 2026.

I have a copy of the motion for yourselves.

**Motion agreed to.**

### MOTION

#### **Debate on the Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2026 (No. 45) to take Precedence over Private Members Business on Wednesday 28 October 2026**

**Mr BAYLEY** (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the House for the willingness to have this debate and acknowledge that this motion was flagged in our discussion last night and distributed last night. I'm not aware of any amendments; certainly none have been prepared and distributed to me, and I understand that it is agreed by the House, and that is very welcome.

In saying that, I acknowledge the position of the government and their support in ceding government business time to debate the Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill. That's very welcome. I also acknowledge the flexibility of other members in this place to affect the rotation and allow for this debate to happen.

This is a really important bill, Honourable Speaker, whether you support it or whether you oppose it. Clearly, this Conversion Practice Prohibition Bill is of substance, significance and length that it deserves and is going to demand greater House scrutiny than the one-and-a-half hours we would be afforded in our private members' time, plus the additional provisions that the Standing Orders provide for.

Clearly, we all need to have a say on this bill. The government, in granting a conscience vote for its members, I think signals the significance of the diversity of views within the Liberal Party, within the community, but also the importance of this bill in terms of the lives of Tasmanians going forward. Given the conscience vote and the fact the bill is of such

significance, we'd expect that many members, certainly on the Liberal side, and perhaps everybody in the Chamber, would want to take the time to get to their feet to make a contribution. This, in and of itself, is going to demand significant additional time that we couldn't provide in Private Members Business.

I want to also acknowledge the conversation last night. There is a clear intention from members to resolve this bill this week. That is the intention and that was what was agreed last night. I acknowledge the aspiration to rise and adjourn the House tomorrow night at 10.00 p.m. and then finish, as provided for, in three on the Thursday. Of course, we agreed last night that we would check in at 8 o'clock or 9 o'clock or thereabouts to review progress on the bill and decide if we need to actually sit later than 10 p.m. tomorrow night to ensure the bill can be concluded on Thursday. I reinstate again - we want this bill to be passed. I think all members want this bill to be resolved, one way or the other, this week. The Adjournment on a Wednesday can be moved in the normal way at the appropriate time that's agreed, subject to those 8 o'clock discussions. That would take the adjournment of the debate and then subsequently the adjournment of the House, and that can be moved from the floor.

I want to make the point and note that the Thursday adjournment at 6 p.m. is an automatic Adjournment and only the government can extend it. Us as the movers of the bill, Dr Woodruff, as the mover of the bill, any other person who's talking on this bill, can't automatically extend the sitting of the House on Thursday to ensure that the bill is concluded. Only the government can do that. In acknowledging the travel arrangements of many members, whether it be northern members or other members who have time constraints on the Thursday evening,