LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

SESSION OF 2025 – 2026

(FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT)

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

No. 53

TUESDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2026

1 COUNCIL MEETS.— The Council met at 11.00 o'clock a.m.

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL PEOPLE.— The President said:

"We meet today on Tasmanian Aboriginal land. We acknowledge and pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people and elders, past and present. We recognise them as the first inhabitants and the continuing custodians of this land."

3 PRAYERS AND REFLECTION.— The President read Prayers.

4 LEAVE TO TABLE ANSWER TO QUESTION AND INCORPORATE ANSWER INTO HANSARD.— *Ordered*, That Ms *Rattray* have leave to Table answer to Question No. 59 and have the answer incorporated into the Hansard record.

5 HUMAN RESOURCES TRANSFORMATION PROJECT.— Ms *Forrest* asked the Honourable the Leader of the Government —

(1) With regard to the Human Resources Transformation Project (HRTP), that is the re-scoped Human Resources Information System (HRIS) transferred from the Department of Health to the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC):
   (a) What is the total number of contracts awarded in connection with the HRTP to date?
   (b) What is the total value of contracts awarded in connection with the HRTP to date?
   (c) What is the total pricing distribution of contracts awarded in connection with the HRTP to date? and
   (d) Please provide a full schedule of these contracts including value, award date, contract period, and number of bids received.

(2) Of the contracts confirmed:
   (a) how many were priced between $50,000 and $99,000 under open-market quoting threshold under the Treasurer's Instructions; and
   (b) how many were priced between $99,000 and $99,999?

(3) What procurement method (direct sourcing, panel arrangement, labour hire, single-invite quote, or open tender) was used for each of the contracts awarded to date?

(4) Where multiple sub-threshold contracts have been awarded to the same vendor within a short period, does the Premier accept this could constitute contract splitting in substance even where each individual contract complies with the letter of the threshold?

(5) Where multiple sub-threshold contracts have been awarded to the same vendor within a short period, does the Treasurer accept this could constitute contract splitting in substance even where each individual contract complies with the letter of the threshold?

(6) What internal control exists within DPAC to detect and prevent the risk of contract splitting?

(7) What internal control exists within Treasury to detect and prevent the risk of contract splitting?

(8) Please confirm:
   (a) the actual number of bids or quotes received for each of the contracts; and
   (b) In cases where only one bid or quote was received - in each case, what steps were taken to test market pricing given the absence of competitive tension?

(9) How many contracts have been awarded above the $100,000 threshold; and

(a) How many of these contracts have been awarded without open-market tender;
(b) What was the value of each of these contracts;
(c) For each of these contracts, what specific exemption under the Treasurer's Instructions was relied upon; and
(d) Was that exemption approved by the appropriate delegate?

(10) What verification does DPAC undertake of a supplier's claimed Tasmanian presence, including local employment, before applying Buy Local Policy weighting, and was that verification applied to all contracts?

(11) Were four direct-sourced contracts totalling approximately $920,000 executed on 24 December 2025; and
(a) if so, what was the operational reason for awarding contracts on that date specifically; and
(b) were normal approval and delegation processes followed in full?

The Leader answered:

(1) (a) From 28 June 2024 to 11 August 2026, 62 contracts have been awarded. Of these:
- 7 contracts relate to the provision of services by a company.
- 1 contract relates to specialist IT software.
- 54 of these contracts are for employment agencies that provide individual specialist contractors, of which 29 contracts are contract renewals to continue/extend the services of the specialist contractors.

(Note, DPAC commenced management of contracts for the HRTP program under the 2024-25 budget appropriation.)

(b) Between the period from 28 June 2024 to 11 August 2026:
- $19,327,971 of awarded contract value; and
- $25,366,377 including the maximum value of potential renewals

(c)

Contract Value	Number
Below $50,000	4
Between $50,000-$100,000	33
Over $100,000	25
Total	**62**

(2) (a) 17 contracts were priced between $50,000 and $99,000.
- 1 of these contracts was a fixed-price contract
- 1 of these was a time and materials-based engagement for a system implementation service sourced through an RFQ/RFI
- 15 of these contracts were a maximum price for a time and materials-based engagement with employment agencies for specialist contractors based on a fixed rate, of which:
  - 5 were a renewal of an existing specialist contractor.
  - 3 were a direct engagement due to specialist expertise/experience.
  - 7 were engaged through a request for quote (RQF) recruitment.

(b) 16 contracts were priced between $99,000 and $99,999.

All of these contracts were a maximum price for a time and materials-based engagement with employment agencies for specialist contractors based on a fixed rate, of which:
- 3 were a direct engagement due to specialist expertise/experience.
- 13 were engaged through a RFQ recruitment.

(3) Refer to tabled spreadsheet, column C, for details by contract

(4) No.

Multiple contracts with one employment agency may occur in a short period of time because different individual resources are contracted through each employment agency. Multiple short-term contracts for the same resource have not been executed by the project other than 3 specific exceptions:

- 2 contractors were re-engaged on short-term contracts in June 2025 following the announcement of a State election and the uncertainty regarding the project funding prohibiting a longer contract engagement under the Financial Management Act 2016; and
- 1 contract was renewed on a short-term basis in April 2026 to allow a contractor to complete a specific piece of work. It was determined that this resource would not be required for a longer period and hence a longer contract was not pursued.

A contract below the $100,000 threshold for individual contractors is only entered into for the following reasons:

- The program specifically seeks a short-term contract for an initial engagement following a recruitment process to ensure that there is a strong fit between the program needs and contractor skill set before seeking approval for a longer term contract.
- An individual contractor may occasionally have a specific need for a short term contract to maintain their own flexibility.
- In exceptional circumstances, there has been a need to retain a particular contractor for a short period of time to complete a piece of work, and the project has been unwilling to commit to the individual for a longer period.

(5) In Tasmania, procurement is devolved to Tasmanian Government agencies. Each agency's Accountable Authority is responsible for ensuring adherence to the requirements of the Treasurer's Instructions (TIs) issued under the Financial Management Act 2016.

The TIs specifically prohibit contract splitting. TI PP-1 Valuation prohibits agencies from dividing a procurement into separate parts for the purpose of avoiding the application of any otherwise applicable procurement threshold. Additionally, a particular method for estimating the value of a procurement must not be applied for the purpose of avoiding the application of any otherwise applicable procurement threshold.

(6) Treasurers Instructions require that all contracts in excess of $250,000 are reviewed and endorsed by the Procurement Review Committee of the respective Agency.

Within DPAC, that threshold is reduced to $100,000.

Since February 2024, DPAC has implemented a process to report and assess all contracts between $50,000 and $100,000 to add an extra layer of scrutiny before executing a contract.

This provides visibility for contracts that may be awarded to the same vendor by the procurement function. Additionally, inherent in that process is a requirement that at least 3 quotes are requested and compared.

(7) Under TI PF-5 Accountability and Reporting, agencies are required to send awarded contract details to Treasury for publication on the Tasmanian Government Tenders website within 10 working days of awarding a contract.

Treasury does not endorse the practice of contract splitting and, when requested, can support agencies in identifying TI-compliant pathways to meet their individual procurement needs. Treasury regularly reminds agencies of TI obligations when it becomes aware of sub-optimal procurement practices.

(8) (a)

Specialist Contractors	
Extensions for ongoing contractors	29
Direct engagements	6
New engagements (between 3-27 proposals / bids received)	19
Software / IT Services	

Direct engagement	2
Proposals from market / existing panel (2-4 proposals/bids received)	6

(b) Of the 62 contracts, 29 contracts relate to the engagement of individual specialist contractors through employment agencies, including those who commenced with the program in Department of Health and migrated with the project to DPAC. These specialist contractors have extensive established knowledge of the program activities that would be damaging to lose and take significant cost to replace. In these cases, contract renewals adhered to Treasurer's Instructions, and approvals where required were granted by the Accountable Authority. Each ongoing engagement is benchmarked with new rates for comparable specialists.

Where new resources have been required, the first preference has always been to secure internal employees from within Government who could transfer to the project on a fixed term basis. If internal resources are not available, then contact is made with identified contracting companies specialising in SAP and project personnel contracting.

As routine, 8 specialist contracting companies are requested to provide quotations of potential contractors based on the provided skill set required and the time that the resource will be needed. Each firm then has the opportunity to submit proposals, including submission of CV's and cost details for any proposed resource.

- These submissions are reviewed by the project including for alignment of skills, experience in similar jurisdictions and programs.
- Costs are bench-marked, inclusive of candidate location and potential travel costs.
- Candidates are then short-listed and interviews are held to identify the preferred contractor.
- Individuals are typically engaged on a short term contract initially in order to verify that the individual is a good fit for the project and team.
- After assessment of satisfactory performance and demonstrated ongoing program need, longer contracts are then considered in line with Treasurer's Instructions and with the approval of the Accountable Authority.

In rare occasions, either only a single candidate is proposed, or exceptional candidates are identified and approached directly due to unique expertise or experience. As specialist contractors are generally contracted on a day rate basis and comparison is regularly made of offered rates across these different firms. This regular process has enabled a strong database of expected day rates for different skill sets ensuring that rates proposed are able to be assessed for reasonableness before acceptance.

(9) 25 contracts from 28 June 2024 to 11 August 2026 were above the $100,000 threshold.

- 23 of these contracts are for services delivered by individual specialists, of which 22 are new contracts to continue/extend their services following new budget appropriation.
- 1 contract relates to IT software.
- 1 contract relates to the provision of system implementation services by a company.

(a) 22 contracts were awarded directly without a market approach as they were contracts to continue/extend the services of existing individual contractors following new budget appropriation or expiry of previous contracts.

1 contract relating to IT software was directly awarded following detailed requirements gathering, requests for quotation and vendor demonstrations of product capability against requirements.

1 contract related to the provision of system implementation services was awarded following an extensive market approach, shortlisting and limited tender process.

(b) Refer to tabled spreadsheet for details by contract.

(c) Refer to tabled spreadsheet, Column L, for details by contract.

(d) Yes. Column C of tabled spreadsheet notes which contracts were executed under a Treasurer's Instruction exemption. In each case supporting minutes are available to evidence exemption approval.

(10) The Buy Local Policy weighting is applied to all tenders undertaken. All vendors are validated through submission of company information in requested documentation and through direct engagement with company leadership or key contacts.

In addition to the Buy Local Policy application in tenders, for every contract that the program issues, the location of any employees or resources proposed to be engaged on the programs activities is also required to be specified and is considered.

(11) (a) 4 direct-sourced contracts were executed on 24 December 2025, for a total of $920,395 (inclusive of potential extensions). These comprised:

- Contracts for 3 companies providing 5 contractors where existing contracts were due to expire and needed to be renewed prior to 31 December 2025 to ensure continuity of specialist resources to support the program delivery:
- A further company providing a single contractor was due to commence on 6 January 2026. This was a critical resource contractor who had previously been engaged by the program but stood down until funding and program activities required.

Funding to support the continuation of the engagements required appropriation funding in the 2025-26 budget and could not be actioned until the budget had passed parliament and received royal assent. Due to the timing of the 2025-26 budget:

- 10 December 2025: 2025-26 budget passed in Parliament
- 12 December 2025: Contracts considered and endorsed by Procurement Review Committee
- 19 December 2025: Approval by DPAC Secretary
- 22 and 23 December 2025: Contracts executed by third parties
- 24 December 2025: Contracts executed by DPAC on behalf of Crown

Failure to renew the contracts would have resulted in the loss of knowledge and resources to the project, the need to find alternative resources costing both time and money and ultimately causing delays to the project as new resources are required to get up to speed on the needs of the project.

(b) Yes. All normal approval and delegation processes were followed in full.

6 LEAVE TO TABLE ANSWER TO QUESTION AND INCORPORATE ANSWER INTO HANSARD.— *Ordered*, That Ms *Rattray* have leave to Table answer to Question No. 66 and have the answer incorporated into the Hansard record.

7 PROCUREMENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S BLUEGUM DIGITAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION.— Ms *Thomas* asked the Honourable the Leader of the Government — Further to the Government's 11 August 2026 responses to my Questions on Notice regarding procurement for the Department of Health's Bluegum Digital Health Transformation:

(1) Did the Department of Health have an overarching procurement strategy or plan for the engagement of contractors and labour-hire personnel under Bluegum?
  (a) If yes, who approved it and will the Government table it?
  (b) If no, why was a project involving more than $61 million in contracted labour-hire expenditure undertaken without such a plan or strategy?

(2) What roles within the Departments of Health and Treasury were responsible for monitoring the cumulative number and value of Bluegum contracts and what internal controls existed to identify and prevent the risk of contract splitting where multiple contracts below the tender threshold were awarded to the same provider (i.e.. awarding more than one contract to the same contractor for the same or overlapping time periods and/or more than one contract to the same contractor to deliver separate but related outputs, resulting in individual contract values coming in below $100,000)?

(3) The Government's answers identified one provider as receiving 86 separate contracts worth more than $6.9 million.
  (a) Why was this substantial body of work not aggregated and subjected to an open competitive tender process?

(b) Was an open tender ever considered and, if so, why was it not pursued?
(c) Does the Government accept that repeatedly awarding sub-threshold contracts to the same provider may create a risk of contract splitting in substance, even where individual contracts comply with the applicable procurement threshold?

(4) Of the 692 Bluegum contracts valued below $100,000:
(a) how many were valued between $90,000 and $99,999;
(b) how many contractors were provided concurrent contracts (multiple contracts for the same time period) and why was this allowed;
(c) how many involved extensions, renewals or subsequent engagements with the same provider for substantially the same or related work;
(d) how many contracts were renewed within one month following expiry of the previous contract; and
(e) in determining the appropriate procurement method, was the cumulative or reasonably anticipated value of those related engagements taken into account?

(5) For each Bluegum contract where competitive quotations were required:
(a) how many quotations or bids were actually received; and
(b) where only one quotation or bid was received, what steps were taken to test market pricing and demonstrate value for money in the absence of competitive tension?

(6) For any Bluegum procurement where the ordinarily applicable competitive procurement requirements were not followed:
(a) what exemption, exception or other provision of the Treasurer's Instructions or procurement framework was relied upon;
(b) how many contracts were awarded under each exemption or provision and what was their combined value; and
(c) was each use approved by the appropriate delegate?

(7) Has the Department sought advice from Treasury, internal audit, a probity adviser or any other independent source about whether the pattern of repeated sub-$100,000 Bluegum contracts complied with both the requirements and intent of the Government's procurement framework?
(a) If so, what advice was received and will it be tabled?
(b) If not, why not?

(8) In relation to the procurement approach adopted for the Bluegum Digital Health Transformation:
(a) When did the Secretary of the Department of Health first become aware of the number and cumulative value of contracts being awarded below the $100,000 open tender threshold, and is the Secretary satisfied the approach complied with the Government's procurement framework and represented value for money?
(b) When did the Secretary of the Department of Treasury and Finance first become aware of the number and cumulative value of Bluegum contracts being awarded below the $100,000 threshold, and is the Secretary satisfied the approach was consistent with the requirements and intent of the Government's procurement framework?
(c) When did the Treasurer first become aware of the number and cumulative value of Bluegum contracts being awarded below the $100,000 threshold, and is the Treasurer satisfied the procurement approach complied with the Treasurer's Instructions, including their intent?
(d) When did the Minister for Health first become aware of the number and cumulative value of Bluegum contracts being awarded below the $100,000 threshold, and is the Minister satisfied the procurement approach was appropriate, complied with the Treasurer's Instructions and represented value for money for Tasmanian taxpayers?

(9) Will the Government undertake an independent review of procurement practices associated with Bluegum?
(a) If yes, who will conduct it and will the findings be made public?

(10) If no, why not?

The Leader answered:

(1) On 22 October 2024, the Secretary of the Department of Health approved the Health ICT Project Workforce Optimisation Plan to reduce Health ICT's reliance on labour hire through the creation of 51 key salaried positions across both Health ICT broadly and the Bluegum Program. The plan envisaged a predominantly salaried workforce, with contract labour used only to provide short-term specialist expertise or address temporary capability gaps. A key objective was to provide opportunities for more than 50 existing contractors across both Bluegum and Health ICT to transition into permanent roles.

Despite an extensive recruitment campaign, conversion and recruitment outcomes were significantly lower than anticipated. As a result, the Department continued to rely on specialist contract labour to fill critical capability gaps, maintain delivery momentum across major digital transformation initiatives, and support the progression of commenced projects.

Programs such as Bluegum require highly specialised skills in areas including digital health, enterprise architecture, cybersecurity, clinical informatics, program delivery, integration, testing and change management. These capabilities are often required for finite periods, fluctuate throughout the program lifecycle, and are not readily available within the existing workforce or local labour market.

To access the specialist capability required, the Department adopted an open-market procurement approach for ICT contract labour. This approach was implemented because the procurement frameworks available at the time were primarily designed for outcome-based ICT services rather than ICT professionals working under the direct supervision of the Department. The Department therefore sourced specialist ICT contract labour through open market competition, supported by contract management controls, delegated approval processes, and publication of awarded contracts in accordance with Treasury requirements.

(a) The Secretary of the Department of Health approved the Health ICT Workforce Optimisation Plan.
(b) N/A.

(2) The Department of Health's responsibility for monitoring Bluegum contractor expenditure rested across the Department's procurement, financial and program governance arrangements, with contract information and cumulative expenditure routinely reported through project steering committees, executive governance forums, monthly accountability meetings, Treasury reporting processes, and official departmental record management systems. Treasury was also regularly advised of contractor expenditure and procurement activity.

The Department maintained a range of controls to support procurement compliance and oversight, including formal approval processes, contract and financial reporting, governance committee review, contractor resource request processes, and regular monitoring of contractor utilisation and expenditure. Throughout 2025 and 2026, the Department continued discussions with Treasury regarding appropriate ICT labour hire procurement arrangements, including consideration of Request for Tender (RFT) processes, which ultimately led to the introduction of revised procurement arrangements and enhanced oversight measures in July 2026.

(3) (a) The engagements were labour-hire arrangements for individual specialist resources working under the direction and supervision of the Department, rather than outcome-based service contracts for the delivery of a defined scope of work. As such, the Department's assessment was that these engagements did not constitute a single procurement for a common deliverable that could appropriately be aggregated and released to market as one tender.

Since 2021, the Department has consistently advised Treasury and Crown Law that the Technology Services List was designed primarily for outcome-based ICT procurements and did not provide a clear procurement pathway for ICT labour-hire arrangements operating under departmental management and control. To meet resourcing requirements, the Department utilised an open-market approach that included Request for Resource processes, market testing, delegated approvals and executive oversight.

The cumulative value and utilisation of contractor engagements were routinely reported through established governance and accountability mechanisms, including steering committees, executive governance forums, financial reporting processes, monthly accountability meetings, contract reporting to Treasury, and official departmental record management systems.

As explained in question 2, the Department continued to engage with Treasury regarding appropriate procurement arrangements for ICT labour hire, including consideration of more formal procurement mechanisms and RFT processes. This resulted in revised ICT labour-hire procurement arrangements approved and introduced in July 2026, including Procurement Review Committee oversight, structured quotation processes, and open tender requirements for higher-value procurements.

(c) Yes. The option of an open tender was considered in the context of the procurement frameworks available at the time. However, it was not pursued due to the prevailing ICT procurement arrangements, including the Technology Services Multi-Use List (TSL) and Tasmanian Technology Contract Conditions (TTCC), which were designed for outcome-based service procurements delivered under defined scopes of work, rather than for the engagement of individual ICT specialists working under the direct supervision of the Department.

Treasury had also advised against the establishment of dedicated ICT labour-hire panels through a Request for Tender process. As a result, there was no practical tender-based mechanism available for the procurement of ICT contract labour. In these circumstances, the Department adopted an open-market sourcing approach for ICT labour hire, supported by procurement controls, delegated approvals, contract management arrangements, and reporting requirements, to ensure access to the specialised workforce required to deliver major digital transformation programs while maintaining compliance with procurement obligations.

As previously noted, revised ICT labour-hire procurement arrangements have been implemented, including structured quotation processes and RFT requirements for higher-value procurements, providing a formal pathway for future open tender processes where applicable.

(d) The Department acknowledges that repeatedly awarding sub-threshold contracts to the same provider may create a risk of perceived or actual contract splitting, even where individual contracts comply with applicable procurement thresholds. The Department has taken steps to address and mitigate this risk through the implementation of the revised ICT labour hire procurement framework.

The new framework provides enhanced governance and oversight mechanisms, including Procurement Review Committee scrutiny, structured quotation processes for procurements under $250,000, and RFT processes for procurements valued at $250,000 or more.

The Department considers these measures an appropriate response to the risks associated with ICT labour hire procurement and will ensure future engagements are undertaken through procurement pathways that provide greater consistency, oversight, and market competition.

(4) Bluegum contracts were awarded between 1 July 2021 and 27 July 2026:

- 692 were valued between $50,000 and $99,999;
- 50 were valued under $50,000; and
- The information below is based on this combined number of 742 contracts.

(a) 339 Bluegum-related contracts valued between $90,000 and $99,999 were awarded with a combined value of $32.5 million.

(b) 143 contractors were provided concurrent contracts. Each contract renewal was subject to scrutiny by the program manager to justify the ongoing need for the resource to support commenced projects. All concurrent contracts were submitted to the Chief Information Officer for delegate review and approval prior to execution of a contract. The Department's position was that these engagements represented the engagement of individual specialist resources to meet specific capability needs across the program, rather than a single outcome-based procurement.

(c) The 143 contractors with concurrent contracts were awarded a total of 709 contracts. Of these, the majority were extensions, renewals, or subsequent engagements with the same provider for substantially the same or closely related services. The Department's position was that these

arrangements involved the engagement of individual specialist ICT labour-hire resources working under departmental supervision to meet specific capability requirements, rather than the procurement of a single outcome-based work package. Accordingly, contract renewals were based on the continued need for specialist roles, not the specific delivery of a related package of work.

(d) Of the 709 concurrent contracts awarded, 704 were renewed within one month following expiry of the previous contract.

(e) Yes. In determining the appropriate procurement method, the Department considered the cumulative and reasonably anticipated value of contractor engagements supporting the Bluegum Program.

At the time, there was no established procurement framework specifically designed for ICT labour-hire arrangements of this nature. The existing Technology Services List was primarily intended for outcome-based ICT services rather than individual specialist resources working under the direction and supervision of the Department.

Accordingly, the Department utilised an open-market procurement approach for ICT contractor labour, supported by Request for Resource processes, delegated approval requirements, executive oversight and governance controls. The Department's position was that these arrangements represented the engagement of individual specialist resources to address capability requirements across the program, rather than a single outcome-based procurement that could be sourced through an open tender process.

(5) (a) Candidate submissions received for requests for new specialist ICT resources varied, with a median of 12 submissions per request, and some requests receiving more than 70 submissions. In total, more than 1,300 candidate submissions have been received.

Health ICT's panel comprises more than 80 providers, who are notified when a competitive request for specialist ICT resources is released.

(b) All requests for new specialist ICT resources were undertaken through a market-based process and attracted responses from multiple recruitment and labour-hire agencies. While an individual contractor may ultimately have been sourced through a single provider, the underlying resource requests were exposed to the broader market and generated multiple candidate submissions for consideration.

For each resource request, the number of candidates submitted by agencies typically ranged from 6 to more than 70 individuals. Candidates were assessed against the required capabilities, experience, availability, and rates, providing the Department with a basis to test the market and assess value for money before engagement.

(6) (a) No exemptions or exceptions were relied upon, as Bluegum procurements followed a structured and compliant procurement process for contractor engagements that were managed through an open market procurement process, a mandatory Request for Contractor Resource (RFR) process, and delegated authority and executive approval frameworks.

Please see separate response provided from the Treasurer.

(b) N/A.

(c) I am advised that each individual ICT labour-hire contract has been approved and executed under the delegated authority of the Chief Information Officer.

(7) I am advised that yes, the Department has engaged with Treasury over a number of years regarding the limitations of the existing TSL and TTCC arrangements in supporting the engagement of specialist ICT labour-hire resources.

The Department's consistent position was that the Bluegum contractor engagements related to the procurement of individual specialist ICT resources, required to work under departmental supervision, rather than a single, outcomes-based procurement.

Faced with a procurement framework that did not adequately accommodate ICT labour-hire arrangements of this nature, the Department implemented what it considered to be the most transparent and compliant approach available, including open-market competition, contract management controls, publication of contracts in accordance with Treasury requirements, and delegated approval processes.

(a) Advice from Treasury primarily concerned the limitations of the existing TSL and TTCC in accommodating ICT labour-hire personnel working under departmental supervision.

Treasury advised that it was working with the Office of the Crown Solicitor on possible contractual solutions and, at that time, advised against establishing a dedicated labour-hire panel through a Request for Tender. This resulted in the Department continuing to source individual specialist resources through open-market processes, supported by delegated approvals, contract management controls and reporting requirements.

Subsequent advice from Treasury was that any proposed specialised ICT labour-hire panel would represent a departure from the prevailing whole-of-government procurement framework and would require consideration by the Treasurer before proceeding.

(b) N/A.

(8) (a) I am advised the Secretary first became aware of the exact number and cumulative value of the contracts in response to an Auditor-General request in May 2026. Prior to that time, while the Secretary was aware of the arrangements around the engagement of specialist ICT labour-hire resources, he had not been directly involved in the recruitment of personnel for Health ICT, including Bluegum, as the Secretary had approved a delegation to the Chief Information Officer to commit expenditure for ICT labour hire contracts, with which the Chief Information Officer was acting in accordance.

The Secretary acknowledges that repeatedly awarding sub-threshold contracts to the same provider may create a risk of perceived or actual contract splitting, even where individual contracts comply with applicable procurement thresholds. The process followed was designed to ensure value for money, which is considered to have been achieved.

Earlier this year the Secretary met with his Treasury counterpart, and this resulted in a new process being put in place. The Secretary is satisfied that the Department has taken steps to address and mitigate this risk through the implementation of this revised ICT labour hire procurement framework.

(b) Please see separate response provided from the Treasurer.

(c) Please see separate response provided from the Treasurer.

(d) I first became aware of the volume of Bluegum contracts awarded below the $100,000 threshold in June 2026.

While I do accept the Department’s reasoning, acknowledging that a number of important initiatives have been delivered that are already making a real difference to people’s lives, it is clear that greater Ministerial and Treasury oversight is needed to ensure the Program remains on

track, on budget, and complies with all relevant governance and reporting processes. The Treasurer and I are currently in discussions on the best mechanism to ensure this occurs in a way that does not duplicate existing accountabilities and governance responsibilities, but reinforces them.

(9) Please see separate response provided from the Treasurer.

(a) Please see separate response provided from the Treasurer.

(b) Please see separate response provided from the Treasurer.

Ordered, That Ms *Rattray*, have leave to Table the following documents:
(1) Procurement for the Department of Health's Bluegum Digital Health Transformation;
(2) Department of Health and Treasury letters and email exchanges;
(3) Health ICT Project Workforce Optimisation Plan, October 2024; and
(4) Correspondence between the Department of Health and Department of Treasury and Finance regarding compliance with Treasurer's Instructions Health ICT projects.

8 LEAVE TO TABLE ANSWER TO QUESTION AND INCORPORATE ANSWER INTO HANSARD.— *Ordered*, That Ms *Rattray* have leave to Table answer to Question No. 67 and have the answer incorporated into the Hansard record.

9 TASTAFE LABORATORY COURSE SUBSIDY CUTS.— Ms *Thomas* asked the Honourable the Leader of the Government — In October 2025 the Government confirmed TasTAFE had decided to discontinue delivery of its laboratory technology qualifications and would instead subsidise laboratory technology training delivered by privately owned, interstate-based Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

Given the importance of these qualifications to Tasmania's education, health and scientific sectors,

(1) What were the reasons for TasTAFE's decision to discontinue delivery of its laboratory technology qualifications?
(2) What financial modelling was undertaken comparing:
  (a) the cost of continuing delivery through TasTAFE; and
  (b) the cost to State Government of subsidising laboratory technology qualifications through private RTOs?
(3) Did this modelling consider the value of existing TasTAFE facilities and equipment, local teaching expertise, industry relationships, work placements and graduate employment outcomes?
(4) For each private RTO currently subsidised to provide laboratory technology qualifications to Tasmanians:
  (a) which qualifications are subsidised;
  (b) through which funding program;
  (c) what is the subsidy per student; and
  (d) how much State Government funding was provided to it in each of the past five years?
(5) For each of the past five years, for the Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques and Diploma of Laboratory Technology delivered by TasTAFE:
  (a) what was the total annual cost of delivery;
  (b) how much of that cost was met through TasTAFE's Deed funding;
  (c) how much was met through student fees; and
  (d) what was the student fee for each qualification?
(6) Why has a decision been made to subsidise students through private interstate-based RTOs when Government previously provided no subsidy to students to receive the exact same training through TAFE for the Diploma IV course?
(7) What consultation occurred with laboratory managers, schools, pathology and health services, industry employers and professional associations before TasTAFE decided to discontinue these courses?

(8) The Minister has advised that the decision followed a TasTAFE review undertaken in 2025. Will the Government provide or table that review, including the enrolment, withdrawal, completion, cost and employment outcome data considered?

(9) What are the annual enrolment, commencement, completion and graduate employment figures for each TasTAFE laboratory technology qualification for each of the past ten years?

(10) How many prospective students sought to enrol or expressed an interest in enrolling in the TasTAFE Certificate IV or Diploma for 2026 after the decision was made not to accept a new intake?

(11) What evidence supports Skills Tasmania's conclusion that the current private RTO arrangements will meet Tasmania's expected demand for laboratory technicians?

(12) Will the Government provide or table the workforce analysis undertaken by Skills Tasmania in reaching that conclusion?

(13) What assessment has been undertaken of current and projected demand for laboratory technicians in:
   (a) Tasmanian schools;
   (b) pathology and health services;
   (c) biosecurity;
   (d) food production; and
   (e) environmental and other scientific industries?

(14) What changes have been observed in DECYP's capacity to recruit laboratory technicians in northern Tasmania since local delivery of laboratory technology courses in the north ceased several years ago?

(15) Given the current private RTO model relies on online learning combined with workplace-based training and assessment, how will people who are not already employed in a laboratory obtain the practical experience necessary to enter the industry?

(16) Have any providers indicated an intention to offer a pre-employment laboratory technology training option? If so, which provider/s, when will it commence, where will it be delivered and how many places will be available?

(17) What does TasTAFE intend to do with:
   (a) existing laboratory facilities and equipment; and
   (b) staff currently employed to deliver laboratory technology qualifications?

(18) What is the estimated cost of decommissioning TasTAFE laboratory facilities?

(19) Did TasTAFE consider retaining laboratory technology delivery before deciding to redirect resources to other priority training areas and, if so, what factors led it to conclude those areas represented a higher priority?

(20) In light of Tasmania's ongoing need for laboratory technicians, will the Government and TasTAFE reconsider continuing the delivery of laboratory technology qualifications if the private RTO model does not demonstrate sufficient enrolment, completion and employment outcomes?

The Leader answered:

(1) In late 2025, TasTAFE conducted a review of qualifications being delivered, as part of this process a number of courses were identified as having low enrolment and completion rates over several years.

Taking this into account, together with the availability of alternative delivery options through other training providers, it was determined that these qualifications would no longer be delivered by TasTAFE from 2026 onwards

This decision allows TasTAFE to focus its resources on priority training areas that support Tasmania's workforce needs, in line with the Tasmanian Skills Plan.

(2) (a) TasTAFE undertook financial modelling of the direct and indirect costs associated with delivering the Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques and Diploma of Laboratory Technology. This included teaching salaries, materials, utilities and associated support costs.

The modelling looked at how many fee-paying students would be needed to cover the cost of delivering the courses without funding through the Deed of Purchasing Agreement.

(b) Private Registered Training Organisations have delivered subsidised laboratory technology qualifications in Tasmania since 2018, with historical funding and delivery information available to Skills Tasmania.

As existing subsidised delivery arrangements were already established, separate financial modelling of private RTO delivery costs was not undertaken.

(3) TasTAFE's financial modelling considered the direct and indirect costs of delivering these qualifications, including teaching salaries, materials, utilities and support costs.

The modelling focused on the financial viability of continuing delivery without funding through the Deed of Purchasing Agreement.

(4) (a) **Subsidised RTO Qualification**

RTO NAME	QUALIFICATION
Labtech Training Victoria Pty Ltd	MSL30122 - Certificate III in Laboratory Skills MSL40122 - Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques MSL50122 - Diploma of Laboratory Technology
ABC Training and Consulting	MSL30122 - Certificate III in Laboratory Skills MSL40122 - Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques MSL50122 - Diploma of Laboratory Technology
Melbourne Tech Institute Pty Ltd	MSL30122 - Certificate III in Laboratory Skills MSL40122 - Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques

(b) **Subsidy Funding Program**

RTO NAME	QUALIFICATION
Labtech Training Victoria Pty Ltd	Apprentice and Trainee Training Fund and Train Now Fund
ABC Training and Consulting	Apprentice and Trainee Training Fund
Melbourne Tech Institute Pty Ltd	Apprentice and Trainee Training Fund

(c) **Subsidy Per Student**

QUALIFICATION	SUBSIDY
MSL30122 - Certificate III in Laboratory Skills	$5,265*
MSL40122 - Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques	$9,727*
MSL50122 - Diploma of Laboratory Technology	$11,265*
MSL50122 - Diploma of Laboratory Technology	$13,000**

*Skills Tasmania base subsidy rate
**Labtech Training Victoria Pty Ltd Subsidy

(d) **State Government Funding for RTO**

Amount Paid by Calendar Year, All RTOs, All Superseded Courses								
RTO Name	**Code**	**Qualification**	**Calendar 2022**	**Calendar 2023**	**Calendar 2024**	**Calendar 2025**	**Calendar 2026**	**Grand Total**
ABC Training and Consulting	MSL30118	Certificate III in Laboratory Skills	$1,130.42	$14,688.87	$3,717.15			$19,536.44
ABC Training and	MSL30122	Certificate III in Laboratory Skills			$4,952.09	$7,759.56	$4,158.19	$16,869.84

Consulting								
ABC Training and Consulting	MSL40118	Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques		$20,983.50	$46,056.56			$67,040.06
ABC Training and Consulting	MSL40122	Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques			$17,349.19	$19,639.78	$31,656.56	$68,645.53
Labtech Training Victoria Pty Ltd.	MSL30122	Certificate III in Laboratory Skills			$8,942.32	$24,311.71	$1,698.76	$34,952.79
Labtech Training Victoria Pty Ltd.	MSL40118	Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques		$393.74	$288.73			$682.47
Labtech Training Victoria Pty Ltd.	MSL40122	Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques			$16,458.60	$36,051.93	$10,682.94	$63,193.47
Labtech Training Victoria Pty Ltd.	MSL50122	Diploma of Laboratory Technology					$9,001.34	$9,001.34

(5) (a) Costs are not directly tracked against individual courses, noting financial modelling undertaken indicates the cost of delivering each course sits between $910k - $1.1m per annum that includes direct costs for teaching salaries, materials and indirect costs.

(b) The majority of the costs were met by the Deed funding.

(c) Tasmanian student fees covered $25-30k per annum in costs for each course with international fees covering approximately $140k over both courses combined.

(d) Information about Certificate IV in laboratory techniques and Diploma of Laboratory Technology.

Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques					
	2021	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Deed	$3,242	$3,324	$3,540	$3,734	$3,835
Concessional	$370	$370	$390	$390	$400
Commercial	$15,638	$16,029	$17,070	$18,008	$18,495

Diploma of Laboratory Technology					
	2021	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Deed	$10,342	$10,342	$11,014	$11,619	$11,935
Concessional	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Commercial	$18,109	$18,109	$19,286	$20,346	$20,900

(6) The Tasmanian Government has previously subsidised both the Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques and Diploma of Laboratory Technology through TasTAFE.

Eligible students have been able to access subsidised training through TasTAFE's Deed of Purchasing Agreement, while private RTOs have also delivered government-subsidised laboratory training in Tasmania.

Private RTOs have delivered the subsidised Certificate IV since 2018 and the Diploma since 2025.

(7) The decision followed a review of the financial viability of continuing to deliver the courses without funding through the Deed of Purchasing Agreement.

This review focused on historical enrolments, delivery costs and whether there would be sufficient demand from fee-paying students to continue offering the courses on a commercial basis.

After Meeting with Department of Health and Department of Education, Children and Young People, Skills Tasmania advises that the available training options can continue to meet workforce needs. The Government will continue monitoring enrolments, completions and industry feedback to ensure Tasmanian learners and employers retain access to appropriate training pathways.

(8) See Tabled paper, Course Subsidy Review Briefing Document.

See Tabled paper, Briefing Tasmanian Training Subsidies.

(9) TasTAFE's annual enrolment, withdrawal and completion figures for the Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques and Diploma of Laboratory Technology are outlined in the tables below.

TasTAFE does not hold graduate employment outcome data for these qualifications.

Note: All Enrolments Commenced

Certificate IV In Laboratory Techniques	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Enrolled	49	63	38	30	20	23	22	22	19	20	24
Withdrawn	30	29	12	14	6	7	7	5	6	12	7
Completed	19	34	26	16	14	16	15	17	13	8	17

Diploma Of Laboratory Technology	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Enrolled	39	29	21	7	13	11	15	9	11	8	9
Withdrawn	20	8	8	3	0	3	1	3	3	3	3
Completed	19	21	13	4	13	8	14	6	8	5	6

(10) TasTAFE is not aware of any prospective students who sought to enrol or expressed an interest in either the Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques or Diploma of Laboratory Technology following the decision not to accept new enrolments for 2026.

(11) Private Registered Training Organisations have been delivering subsidised laboratory qualifications in Tasmania since 2018.

After Meeting with Department of Health and Department of Education, Children and Young People, Skills Tasmania advises that the available training options can continue to meet workforce needs. The Government will continue monitoring enrolments, completions and industry feedback to ensure Tasmanian learners and employers retain access to appropriate training pathways.

The Apprentice and Trainee Training Fund allows funding to respond to increased demand, while other contestable grant programs are available to support training for jobseekers and existing workers where needed.

(12) Skills Tasmania considered a range of factors when reviewing TasTAFE's proposed changes to the qualifications delivered under the Deed of Purchasing Agreement.

These included enrolment demand, withdrawal and completion rates, the availability of other training providers, and discussions with private RTOs about their capacity to accommodate additional students if required.

(13) Skills Tasmania has engaged with the Department for Education, Children and Young People regarding laboratory technician training needs in Tasmanian schools.

TasTAFE does not undertake specific workforce demand forecasts for individual industries.

Skills Tasmania considers available information about training demand and industry needs when determining funding priorities and training arrangements.

(14) TasTAFE and Skills Tasmania are Advised that the Department for Education, Children and Young People is not aware of any current Laboratory Technician workforce shortages across our government schools and colleges.

(15) Practical experience is an important part of laboratory technician training, and the Government recognises the need for pathways for people who are not already working in the industry.

Private RTOs have established relationships with Tasmanian employers and can work with industry to explore opportunities for workplace-based training and practical experience.

There are also government funding programs available to support training for jobseekers, including proposals for pre-employment training where there is an identified need.

(16) Labtech Training Victoria Pty Ltd is now funded to deliver Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques and Diploma of Laboratory Technology to existing workers under the Train Now Fund.

At this stage, no commencement date, delivery location or number of training places has been confirmed.

(17) (a) TasTAFE's existing laboratory facilities and equipment will remain in place until the current students complete their training in December 2026.

TasTAFE will assess the future use of these facilities and equipment in 2027, including whether decommissioning is required.

(b) Affected TasTAFE staff have been part of the TasTAFE’s consultation process in relation to the cessation of delivery and will become redundant at end of “teach out” phase.

(18) No decision has been made to decommission TasTAFE's laboratory facilities, and detailed planning or costings have not been undertaken. Preliminary estimates suggest that decommissioning could cost between $60,000 and $120,000, should it be required.

(19) As part of its review in late 2025, TasTAFE considered whether to continue delivering laboratory technology qualifications alongside its broader training priorities.

The review identified consistently low enrolment and completion rates over several years, along with the availability of alternative training options through other providers.

Taking these factors into account, TasTAFE determined that its resources could be better directed towards priority training areas identified in the Tasmanian Skills Plan, where there is greater demand for training to support Tasmania's workforce needs.

(20) The Government's priority is to ensure Tasmanians continue to have access to laboratory training that meets the needs of industry and employers.

Skills Tasmania will continue to consider training demand and the capacity of existing providers to meet Tasmania's workforce needs.

Should circumstances change, the Government will consider what further training arrangements may be needed to ensure these skills remain available in Tasmania.

Ordered, That Ms *Rattray*, have leave to Table the following Documents:
- TasTAFE Course Subsidy Briefing
- TasTAFE Subsidies Briefing

10 PAPERS.— The Clerk of the Council laid upon the Table the following Papers:—

(1) Audit Tasmania: Report of the Auditor-General No. 2 of 2026-2027. Treasury's oversight of government businesses.

(2) Audit Tasmania: Report of the Auditor-General No. 3 of 2026-2027. Auditor-General's report on the financial statements of State entities. Volume 2 – Public Financial Corporations, Public Non-Financial Corporations and Tasmanian Water and Sewerage Corporation Pty. Ltd. Audit of State entities and audited subsidiaries of State entities 30 June 2026.

(3) Education and Care Services Ombudsman and National Education and Care Services, and Freedom of Information and Privacy Commissioners: Annual Report 2024-2025.

(4) Office of the Custodial Inspector Tasmania: Looking towards the future. Youth education inspection report 2026.

(5) Inland Fisheries Service: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(6) Education Regulation: Annual Report 2025–2026.

(7) TT-Line Company Pty Ltd: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(8) Wellington Park Management Trust: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(9) Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(10) Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. *Police Powers (Surveillance Devices) Act 2006.* Annual Report 2025-2026.

(11) Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management: *Listening Devices Act 1991.* Annual Report 2025-2026.

(12) Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management: *Police Powers (Controlled Operations) Act 2006.* Annual Report 2025-2026.

(13) Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management: *Police Powers (Assumed Identities) Act 2006.* Annual Report 2025-2026.

(14) Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission: *Police Powers (Assumed Identities) Act 2006 (Tas).* Annual Report 2025-2026.

(15) Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission: *Police Powers (Controlled Operations) Act 2006* (Tas). Annual Report 2025-2026.

(16) Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission: *Police Powers (Surveillance Devices) Act 2006* (Tas). Annual Report 2025-2026.

(17) Legal Profession Board of Tasmania: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(18) State Policies and Projects (Macquarie Point Precinct) Order 2025. Register of Approvals and Amendments of Relevant Documents.

(19) Education and Care Services National Further Amendment Regulations 2026.

(20) *Marine Farming Planning Act 1995*: Statutory Rules 2026, No. xx, Marine Farming Planning Regulations 2026.

(21) *Nature Conservation Act 2002*: Statutory Rules 2026, No. 65, Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Amendment (Deer) Regulations 2026.

(22) *Firearms Act 1996*: Statutory Rules 2026, No. 69, Firearms Regulations 2026.

(23) *Marine Safety (Misuse of Alcohol) Act 2006*: Statutory Rules 2026, No. 70, Marine Safety (Misuse of Alcohol) Regulations 2026.

(24) *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995*: Fisheries (Scalefish Management Plan) Order 2026.

(25) *Marine and Safety Authority Act 1997*: Marine and Safety (Motor Boats and Licences) Amendment By-Laws 2026.

(26) *Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012*: Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Regulation 2026.

(27) *Land Acquisition Act 1993*: Notice of Acquisition of land under Section 18, comprising area of land containing 92.1m^2 situate in the Parish of Brisbane, Land District of Somerset, South Line Railway – Andover and Lowdina. Municipal area of Southern Midlands.

(28) *Land Acquisition Act 1993*: Notice of Acquisition of land under Section 18, comprising area of land containing 81.4m^2 situate in the Parish of Staffa, Land District of Monmouth, South Line Railway – Andover and Lowdina. Municipal area of Southern Midlands.

(29) *Land Acquisition Act 1993*: Notice of Acquisition of land under Section 18, comprising area of land containing 2.017ha situate in the Parish of Staffa, Land District of Monmouth, South Line Railway – Andover and Lowdina. Municipal area of Southern Midlands.

(30) *Land Acquisition Act 1993*: Notice of Acquisition of land under Section 18, comprising area of land containing 277.0 m^2 situate in the Parish of York, Land District of Monmouth, South Line Railway – Andover and Lowdina. Municipal area of Southern Midlands.

(31) *Land Acquisition Act 1993*: Notice of Acquisition of land under Section 18, comprising area of land containing 11.0 m^2 situate in the Town of Stanley, Stanley Highway – Safety Upgrade – TasWater Acquisition. Municipal area of Circular Head.

(32) *Land Acquisition Act 1993*: Notice of Acquisition of land under Section 18, comprising areas of land containing 660 m^2, 660 m^2 and 660 m^2 situate in the Town of Cygnet, Cygnet Ambulance Station – 48-52 Mary Street, Cygnet, Municipal area of Huon Valley.

11 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS.— In accordance with Sections 19 and 20 of the *Parliamentary (Disclosure of Interests) Act 1996*, the Clerk of the Council laid upon the Table of the Council the Register of Members' Interests for 2025-2026 for the electorates of Derwent, Elwick, Hobart, Launceston, McIntyre, Mersey, Montgomery, Murchison, Nelson, Pembroke, Prosser, Rosevears, Rumney and Windermere.

The 14 Annual Returns having been lodged with the President and this day Tabled will now be published on the Parliament's website.

12 REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.— Ms *Forrest* presented a report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts (No. 56 of 2026) Proposed Sale of Wilkinsons Point.

Ordered, That the Report be received. (Ms *Forrest*)

Ordered, That the Report be printed. (Ms *Forrest*)

Ordered, That consideration of the Report and its noting be made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next. (Ms *Forrest*)

13 JOINT SESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON GENDER AND EQUALITY.— Ms *Forrest* reported that the Joint Sessional Committee on Gender and Equality has resolved to commence 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.

14 GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO CLOSURE OF HOBART HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES MOTION.— Mr *Rattray* laid upon the Table the Government's response to the motion moved by the Hon. Luke Edmonds MLC on 13 August 2026, Closure of Hobart Hospitality Businesses.

15 STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT – MESSAGE FROM BUCKINGHAM PALACE.– The President said:–

"Honourable Members, I advise the Chamber that on Friday 15 September 2026 I received from Her Excellency the Governor the following message from His Majesty King Charles III:–

As you mark the 200th anniversary of the first sitting of your Legislative Council, I extend my warmest congratulations to the people of Tasmania.

For two centuries, the Council has existed as a keystone of Tasmanian government. Throughout its long history, the Council has adapted to times of opportunity and challenge alike, striving to serve the people of your State. In a world of constant change, the Legislative Council continues to stand as a testament to the enduring strength of parliamentary democracy and the importance of upholding the traditions of responsible government.

I remember fondly my many visits to Tasmania over the years, where I have always been touched by the warmth of your welcome, and by your optimism and strength. It is my fervent hope that you join me in this bicentenary year in reflecting with pride on the achievements of the past, and looking ahead to a harmonious future.

My wife and I send our heartfelt good wishes to all Tasmanians on this special anniversary.

Signed Charles R".

16 ROYAL ASSENT TO BILLS.— The President read a Message from Her Excellency the Governor as follows:

MESSAGE

Caroline Wells, Governor

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 of 2026; *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 of 2026; *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 of 2026; *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 of His Majesty the King, assented to the said Bills.

Government House, Hobart, 11 September 2026

17 ROYAL ASSENT TO BILLS.— The President read a Message from Her Excellency the Governor as follows:

MESSAGE

Caroline Wells, Governor

A Bill for An Act to amend the *Statutory Holidays Act 2000*
(Bill No. 14 of 2026; *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 of 2026; *Act No. 19 of 2026*)

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 of His Majesty the King, assented to the said Bills.

Government House, Hobart, 9 October 2026

18 SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS.— The President advised the Chamber of 5 Members who had indicated their desire to speak:—

(1) Mr *Edmunds* – Biggest Ever Blokes Lunch;

(2) Ms *Forrest* – Mudlark Theatre's ENOUGH production;

(3) Mr *Gaffney* – Royal Australian College of General Practitioners;

(4) Ms *Glade-Wright* – Salmon Farming Technology; and

(5) Ms *Thomas* – Business Greater Hobart Small Business Excellence Awards.

At the conclusion of Special Interest Matters the Council proceeded to Orders of the Day.

19 MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE.— *Ordered,* That Ms *Forrest* have leave to move a Motion without Notice.

20 ESTABLISHMENT OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES.— A Motion was made (Ms *Forrest*) and the Question was proposed:—

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

(2) That the Committees have leave to sit on Monday, 7 December and Tuesday, 8 December 2026 between the hours of 9.00 a.m. and 5.15 p.m. or such other time as varied by the Chair and as necessary for the purpose of relevant stakeholder and deliberative meetings.

(3) For 2026 Government Businesses are allocated to the Committees as follows—

Committee A
Monday, 7 December 2026

Aurora Energy Pty Ltd, Metro Tasmania Pty Ltd, Tasmanian Public Finance Corporation and Tasmanian Water and Sewerage Corporation

Committee B
Tuesday, 8 December 2026
Motor Accidents Insurance Board, Tasmanian Railways Pty Ltd, Tasmanian Irrigation Pty Ltd, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority and Tasracing Pty Ltd

And that –

Ms *Forrest*,
Ms *Glade-Wright*,
Ms *Lovell*
Ms *O'Connor*, and
Ms *Thomas*
be of Committee A

and

Ms *Armitage*,
Mr *Edmunds*,
Mr *Gaffney*,
Mr *Hiscutt*, and
Ms *Webb*
be of Committee B.

(4) And that the Committees report on the Government Businesses by no later than 30 January 2026.

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

(a) the reports shall be deemed to have been presented to the Council;

(b) the publication of the reports is authorised by this Resolution;

(c) the President, Deputy President or other Office holder, as the case may be, may give directions for the printing and circulation of the reports; and

(d) the President, Deputy President or other Office holder, as the case may be, shall direct the Clerk to lay the reports upon the Table at the next sitting of the Council.

A Debate arose thereupon.

And the Question being put,

It was resolved in the Affirmative.

21 MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.— *Ordered,* That Ms *Armitage* have leave to move Motions without Notice.

22 CONDOLENCE MOTION: HONOURABLE DONALD GEORGE WING.— A Motion was made (Ms *Armitage*) and the Question was proposed, That the Legislative Council expresses its deep regret at the passing on 1 October 2026 of the Honourable Donald George Wing AM, Member of the Legislative Council for Launceston and Paterson from 1982 to 2011 and President of the Legislative Council from 2002 to 2008, and places on record its appreciation of his service to this State, and further, that this House respectfully tenders to his family its sincere sympathy in their bereavement.

A Debate arose thereupon.

23 SITTING SUSPENDED.— It being 1.00 o'clock p.m. the Sitting of the Council was suspended.

The Council resumed the Sitting at 2.30 o'clock p.m.

24 QUESTION TIME.— The President called for Questions without Notice. There were 10 Questions asked.

25 CONDOLENCE MOTION: HONOURABLE DONALD GEORGE WING.—
Resolved, Nemine Contradicente,

That this Council expresses its profound regret at the death on 1 October 2026 of the Honourable Donald George Wing, Member of the Legislative Council for Launceston and Paterson from 1982 to 2011 and President of the Legislative Council from 2002 to 2008, and places on the record its sincere appreciation of his great service to this State, and further, that the Council humbly and respectfully tenders to his family its deepest sympathy in their bereavement.

Ordered, That the Resolution of the Council be forwarded to the family of the late Donald George Wing. (Ms *Armitage*)

26 ENCYCLICAL LETTER MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV.— A Motion was made (Ms *O'Connor*) and the Question was proposed, That the Encyclical Letter Magnifica Humanitas of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, be considered and noted.

A Debate arose thereupon.

27 SITTING SUSPENDED. — It being 4.00 o'clock p.m. the Sitting of the Council was suspended.

The Council resumed the Sitting at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

28 ENCYCLICAL LETTER MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV.— The Council resumed Debate on the Question, That:—

The Encyclical Letter Magnifica Humanitas of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, be considered and noted.

And the Question being put,

It was resolved in the Affirmative.

29 FRAGRANCE SENSITIVITY RECOGNITION ACCOMMODATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS.— A Motion was made (Ms *Forrest*) and the Question was proposed, That the Legislative Council:—

(1) Notes:
- (a) fragrance sensitivity, also referred to as multiple chemical sensitivity in its broader form, is a documented and often debilitating health condition affecting a significant proportion of the Australian and Tasmanian population, characterised by adverse physiological responses to fragranced consumer products including perfumes, colognes, air fresheners, cleaning products, and scented personal care items;
- (b) peer-reviewed research published in *Air Quality, Atmosphere & Health* (Steinemann, 2019), drawing on nationally representative surveys across four countries including Australia, found that:
  - (i) approximately one in three adults in Australia (33 per cent), report adverse health effects from fragranced consumer products;
  - (ii) commonly reported health problems include respiratory difficulties, mucosal symptoms, migraine headaches, skin rashes, and asthma attacks;
  - (iii) 7.7 per cent of Australians had lost workdays or a job in the past year due to illness from fragranced product exposure in the workplace;
  - (iv) A single application of perfume can release over 100 different chemical compounds into the air, many of which are not listed on product labels due to trade secret protections;
  - (v) fragrance-free policies have been implemented in workplaces, schools, health care facilities, public buildings, and other indoor environments around the world, and national surveys indicate that more people prefer fragrance-free rather than fragranced environments;
  - (vi) among the general population, 47.8 per cent would support a fragrance-free policy in the workplace, compared to only 20.4 per cent who would not.

(2) Acknowledges:
- (a) fragrance sensitivity is an invisible condition and this invisibility contributes to a pattern of scepticism, dismissal, and minimisation that compounds the burden on those living with the condition, creates barriers to disclosure, and discourages people from seeking workplace accommodations or participating fully in public life;
- (b) fragrance sensitivity can have a profound impact on people's professional and personal lives, including their ability to maintain employment, attend events, access public spaces, and perform their work, and many Tasmanians living with this condition do so largely in silence for fear of disbelief or ridicule;
- (c) fragrance sensitivity is a legitimate and debilitating health issue deserving of the same seriousness afforded to other airborne health triggers, including cigarette smoke and known allergens;
- (d) workplaces, government and public institutions should develop and implement fragrance-awareness or fragrance-reduction policies as a reasonable and practical measure to support access and inclusion;
- (e) the culture surrounding invisible illness needs to change, and institutions have a role to play in modelling respectful, evidence-informed responses to accommodation requests; and
- (f) those who raise health and accessibility concerns in institutional settings are entitled to have those concerns treated with confidentiality, dignity, and professionalism.

(3) Calls on the Government to:
- (a) consider what steps can be taken within government services and public institutions to reduce fragrance exposure and support those with fragrance-related health conditions;
- (b) consider whether public health guidance on fragrance sensitivity could be developed or promoted to assist employers, event organisers, schools, and health care facilities; and
- (c) reflect on the importance of maintaining confidentiality and trust when individuals raise health and accessibility concerns in professional or institutional contexts.

A Debate arose thereupon.

And the Question being put,

It was resolved in the Affirmative.

30 STATE GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TO CONSTRUCTION OF THE MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM.— A Motion was made (Ms *Webb*) and the Question was proposed, That the Legislative Council:—

(1) Notes in relation to the estimated total costs of the Macquarie Point Stadium (the stadium), and the estimated State Government contribution towards the stadium's construction, the following;
- (a) On 1st of March 2022, when announced by then-Premier Peter Gutwein MP, the estimated cost for the stadium was $750 million;
- (b) On 18th of September 2022, when announcing Macquarie Point as the preferred new stadium location, Premier Jeremy Rockliff MP stated in a media release that: "*the government is firm that it will cap its investment at $375 million*";
- (c) On the 15th of February 2024, prior the March 2024 state election, Premier Jeremy Rockliff MP stated in a media release that: "*a re-elected majority Rockliff Liberal Government will cap Tasmanian Government capital expenditure on the Macquarie Point Stadium at the currently budgeted $375 million – and not one red cent more.";*
- (d) When announcing the Macquarie Point Development Corporation (MPDC) had submitted the Project of State Significance application for the stadium to the Tasmanian Planning Commission on the 18th of September 2024, then Minister for Sports and Events Nic Street MP reiterated: *"Our funding to this project is capped at $375 million*.";
- (e) On the 27th of May 2025, then Minister for Business, Industry and Resources Eric Abetz MP released draft enabling legislation for the stadium and also provided a revised total cost estimate of $945 million;
- (f) On the 18th of September 2025, the government announced a revised cost estimate of $1.13 billion for the stadium;
- (g) By the time the *State Policies and Projects (Macquarie Point Precinct) Order 2025* was

debated in the Council on the 3rd of December 2025, Premier Jeremy Rockliff had committed to capping the state's contribution to the stadium at $875 million;

(2) Further notes:

(a) Global economic instability due to ongoing conflicts in the Middle East continues to pose risks of escalation of the total stadium project cost estimate, and therefore, also to the expected state contribution, including any interest payable on borrowings;

(b) Treasurer Eric Abetz MP on ABC Drive Radio on the 27th of July 2026 anticipated the cost of the proposed stadium could change by the end of the year and stated: "*Until such time as we have a proper figure to announce the figure of $1.13 billion remains*";

(3) Acknowledges:

(a) The commitment made by the Leader for Government Business in the Legislative Council during debate on the *State Policies and Projects (Macquarie Point Precinct) Order 2025* on the 4th of December 2025, that: "*if additional funds are required, it would need to be appropriated and that would occur in an appropriation bill or a supplementary appropriation bill*.";

(b) Correspondence regarding the potential tabling of any revised stadium construction cost estimate following a motion passed by the House of Assembly, from the MPDC Board Chair to the Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal dated the 4th of August 2026, and tabled during Public Accounts Committee hearings which states: "*If there are matters related to cost identified in the assessment process, I anticipate advice on this being provided to you at the end of September or early October*";

(4) Recognises that in regard to Parliamentary scrutiny of significant state-funded infrastructure projects:

(a) The usual approval process includes inquiry by the Public Works Committee, which routinely undertakes examination before the tender process has concluded and before any contract has been signed;

(b) In the Public Works Committee process, the onus is upon government Departments to provide the Committee with sufficient information about cost estimates to enable it to make public value assessments as part of its deliberations;

(c) While the Project of State Significance process excluded the Macquarie Point stadium project from Public Works Committee scrutiny, it should still be available to the Parliament to scrutinise and assess public value at a similar stage in the progress of that project without jeopardising tender and contract negotiations; and

(5) Formally requests the Government, at the completion of the stadium project procurement process but prior to the formal signing or completion of the contract process with any successful tenderer, to provide to this House:

(a) The highest likely cost of total project construction based on the successful tenderer's bid and the proposed final contract terms, whether it remains $1.13 billion or is a revised amount; and

(b) The estimated state contribution component of the total project construction cost as referred to in (5)(a), whether the state contribution remains $875 million or is a revised amount.

A Debate arose thereupon.

Ordered, That the Debate be adjourned. (Ms *Thomas*)

31 SITTING SUSPENDED.— *Resolved*, That the Sitting of the Council be suspended until the ringing of the Division bells. (Ms *Rattray*)

The Sitting was suspended at 6.53 o'clock p.m. and resumed at 8.00 o'clock p.m.

32 STATE GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TO CONSTRUCTION OF THE MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM.— The Council according to order resumed the Debate on the Question, That:—

(1) Notes in relation to the estimated total costs of the Macquarie Point Stadium (the stadium), and the estimated State Government contribution towards the stadium's construction, the following;

(h) On 1st of March 2022, when announced by then-Premier Peter Gutwein MP, the estimated cost for the stadium was $750 million;

(i) On 18th of September 2022, when announcing Macquarie Point as the preferred new stadium location, Premier Jeremy Rockliff MP stated in a media release that: "*the government is firm that it will cap its investment at $375 million*";

(j) On the 15th of February 2024, prior the March 2024 state election, Premier Jeremy Rockliff MP stated in a media release that: "*a re-elected majority Rockliff Liberal Government will cap Tasmanian Government capital expenditure on the Macquarie Point Stadium at the currently budgeted $375 million – and not one red cent more.";*

(k) When announcing the Macquarie Point Development Corporation (MPDC) had submitted the Project of State Significance application for the stadium to the Tasmanian Planning Commission on the 18th of September 2024, then Minister for Sports and Events Nic Street MP reiterated: *"Our funding to this project is capped at $375 million*.";

(l) On the 27th of May 2025, then Minister for Business, Industry and Resources Eric Abetz MP released draft enabling legislation for the stadium and also provided a revised total cost estimate of $945 million;

(m) On the 18th of September 2025, the government announced a revised cost estimate of $1.13 billion for the stadium;

(n) By the time the *State Policies and Projects (Macquarie Point Precinct) Order 2025* was debated in the Council on the 3rd of December 2025, Premier Jeremy Rockliff had committed to capping the state's contribution to the stadium at $875 million;

(2) Further notes:

(c) Global economic instability due to ongoing conflicts in the Middle East continues to pose risks of escalation of the total stadium project cost estimate, and therefore, also to the expected state contribution, including any interest payable on borrowings;

(d) Treasurer Eric Abetz MP on ABC Drive Radio on the 27th of July 2026 anticipated the cost of the proposed stadium could change by the end of the year and stated: "*Until such time as we have a proper figure to announce the figure of $1.13 billion remains*";

(3) Acknowledges:

(c) The commitment made by the Leader for Government Business in the Legislative Council during debate on the *State Policies and Projects (Macquarie Point Precinct) Order 2025* on the 4th of December 2025, that: "*if additional funds are required, it would need to be appropriated and that would occur in an appropriation bill or a supplementary appropriation bill*.";

(d) Correspondence regarding the potential tabling of any revised stadium construction cost estimate following a motion passed by the House of Assembly, from the MPDC Board Chair to the Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal dated the 4th of August 2026, and tabled during Public Accounts Committee hearings which states: "*If there are matters related to cost identified in the assessment process, I anticipate advice on this being provided to you at the end of September or early October*";

(4) Recognises that in regard to Parliamentary scrutiny of significant state-funded infrastructure projects:

(a) The usual approval process includes inquiry by the Public Works Committee, which routinely undertakes examination before the tender process has concluded and before any contract has been signed;

(b) In the Public Works Committee process, the onus is upon government Departments to provide the Committee with sufficient information about cost estimates to enable it to make public value assessments as part of its deliberations;

(c) While the Project of State Significance process excluded the Macquarie Point stadium project from Public Works Committee scrutiny, it should still be available to the Parliament to scrutinise and assess public value at a similar stage in the progress of that project without jeopardising tender and contract negotiations; and

(5) Formally requests the Government, at the completion of the stadium project procurement process but prior to the formal signing or completion of the contract process with any successful tenderer, to provide to this House:

(c) The highest likely cost of total project construction based on the successful tenderer's bid and the proposed final contract terms, whether it remains $1.13 billion or is a revised amount; and

(d) The estimated state contribution component of the total project construction cost as referred to in (5)(a), whether the state contribution remains $875 million or is a revised amount.

And the Question being put,

It was resolved in the Affirmative.

33 INTERIM REPORT OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENERGY MATTERS (NO. 17 OF 2026) INQUIRY INTO ENERGY PRICES AND RELATED MATTERS IN TASMANIA.— A Motion was made (Ms *Forrest*) and the Question was proposed, That the Interim Report of the of the Joint Select Committee on Energy Matters (No. 17 of 2026) Inquiry into Energy Prices and Related Matters in Tasmania be considered and noted.

And the Question being put,

It was resolved in the Affirmative.

34 BILL NO. 44.— A Message from the House of Assembly:—

MR PRESIDENT,

The House of Assembly hath passed a Bill, intituled — 'An Act to amend the *Electricity Companies Act 1997*, the *Government Business Enterprises Act 1995*, the *Irrigation Company Act 2011*, the *Metro Tasmania Act 1997*, the *Motor Accidents (Liabilities and Compensation) Act 1973*, the *Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority Act 1987*, the *Public Trustee Act 1930*, the *Racing (Tasracing Pty Ltd) Act 2009*, the *Rail Company Act 2009*, the *Tasmanian Ports Corporation Act 2005*, the *Tasmanian Public Finance Corporation Act 1985* and the *TT-Line Arrangements Act 1993*',

to which the House desires the concurrence of the Legislative Council.

House of Assembly, 27 October 2026 JACQUIE PETRUSMA, *Speaker*

The Bill was read the First time.

Ordered, That the Second reading of the Bill be made an Order of the Day for tomorrow. (Ms *Rattray*)

35 LEAVE TO TABLE DOCUMENT.— *Ordered*, That Mr *Rattray* have leave to Table a document in relation to Question on Notice 59.

36 HUMAN RESOURCES TRANSFORMATION CONTRACT REGISTER.— Mr *Rattray* laid upon the Table the Human Resources Transformation Contract Register.

37 ADJOURNMENT.— *Resolved,* That the Council will, at its rising adjourn until 11.00 o'clock a.m. on Wednesday, 28 October 2026. (Ms *Rattray*)

Resolved, That the Council do now adjourn. (Ms *Rattray*)

The Council adjourned at 10.03 o'clock p.m.

C.L. VICKERS, *Clerk of the Council*.