



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 21 May 2024

REVISED EDITION

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Tuesday 21 May 2024

The President, **Mr Farrell**, took the Chair at 11 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mr PRESIDENT - Before I call on the Leader, I welcome into our Chamber today year 11 and 12 students from The Friends' School. They are doing legal studies. Welcome to our Chamber, where this is our first sitting day back. As you can see, we are a little rusty on a few things, but we will get there eventually.

We are the upper House of the Tasmanian parliament. You have probably had a look at the other Chamber. The passage of legislation is usually through the House of Assembly to the Legislative Council, and then if that is all good, it goes off to the Governor for Royal Assent. Probably you have studied all that in your legal studies and you can tell us a thing or two. I am sure all members will join me in making you welcome to the Legislative Council this morning.

Members - Hear, hear.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Member for Windermere - Mr Duigan

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

That the member for Windermere, Mr Duigan, be granted leave of absence from the service of the Council for this week's sitting.

Motion agreed to.

MOTIONS

Committee of Privileges - Membership

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

That Mr Farrell, as President, Ms Forrest, as the Chair of Committees, Mr Gaffney, Ms Rattray, and the mover be appointed as the Committee of Privileges for this Council to inquire into and report upon complaints of breach of privilege which may be referred to it by the Council.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Orders Committee - Membership

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

That the President, the Chair of Committees, Ms Rattray, Ms Armitage, and the mover be appointed as the Standing Orders Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Subordinate Legislation Committee - Membership

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

That Mr Harriss, Ms Rattray, and the mover be appointed to serve on the Subordinate Legislation Committee in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the *Subordinate Legislation Committee Act 1969*.

Motion agreed to.

Joint Standing Committee on Integrity - Membership

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

That Ms Armitage, Ms O'Connor and Ms Webb be appointed to serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Integrity in accordance with Section 23 of the *Integrity Commission Act 2009*.

Motion agreed to.

Joint House Committee - Membership

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

That the President, Ms Forrest, and the mover be appointed to serve on the Joint House Committee of this parliament.

Motion agreed to.

Joint Parliamentary Library Committee - Membership

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

That Ms Armitage, Mr Farrell, Ms Forrest, Ms Rattray, and Mr Vincent, and the mover be appointed to serve on the Joint Committee of both Houses to manage the Parliamentary Library.

Motion agreed to.

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

That a message be transmitted to the House of Assembly acquainting that House of the appointment of members to those respective joint committees of both Houses of Parliament.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

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

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

This is for the purposes of a meeting of members here in the Chamber.

Sitting suspended from 11.09 a.m. to 11.50 a.m.

MOTIONS

Public Works Committee - Membership

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

That Ms Rattray and Mr Harriss be appointed to serve on the Public Works Committee in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the *Public Works Committee Act 1914*.

Motion agreed to.

Public Accounts Committee - Membership

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

That Mr Edmunds, Ms Forrest and Ms Thomas be appointed to serve on the Public Accounts Committee in accordance with the provisions of Section 2 of the *Public Accounts Committee Act 1970*.

Motion agreed to.

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

That a message be transmitted to the House of Assembly, acquainting that House of the appointment of members to those respective joint standing committees of both Houses of Parliament.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Government Administration Committees A and B - Re-Establishment

[11.51 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That the Legislative Council agree to the re-establishment of two Government Administration Sessional Committees for the following terms -

1. SESSIONAL COMMITTEE A ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION
 - 1.1 Sessional Committee A on Government Administration is re-established.
 - 1.2 The committee consists of not less than 5 members.
 - 1.3 The functions of the Committee are to inquire into, and report upon, any matter relating to -
 - (a) any Bill or other matter referred to it by the Council;
 - (b) the administration, processes, practices and conduct of any department, agency, Government Business Enterprise, State-owned Company, or other entity for which the following Ministers are responsible -

- I. Deputy Premier
- II. Treasurer
- III. Minister for Infrastructure
- IV. Minister for Energy and Renewables
- V. Minister for Parks and Environment
- VI. Minister for Children and Youth
- VII. Minister for Community Services
- VIII. Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
- IX. Minister for Finance
- X. Minister for Local Government
- XI. Minister for Sport and Events
- XII. Minister for Business, Industry and Resources
- XIII. Minister for Transport
- XIV. Minister for Education
- XV. Minister for Disability Services

- (c) The administration, processes, practices and conduct of any other entity, including those entities in which local government has an interest.

1.4. And that Mr Harriss, Ms Lovell, Ms Thomas, Mr Vincent, and the mover be appointed to serve on the said Committee.

2. SESSIONAL COMMITTEE B ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

2.1 The Sessional Committee B on Government Administration is re-established.

2.2 The committee consists of not less than 5 members.

2.3 The functions of the Committee are to inquire into and report upon matters relating to -

- (a) any Bill or other matter referred to it by the Council;
- (b) the administration, processes, practices and conduct of any department, agency, Government Business Enterprise, State-owned Company, or other entity for which the following Ministers are responsible -

- I. Premier
- II. Minister for Tourism and Hospitality
- III. Minister for Trade and Major Investment
- IV. Minister for Primary Industries and Water
- V. Minister for Racing
- VI. Minister for Housing and Planning
- VII. Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management
- VIII. Minister for Skills and Training

- IX. Minister for Small Business and Consumer Affairs
- X. Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation
- XI. Minister for the Arts
- XII. Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence
- XIII. Attorney-General
- XIV. Minister for Justice
- XV. Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing
- XVI. Minister for Veterans' Affairs

- (c) The administration, processes, practices and conduct of any other entity, including those entities in which local government has an interest;

1.4. And that Mr Armitage, Ms Edmunds, Mr Gaffney, Ms O'Connor, Ms Rattray and Ms Webb be appointed to serve on the said Committee.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Government Administration Committees A and B – Sessional Orders

Ms FORREST (Murchison) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That the Sessional Orders governing the operation of the two Government Administration Sessional Committees A and B, which were in place for the last session of the Fiftieth Parliament be again approved for this session.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Joint Sessional Workplace Culture Oversight Committee - Re-Establishment

Ms FORREST (Murchison) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

- (1) That a Joint Sessional Workplace Culture Oversight Committee be appointed with power to send for persons and papers and with leave to report from time to time, to oversee the implementation of any recommendations, by the relevant employer, contained in the report Motion for Respect: Report into Workplace Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (August 2022).

- (2) That the number of Members be appointed to serve on the said Committee on the part of the Legislative Council be 4.

Motion agreed to.

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

That a message be transmitted to the House of Assembly, requesting its concurrence therein.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Joint Sessional Gender and Equality Committee - Re-Establishment

Ms FORREST (Murchison) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That a Joint Sessional Gender and Equality Committee be appointed with power to send for persons and papers, with leave to sit during any adjournment of either House and with leave to adjourn from place to place to inquire into and report upon -

- (1)(a) Any Bill referred to it by either House in order to examine gender and equality impacts and any such Bill so referred shall be reported upon within 10 sitting days of its referral;
- (1)(b) Any matter related to gender and equality referred to it by either House; and
- (1)(c) Any matter related to gender and equality, initiated by its own motion; and
- (2) That Notice of any own Motion Inquiry shall be reported to both Houses within two (2) sitting days of the Committee's Resolution; and
- (3) That the number of Members to serve on the said Committee on the part of the Legislative Council be four.

Motion agreed to.

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

That a message be transmitted to the House of Assembly and requesting its concurrence therein.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Select Committee on the *University of Tasmania Act 1992* - Re-Establishment

Ms WEBB (Nelson) (by leave) - Mr President. I move -

That the Legislative Council Select Committee on the *University of Tasmania Act 1992* appointed on 24 May 2022 and reappointed on 16 August 2022 with power to send for persons and papers, with leave to sit during any adjournment of the Council, and with leave to adjourn from place to place to inquire into and report upon the provisions of the *University of Tasmania Act 1992* be re-appointed; and That

Mr Gaffney,
Ms Lovell; and
The Mover

be of the Committee and its Terms of Reference be those agreed to in the Second Session of the Fiftieth Parliament and that the Minutes of Proceedings of, and evidence received by that Committee be referred to the Committee.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS

Launceston Airport - RAAF Involvement

[11.59 a.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, it is the first opportunity we have had and I would like to welcome the new members to the Chamber. Welcome Ms O'Connor, Mr Vincent and Ms Thomas. I am sure you will enjoy your time here. You are very welcome.

Launceston Airport and the history of the airport: Sometimes there is a double life we are really not aware of. Launceston Airport has had a double life as an RAAF base.

In recent years, Launceston Airport has advanced ahead in leaps and bounds, with exceptional redevelopment, becoming an amazing gateway to our state's north. While we look to the airport's future, I am conscious we should also look to its past and how we can best honour its history and legacy. I was therefore very enlightened reading in *The Examiner* newspaper on 25 April an article by Joe Colbrook about the historical significance of the airport, particularly during wartime.

According to Wayne Dearing of the Tasmanian Aviation Historical Society, in 1926 plans to establish an aerodrome at Western Junction commenced, but it was not until 1929 that land was purchased for this purpose. During 1930 significant works to clear the site occurred and, on 23 November 1930, the first plane took off - the Aero Club Gypsy Moth registered as VH-ULM.

The site officially opened on 28 February 1931 by Colonel Brimsmead, Controller of Civil Aviation, with almost 20,000 people assembling on Evandale Road for the occasion.

During the Second World War, Launceston Airport, or Western Junction Aerodrome as it was then known, itself became conscripted into the war and became known as Number 7 Elementary Flying Training School. Between September 1940 and December 1944, 1801 young Australians from the southern states of the country came through the Flying Training School as trainee pilots, who were subsequently tasked with fighting for our country.

According to George Ashwood of the RAAF Association Museum, the youthful vigour and exuberance of trainees resulted in some quite daring flight displays, even during the formative stages of training. Mr Ashwood has said they considered themselves bulletproof and that one Flight Lieutenant Howard Roberts, flew his plane alongside a train - obviously far below regulation altitude - waving at the train passengers who I am quite sure would have been amused by the display. The fate of Lieutenant Roberts was that he was posted to the Middle East and shot down, surviving to become a prisoner of war in Germany.

According to Mr Ashwood, while these displays of daring were officially frowned upon by senior officers, they also indicated that trainees had the temperament needed to survive in such high-stakes environment like aerial combat, describing it as a type of spunk.

Mr Ashwood's research has also yielded the fates of those trained at Number 7 Elementary Flying Training School, sadly nearly onethird of them died after leaving the school. These included training accidents, combat fatalities and 12 men who were taken as prisoners of war.

A number of pilots who were trained at Number 7 Elementary Flying Training School also received awards and honours for their service. Three pilots were awarded Distinguished Service Orders, 32 were awarded Distinguished Flying Crosses, two received Air Force Crosses, four received Distinguished Flying Medals, two received Air Force Medals; one was awarded the Military Medal; eight were mentioned in dispatches, and three were given King's Commendations. The base was disbanded on 31 August 1945, but the mark it left on the Western Junction site and the significance it played in the Australian war effort was undeniable.

The Evandale Historical Society, in conjunction with the RAAF Association, Launceston branch, constructed a memorial to honour all those who trained and served at Number 7 Elementary Flying Training School, which was unveiled on 21 August 2010. It still stands as a reminder of the sacrifices that so many made for our country during times of war.

When we think of the future for places we all know, like Launceston Airport, it is important to be mindful of the past and to observe and honour it appropriately.

We thank those who served then and who serve today. We note the historical significance of the Western Junction site.

Neighbourhood House - East Devonport

[12.04 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I rise today to champion the urgent need for a new purpose-built neighbourhood house in East Devonport. Unfortunately, this vital community facility is struggling to deliver its essential service due to the limitations of its current outdated facility.

The East Devonport Neighbourhood House, or the EDNH, has been a cornerstone of the community since 2005. It tackles significant socio-economic challenges confirmed by the suburbs Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas, the SEIFA rating of 789, which signifies extreme economic and social disadvantage. People will not know this fact, but of Tasmania's 727 suburbs, East Devonport ranks as the 14th most marginalised.

The EDNH provides essential services and supports focusing on health and wellbeing, learning opportunities, employment support, social inclusion programs and building community resilience.

The effectiveness of the EDNH is severely hampered by its current location, a renovated two-storey, four-bedroom domestic home on a hillside. In 2017, during which the EDNH had more than 38,000 points of contact, the limitations of the building resulted in daily disruptions. Four years later in 2021, access and safety concerns forced the indefinite closure of the entire ground floor, reducing the operational space from seven rooms to just two.

This drastic reduction in space for the last two years means that on an average day the house is running at capacity, with activity spaces full and no room for growth. In an average week the house well exceeds capacity, needing to run programs in the car park and off-site, which is far from ideal.

In an average year, the neighbourhood house provides more than 22,000 services - in the forms of weekly activities, information support and referral, social programs, food relief, exercise classes, skill development training and events - for up to 1000 community members. All these services are provided from a building with a capacity of approximately 35 people.

Furthermore, this building is not accessible to a standard that can meet the community's needs. Many people are missing out on the opportunity to learn and connect. A new purpose-built neighbourhood house would present a transformative opportunity. Co-designed with the community, it would offer dedicated spaces for meetings, workshops, activities and learning spaces. It would allow the further development of existing partnerships with more than 240 organisations, which include job network providers, health professionals and educators.

This collaborative approach would maximise the positive impact on the wider community. The benefits extend beyond East Devonport's residents. There is a growing multicultural population, working in agriculture and service industries. The proposed facility would provide a space for new arrivals to connect, share experiences and celebrate their cultural heritage.

Additionally, compliant accessibility would enable the East Devonport Neighbourhood House to partner with NDIS providers and expand its service to a new cohort of individuals

with disabilities and mobility challenges, who, for the past decade, were prevented from accessing this crucial support.

My fellow members would agree that this project aligns perfectly with the Tasmanian government's key priorities. It supports and fosters healthy Tasmania objectives and strengthens the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing strategy. By addressing food insecurity and promoting social recovery, the project would contribute to the Food Relief to Food Resilience Action Plan and the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council recommendations.

Furthermore, the project strives to enhance equality, access and participation by providing grassroots place-based opportunities as outlined by the Community Partnerships and Priorities Division, stating for all Tasmanians to be equal, to be supported, valued, included and engaged in community life.

The estimated cost of \$3 million to bring this project to fruition represents an investment in the future of East Devonport and the greater community. With identified vacant land, and land owned by the Crown and the Devonport City Council, the project is both achievable and cost-effective. A purpose-built, accessible East Devonport Neighbourhood House would enable the organisation to effectively build and support a connected, more engaged and thriving community, providing a safe space for individuals and families, as well as service providers in which to operate, improve health and wellbeing outcomes, reduce loneliness and isolation, and deliver longer-term economic and health benefits to the community.

The East Devonport community deserves a neighbourhood house that reflects their needs and aspirations. A new East Devonport neighbourhood house would serve not only this community but also the broader Tasmanian vision of a stronger, more inclusive society. The neighbourhood house is not satisfactory for what it needs to be able to do, and it limits many people from actually attending, and with the downstairs totally not accessible it is not fair on that community. I would encourage the government and those involved to try and find the finances to help the situation.

West Coast Wilderness Railway and Mountain Heights High School

[12.09 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, before I start my contribution on my special interest matter, I also want to welcome the new members to the Chamber: the repurposed member for Hobart, with some experience, but not so much in this House, welcome and I look forward to working with you. The member for Prosser, congratulations on your election to this place. I am sure you will find it a very enlightening place to work, and we look forward to working with you. My seat buddy, the new member for Elwick, I really welcome you to the Chamber too and look forward to working with you and wish you all the best. We are all here to help. A bit like the government: here to help.

I wish to bring members' attention to a ground-breaking program on my wonderful West Coast. This program was born out of a partnership between the West Coast Wilderness Railway and Mountain Heights High School in Queenstown. It is not merely about imparting knowledge. It is about igniting passion, nurturing potential, opening doors of opportunity for

our year 10 students, and inspiring them to stay in and engage with the education system. It is the best of both worlds - trains and education.

At its core, this program aims to expose our youth to the career pathways within our local tourism industry, of which the West Coast Wilderness Railway is the linchpin. Through the eyes of the railway, it is a call to action, urging students to explore and discover the multitude of possibilities that exist within their grasp right there in their own backyard, the West Coast. It is hoped that they get a taste for their region and the railway, and that they are encouraged to do more, even if doing more means that they need to move away in the hope that one day they will come back to the West Coast community enriched by their experiences elsewhere.

It is an important journey that will benefit the young person and the community at large. This is not work experience. West Coast Wilderness Railway mentors from across the organisation visit the students and their parents in school and present them with pathways in tourism, how it was for them, how it impacted their lives and their career aspirations. The students hear about the many different disciplines that make up the West Coast Wilderness Railway. Students are then required to write a small pitch about five areas that interest them the most and then attend the West Coast Wilderness Railway for a week and spend a day in each chosen discipline with a buddy to mentor in a fly-on-the-wall scenario. They get out on the locomotives, they get mixed with cooks and chefs, they take orders and sell retail. They even get an hour at the end of the first week with the general manager, no matter what is going on - even if there has been a major issue - exposing them to real life decision-making and the pressure of this role.

The initiative traces back to the new general manager, Ian Robertson, who, drawing on his experience with a not-for-profit organisation aiding homeless individuals in Hobart to find jobs, recognised the transformative power of collaborative programs between the charity and local businesses, and what a starting point for a job can do for a person.

Inspired by the success of that program, he sought to replicate this model within the West Coast Wilderness Railway in Queenstown in the realm of education and youth, where the railway is a symbol of that community.

The West Coast Wilderness Railway stands as a testament to the resilience and adaptability of our community from its humble origins as a workhorse for the mining industry that has evolved into the cornerstone of West Coast tourism, all the while honouring that indomitable spirit of those who laid its foundation.

Today, the West Coast Wilderness Railway stands ready to impart invaluable insights to our year 10 students, offering a diverse array of work experience opportunities through its operations. From the bustling cafe front and back of house to the intricate workings of the locomotives in the workshop, from administrative tasks to commercial retail sales and property maintenance - the possibilities are endless. Working in partnership with Mountain Heights School, the program has become a reality. There's now an opportunity for young people to achieve their potential. The success of the inaugural class in 2023, with all 10 students completing their attachment with flying colours and near 100 per cent positive outcomes and feedback is a testament to the efficiency and efficacy of this program. Through personalised programs tailored to the individual needs and aspirations, the community has witnessed the West Coast students thrive and flourish.

The journey has not ended there. With funding now secured through a future partnership with the West Coast Council to enhance employability through specialised training courses such as first aid, barista skills, food handling, RSA and forklift truck licences, the students are being equipped with the tools they will need to navigate the competitive landscape of the job market.

Looking ahead, the potential to add further value to this initiative is clearly present. The prospect of securing funding for an annual apprenticeship helps students with the West Coast Wilderness Railway, made all the more imperative in the wake of the mine closures and the West Coast Connect's demise, holds the promise of cultivating much needed special skills on our local West Coast community. This program transcends mere statistics or accolades. It lies in the transformative impact it has on the lives of our youth and, through them, the community as a whole.

Members would be aware that the West Coast Wilderness Railway is a ministerial corporation which has been part of the community since the late 1890s. This community-led initiative was cemented through a memorandum of understanding between the West Coast Wilderness Railway, Mountain Heights School and the West Coast Council.

Mr President, I sincerely commend the General Manager of the West Coast Wilderness Rail, Mr Ian Robertson, for his inspiration and dedication not only to the railway but also to our youth and the broader community of West Coast. I thank the principal and staff of Mountain Heights School for their enthusiastic support for this initiative, and the West Coast Council for their willing support for such an important program.

The Chudleigh Show - 135th Anniversary

Better Health 4 Dorset

[12.15 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Mr President, before I commence my offering to today's special interest, I welcome my new seat buddy, the honourable member for Hobart. I think that you will enjoy your time in this Chamber. I can already feel how calm you are sitting next to me.

I also extend my welcome to the honourable member for Elwick. Congratulations on being elected to this House. I am sure that the people of Glenorchy are probably looking around for a new mayor as we speak. We are certainly pleased to have you with us here.

To the new member for Prosser, congratulations. It is a great honour to be in this Chamber. I know that that has not gone unnoticed by you. I wish you every success as you take your journey in the House as the as the member for Prosser and part of the government.

Mr President, I have a couple of events that I wanted to share with you today. I could not choose -

Mr PRESIDENT - You have already used three minutes.

Ms RATTRAY - so I thought I would go with two. That is why I said before I commence my special interest.

The Chudleigh Show celebrated its 135th anniversary this year. It was another successful show held on 17 February in the beautiful part of McIntyre at Chudleigh. The show was opened by Alan Cameron, a great member of the Chudleigh community. It was great to listen to his history. He always gives us a bit of history when he takes the opportunity to open the show and that is always enjoyable.

There was a record number of cattle entries this year along with the welcoming back of the lamb exhibitors, so that was good to see. The cattle handling was second to none. There were schools represented from across our state. It is a delight to see those young people who participate in those cattle handling events. I know that there will be some members here who will have them from their electorates as well.

The horse competitions were well represented. There was plenty of show jumping going on in the arena. The home industry section enjoyed overwhelming entries this year, even though we have perhaps had a dry spell, some would say. The floral work was fantastic, and the preserves and the like, which the former member for Hobart would have been talking about from the Bream Creek show, were also first class. Well done to everyone who participated in that. A similar number attended to recent years, and extensive community support for the show was displayed with cars lined up everywhere. It was very difficult to get a park if you were not there very early.

The Chudleigh Show Committee is a hardworking and dedicated group of people - president Laura Richardson, secretary Nikki Atkins, and the real treasure is treasurer Sheryl Crowden. They and their committee members are second to none. They are also very appreciative of the volunteer labour provided to them on show day from community members who graciously give up their time to ensure the long-term success of this wonderful event. Sometime in mid-February 2025, I would be delighted to host anyone who would like to join me at the Chudleigh Show. Well done to them.

Dorset, my home base, has a new organisation in town under the auspice of Health Consumers Tasmania. It is under the Healthy Tasmania Strategic Plan for 2022-26. This group was tasked with establishing community, health and wellbeing networks across the state. Scottsdale was chosen as one of them and so Better Health 4 Dorset was born.

There are 26 community members who form the Regional Steering Group and they combined with community members who make up working groups around health and wellbeing needs for Dorset municipality. They hit the ground running with kitchen round-table conversations, and had quite a lot of community input, and came up with an action plan to establish a Dorset community garden, and that has flourished. You will not be surprised, Mr President, because you know that red dirt very well. Everything grows and it grows well. That has already been a great success in the community. Actually, we need more people taking from the garden as there is an excess of goods. It has been well received by the community.

Next on their action plan is to have a better coordinated approach to community transport. As we know from our more regional areas, having community transport options is important for those who do not have the means to get around themselves, or family or friends who can take them to appointments and the like. They are working with the Dorset Community House, and that, from what I am hearing, is working quite well. We are looking forward to progressing a number of those initiatives on the action plan.

I can say that establishing the Healthy Tasmania Strategic Plan appears to be working in Dorset. I expect that there will be options to roll that program out in other parts of the state. If they want to have a look at one that is working well, then they should get in touch with the group in Dorset. From memory, it is Bec and Lou who run the show there, and they are doing a great job.

That is my offering for today. I will continue to try to challenge myself to have something interesting for members next time.

Weindorfer Memorial Day

[12.23 a.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I, too, would like to extend my welcome to the new members for Hobart, Prosser and Elwick. It is lovely to have you here and see everybody is off to a pretty good start.

It is wonderful to have Cradle Mountain in the electorate of Montgomery.

Ms Forrest - Only part of it.

Mrs HISCUTT - No, it is there. You have a look. The corner, it is there.

Ms Forrest - Do not worry, my next boundary expansion will pick it up.

Mr PRESIDENT - When I take Queenstown.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is a place which became one of Australia's first national parks in 1922, thanks to the tireless advocacy of Gustav and Kate Weindorfer. On 5 May, I was invited to give the opening address at this year's Weindorfer Memorial Day at Wilmot. It is a splendid annual event commemorating the life and work of this pioneering couple and, of course, commemorating their legacy.

The event is run by a dedicated subcommittee of the Wilmot Tourism and Progress Association. It starts with an opening memorial service and I was invited to do the official opening, for which I was extremely honoured. This was followed by a wreath-laying, candle-lighting and readings. The Mayor of Kentish, Kate Haberle, did a reading and went into the history of the Weindorfers.

There was a series of activities planned for the day which included nature walks, looking at the unique flora and fauna of the Cradle Mountain area and educational workshops focusing on environmental conservation and history of national parks in Tasmania.

This year the committee held a film festival, which was a fantastic new initiative for all age groups. Whether you are a novice or waiting to be discovered, there was a category for you. It had to be a five-minute film of any genre as long as it had a connection to the Weindorfer legacy. Categories were open for under-19s and under-12s. The filmmakers were asked to explore the profound influence of this couple on the Cradle Mountain area.

The winning films were played later in that day whilst other people hopped on buses which took them into the national park to visit Waldheim. The Weindorfers fell in love with Cradle Mountain during their first climb to the summit when Gustav declared this must be a national park for the people for all time. Gustav and Kate were so taken with the Cradle Mountain landscape that they purchased land at Cradle Mountain. Gustav toiled by hand to build their chalet, the Waldheim. It was constructed of King Billy pine found on the site. Gustaf also carried many other items into the chalet on his back, such as a bath and a stove, as no horse and cart could come within 14 kilometres of the difficult terrain.

At Waldheim the Weindorfers entertained hardy travellers and became well known for their warm hospitality. They lived by their motto, which was carved into the chalet wall. It said: 'This is Waldheim, where there is no time and nothing matters.'

It sounds lovely. I feel the story of their love for Cradle Mountain will last forever. The last chapter of their personal love story was read and the book closed only in February this year. Kate passed away in 1916 and she was buried in the Don Congregational Cemetery in Devonport, with her family expecting her husband to join her. However, Gustav passed away in 1932, which was 16 years later, and he was buried at their Waldheim chalet on the mountain. It was not until 5 January this year, 2024, that her remains were exhumed and placed with Gustav on the mountain to be together forever.

Mrs Cox, Kate's great-great niece, thanked the Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, the Minister for Parks, Nick Duigan, the Devonport City Council, Friends of the Cradle Mountain Valley and several others who helped make it all happen. Mrs Cox also said it was the love story of time and they should never have been apart. The Weindorfer Memorial Day was a huge success.

I noted that the Wilmot Hall was almost filled to capacity and heartily congratulate the subcommittee of four from the Wilmot Tourism and Progress Association: Coleen Harrison, Sandra Rowden-Rich, Phil Brumby and Kylie Tune. I say well done to them on a very successful event in Wilmot.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Inaugural Speeches

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, before I call orders of the day, I wish to make the following statement.

The first inaugural speeches play an important part in the parliamentary life of a member of parliament. They often represent a moment of achievement, a setting-off point as they step onto the parliamentary stage for the first time for some. We all look forward to the three new members' contributions whenever they so choose to do it.

As members appreciate, the convention in this place is that members do not contribute to substantive debate until they have delivered their first, or inaugural, speech.

New members are allowed to choose the time and the day they wish to make their first speech, and it can be as long as they want to make it because we do not have time limits. I was not meant to read that out, sorry.

Until such time as an inaugural speech is made, the member refrains from participating in substantive debates or the business of the Council.

Just to remind members of our practice: when a member is ready to make their inaugural speech, they generally let me know of the time and choosing and I will advise the Chamber and the Leader's Office.

In the Council, we also allow some latitude in the inaugural speeches, and allow the members to speak broadly on matters not strictly related to the question before the House or the matter under debate.

It is a time-honoured custom that when new members make their initial speech to the Council, they are heard without interjection or interruption. The corollary of these conventions and courtesies is that a first speech should not directly criticise other members or provoke interjections or points of order.

We all have to be very quiet and listen to what is said.

Members I appreciate these time-honoured traditions. However, over time, conventions have changed to allow members to participate in formal business. Just to make sure that it is on the record, new members can participate in limited debates, such as condolence motions or matters of public importance, if they so choose to, before their inaugural speech.

To this end, I am advising the Council that I will rule in order that new members may ask questions - with or without notice - and place matters of notice on the Notice Paper for future debate. That will help with the smooth flowing of our Chamber. This allows our new members, then, to participate in formal business but not substantive debate on any motion, bill or adjournment debate.

I have circulated a notice to members just to remind us all of the rules and orders of adjournment contributions. Thank you.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Continued from 14 May 2024 (page 11).

[12.32 p.m.]

Mr EDMUNDS (Pembroke) - Thank you, Mr President, for that run-down. My advice to members looking to do their first speech is to get the member for Rumney to go before you. She is quite good at filling in space while your wife drives over the Derwent bridge to get to the parliament for your speech. She did a sterling job of that after a few hiccups from me trying to do my first speech, including the loss of an appendix.

I had to speak with some brevity last week, but I welcome our members for Prosser, Hobart and Elwick to the Chamber. You have all done an outstanding job at your elections.

There has been public commentary about it, but it did not really matter what colour or not you ran under; it was whether the community knew you and trusted you. Clearly, they have delivered that trust in you to put the three of you here. I wish you all the best in your careers - perhaps this is not the right word - in the Chamber. I am sure you will all do great things.

I also wish the previous member for Hobart, Mr Valentine, all the best. I am not sure if he was committing to the word 'retirement' when I saw him last week, but however he wishes to spend his time, he was a great contributor in here. I really appreciated his words and counsel as a new member myself. I hope the rest of his time outside this Chamber is fulfilling. Perhaps not as heartfelt, I also wish the previous members for Elwick and Prosser all the best in the lower House. Someone will read that in a few years and think that was not a joke, but it was. They will do good things in the lower House. It is an exciting time for them and they get to give a second first speech.

She is playing with fire, I suppose, although I guess the member for Hobart will get to the same thing I am sure. In fact, it is more dangerous sending someone upstairs than down in that sense because there are no time limits.

I wish all the best to our new members for Franklin, Meg Brown, Eric Abetz and Jacqui Petrusma. I also wish to acknowledge the previous member, Mr Young, and wish him all the best in the next stage of his life. He is a neighbour of mine in Bellerive and our kids go to the same school. We became good friends in our time, both coming into the parliament around the same time. I wish him and his family all the best.

I acknowledge - and I know this list could get out of hand so I will confine my comments to people who I worked with during their campaign in Franklin who were unsuccessful. Kaspar Deane, Ebony Altamira, Simon Bailey, Philip Pregnell and Toby Thorpe. I wish them all the best. They are an amazing group of people; hardworking, dedicated. I am sure - whether in public or private life - they will make immense contributions.

I wish the all the best to the Premier and his new Cabinet. Obviously, we will bring different perspectives to the House. We have had an election. We want Tasmania to be performing and firing on all cylinders. I hope our new Cabinet and our Premier can deliver on some of the things that have been spoken about and turn around some of the situations in Tasmania. Pass on my congratulations to the other members of the lower House. I will not list them, simply because of their immense numbers, I think 12. I look forward to becoming acquainted with those new members, whether it is through committees or just in the hallways, et cetera. They should be really proud of themselves as our new members and everyone who gets here should be. It is a big effort and a big responsibility. We owe the House our respect and also honour the history of this place and the job we have to do for Tasmanians.

I also welcome a new leader of my own party, the Labor Party, Mr Winter. I know him from working and I am sure the member for Romney has the same view of him, being a member for Franklin and my electorate being on the eastern shore. It has been great to work with Dean in the past. He has always been a big supporter of me. I wish him all the best and will be working alongside him closely to try to present a credible alternative government when we are headed to the electorate again.

I lay out my admiration and respect for Rebecca White - to her efforts and dogged determination that she showed as the member for Lyons and the leader of the Labor Party. Her

drive - and probably her brain - are unmatched in this building. She still has much to contribute. I acknowledge her leadership and support. As a person she has been an immense supporter of mine. As an individual, but also when the opportunity presented itself to be a candidate for this parliament, she was an immense supporter for mine. I thank her for that. There are plenty of stories - although I probably will not put them in *Hansard* - where she went above and beyond as a personal supporter for me.

I speak on the Address-in-Reply. The Legislative Council changes you, member for Elwick. I thought five minutes was long enough in local government, but here we are, probably already five minutes in.

It did lay out a lot; plenty that can be agreed with. That is one of the things we talk about with members of the public. When they pick up the paper, they think we are always tearing shreds off each other, particularly perhaps in the other place. That is not really the case. We agree on a lot, and nobody gets elected to this place without wanting to see Tasmania be a great place to live and work.

As I said last week, it is not a time for resting on our laurels; but it is worth acknowledging it is not just the government that needs to pull its socks up. We all have to work to get Tasmania back on its feet. We have to work to make sure that this place is relevant and in touch with our community. Perhaps this House, with our smaller areas, does have a better opportunity to do that. However, they do have many more members downstairs now and perhaps they can get the pizza cutter out and figure out their areas - who knows?

We have challenges in this state - 5000 jobs have been lost since the two previous members went to the crossbench and we had a minority government. Statistically, a planeload of young people is leaving this state every four years. That is pretty sobering data to be presented with. I noticed when I was listening to the address in reply, there was no mention of the *Spirits*. They have become topical in the last week or so; but I found it interesting that it was not there, with the enormous potential that that investment has for this state. So, I hope that was just an oversight. We want the *Spirits* to come online. I know that tourism operators all around the state, particularly in regional Tasmania, are excited about their potential for this state.

There was no mention of the stadium or the Macquarie Point renewal either. It is time to start talking about it, rather than sweep it under the rug. Done properly, it is a big opportunity for our state as an economic driver, as an opportunity to provide local jobs, meaningful employment, both for the people building it and the economy supporting it. Considering we have an election in the rearview mirror, it is probably time to start acknowledging that it is an important issue for Tasmania, rather than not mentioning it.

Planning did not really come up, and that is something that could have been spoken about as well, considering that I expect this parliament will be dealing with whatever the developer assessment panel's legislation is going to be. That will be an immense change for this state. Again, it is better to be open and up-front about some of these things than to not have them mentioned as part of your agenda, when they clearly will be. We will see what that legislation ends up looking like.

We saw the mention of the ramping ban. I have been thinking about the ramping ban and I've been thinking about things I would like to ban. I was thinking about kids sleeping in on

school days - if we could legislate a ban on that, that would be good. Late buses would be another one I would like to ban. I am sure there are others that people can come up with, but I do wish the government all the best in trying to achieve that.

I am sure a few other people are sent these from time to time when there is the Ambulance Tasmania rosters that have the gaps in them. Not to be too cynical, but it is easier to not get ramped if an ambulance cannot show up to pick you up. I hope that is successful. I know that a number of committees have been established or are potentially to be established in this House to look into that. We do want these things to be successful because we live in this state. We are the ones who might rely on the services that it provides. When I had my emergency with my appendix you want to be looked after; and when you are, it is fantastic. But unfortunately, in our elected roles we hear from people who are not, and we do not want that to occur. I note comments about the urgent care centres yesterday, where there was one being opened and the first comment was that 'we just need more'. I hope that both sides of parliament are being lobbied for that in Canberra ahead of a possible election later this year or early next.

I listened to comments about electricity and power prices. I welcome those and look forward to our re-formed committee on energy in Tasmania. We did have a Legislative Council committee, and we had a joint committee. It might be worth taking the opportunity to put the rationale behind that into the *Hansard*. It was that we have a lot of committees in this House, and more being spoken about. In the interests of being lean and using the parliament's time more appropriately, we decided to fold those two committees into one another. It does not mean that one element has been forgotten ; it is just about a more effective use of time for committee members, and also for the staff of the parliament and the resources that we have at our disposal.

Ms Forrest - Through you, Mr President, the motion itself ensures - assuming that it is supported by both Houses - that all evidence collected to date will be taken forward, which is important for those who put hours and hours of work into that.

Mr EDMUNDS - I know the Chair of Committees did a lot of work with those stakeholders to ensure they knew that their submissions were not going to be stuck in the shredder, and that they would be held and used by the committee that will continue to operate.

In my own part of the world, I was proud that we were able to make commitments for infrastructure on the eastern shore. It is a brilliant part of the world; but when you go into some of our halls and sporting clubs, the facilities are probably from that period where we had the boom of investment tied to the bridge. There have been some commitments made from both parties for the Lindisfarne Sailing Club and its future. I hope that those come through because it is at a point where it will need that support to continue to function. Some of our bowls clubs had commitments from both sides of politics. I look forward to seeing those come to fruition.

I was a little disappointed that some of the infrastructure needs at both Warrior Park and Wentworth Park were not bipartisan. However, I am sure that with the member for Franklin being the sport minister, we will continue to be able to work on those. I was heartened by commitments from both the Liberal party and the Labor party about Clarence High School and Lindisfarne North Primary School in my electorate. You probably do not even need to live on the eastern shore to know about some of the infrastructure challenges, especially at Clarence High School. They are currently at the point where grandparents are visiting the school and it looks like it was the same layer of paint from when they were at school themselves. I look forward to those infrastructure projects being looked at forthwith; and the Warrane Mornington

Neighbourhood Centre in the hub project as well. There is a fair bit to keep an eye on in the eastern shore, and we will certainly be doing that.

With my own portfolios, I had disability, local government and planning. I will miss those portfolios, however I feel refreshed and renewed by the challenges of my new portfolios, which are finance, sport and events and racing. I want to bring disability and local government lenses to those portfolios, particularly around sport and events. Local government has a huge role to play - some might say burden - around sport and sporting infrastructure. You cannot get anything done without the support and cooperation of local government, as the Devonport City Council proved so well in the lead up to the last state election. They will certainly be intertwined. Indeed, disability and access and inclusion around sport and events is something that I will remain passionate about and will not stop talking or lobbying for on behalf of the disability community. However, I am rapt that Ella Haddad is taking responsibility for disability in the Labor party and will always try to have a good working relationship with the minister, Ms Palmer, the member for Rosevears in this House. I wish her the best with some of the turbulence that is going to come in that portfolio.

To summarise, it is a good opportunity with the new parliament - for those of us not fresh in the Chamber - to reflect on why we wanted to be here and perhaps to reset some of our ambitions. For those of us - the member for Nelson and myself, who are the next cabs off the rank - I have only a year left, possibly - how do I want to spend that time?

Also for the member for Montgomery, congratulations on your announcement. I wish you all the best over the next 12 months. I will not get too carried away as we still have 12 months to go. I read that and I thought it was well handled by the member and I wish her all the best over the next 12 months and not having the stress of going to the polls. Hopefully, that will be a good thing.

On that, I will conclude. I wish everyone all the best over the next term of parliament and the next 12 months. Thank you for your patience.

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I have the honour to second the motion that the Governor's Address be noted or perhaps it is agreed. I cannot quite remember the motion itself, but either or both.

As this is my first contribution in this 51st Parliament, I acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the original and traditional custodians of this land, lutruwita/Tasmania.

I pay my respects to the muwinina people of this land on which we are meeting, nipaluna Hobart, who did not survive European invasion and dispossession. I pay my respects to Tasmanian Aboriginal elders, past and present, and any Tasmanian Aboriginal people here today or watching today. I respect and value the connection to land and culture that is held and nurtured by the Tasmanian Aboriginal people and I express my gratitude for the opportunities extended to me to learn about, share and benefit from that connection and culture.

I also take this opportunity to welcome new members to this Chamber, the members for Elwick, Prosser and Hobart. Congratulations on your election to the Legislative Council. I know you will work hard for your communities and I hope that you enjoy your time here in this Chamber as much as I do and find the work as fulfilling and purposeful, as I think all members here do. Welcome and good luck.

I congratulate our previous members for Elwick and Prosser on their election to the other place and wish them well in their new roles there, along with the other 33 members of that place who have been successful in the recent election. Many of them are new to the roles that they hold. While I hope we will have a more formal opportunity at another time, I also recognise the former member for Hobart, Rob Valentine, whose absence many of us will be feeling. However, I trust that he is watching today from afar and he will be critiquing our contributions, no doubt. We miss you, Rob.

Ms Forrest - He should have better things to do with his time.

Ms WEBB - I am sure he is tuned in.

As stated in the Governor's Address, this parliament will be different to previous years. This parliament will require a collaborative and consultative approach, though there will be times when views differ. I could not agree more with these sentiments. I am excited and optimistic about the opportunities presented by this new 51st Parliament, particularly the opportunity to work in more collaborative ways.

The collaborative and consultative approach referenced in the Governor's Address will take courage and conviction from all those involved, but particularly from the government as it learns to lead without relying on the brute strength of a majority. This moment of opportunity to work and lead differently has come at an especially pivotal moment for our state. It presents incredible possibilities for transformative progress but on the flipside, there may be serious consequences if we fail to seize this moment. While our political environment may have changed and feel different, the challenges faced by many Tasmanians and the grim realities our state faces, which hold back our ability to thrive, remain alarmingly unchanged or in fact, in some cases are escalating.

We know our challenges: cost of living, the housing crisis, food insecurity, literacy and educational standards, increasing inequity, poor health outcomes, failing justice and corrections system, abhorrent abuse of children in this state within institutions and in our communities, the climate emergency - which we are roundly failing to respond to - and many more. The challenge now is to not allow ourselves or decision-makers around us to become desensitised to those challenges, to become immune to that suffering, to explain it away, as that is just how it is. We are presented in this 51st parliament with a significantly altered political environment. It must be seen as an exceptionally precious opportunity for positive progress, for new solutions. If there was ever a time to work against a tendency to regress to business as usual, this is it.

I listened closely to the Governor's Address delivered in this place last Tuesday and this sentiment early on in Her Excellency's Address caught my ear. She said, 'Tasmania is now a growing state with a story to tell,' and as our Tasmanian Aboriginal fellow citizens and others would tell us, storytelling provides an important and powerful thread, linking past, present and future. Storytelling provides opportunities to reflect, to learn and to share experiences, sorrows, joys, fears and aspirations.

Some people's and some sector's stories are well reflected in the Premier's agenda set out in the Governor's Address but others not so much. We need to seize this opportunity to also hear and tell the diverse ranges of stories of those not represented in the government's priorities outlined in last week's speech. I cannot claim to do so comprehensively here and now.

However, I can make a start. All of us in this place can accept responsibility for ensuring as best we can all Tasmanian stories are heard and represented here.

I shall start with stories perhaps of unfinished business. I have spoken in this place on many occasions about the ongoing, profound and long-standing unsettled debt of Tasmanian history with our Tasmanian Aboriginal community and the custodians of this island, lutruwita/Tasmania. Given that, it is with great sadness and disappointment to note that the government's agenda, outlined by Her Excellency last week, did not once mention reconciliation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal people; no mention of truth-telling nor treaty in lutruwita/Tasmania. It was a shocking silence that spoke volumes.

Almost exactly three years ago, in the Governor's Address made in this place in June 2021, at the opening of the 50th Parliament of Tasmania, it was announced that Professor Kate Warner AC would lead a process to understand directly from Aboriginal people themselves how best to take Tasmania's next steps towards reconciliation. It has now been two-and-a-half years since the Pathway to Truth-Telling and Treaty report undertaken by Professor Warner, Professor Tim McCormack and Fauve Kurnadi was tabled in this parliament on 25 November 2021. As we will all recall, the important report provided a vital ground-breaking step forward in our understanding of the depths and longevity of those unsettled debts in our state.

The report set out a clear and urgent imperative action, which makes it even more astonishing to note that in the current context of continued stalled progress on measures in closing the gap, coupled with the profoundly disappointing and hurtful result of the Voice to Parliament referendum in October last year, we have been presented with an echoing absence of mention of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people in either the Liberal Government's 2030 plan or the government agenda outlined in the Governor's Address to open this 51st Parliament.

Last year, in the Premier's address we heard reiterated the government's commitment to the Pathway to Truth-Telling and Treaty report, including a brief update on progress. Yet, here we are 12 months later with the government's agenda presented in the Governor's Address with not even a mention of treaty and truth-telling, let alone an update on progress. It appears very difficult to find any public update on the government's progress on those recommendations from the Pathway to Truth-Telling and Treaty report.

I would hope that we all deserve an update on that front and that we hear from the Government soon in some manner to update us on progress being made on the 23 recommendations from that report.

I know many in this 51st Parliament, across both Chambers, are committed to progressing truth-telling and treaty with the Tasmanian Aboriginal people of lutruwita/Tasmania. I see an opportunity for real engagement and progress and I invite the Rockliff minority government to embrace that opportunity.

Further, I recall that while the Premier Mr Rockliff accepted and eventually acted upon the 2020 House of Assembly Select Committee recommending the restoration of numbers in the other place, and I acknowledge the work by the current member for Hobart in chairing that committee in her former capacity, there was a second recommendation in that same report, which stated:

Recommendation 2: That a Joint Parliamentary inquiry be established in this term of Parliament to develop a preferred model that provides for dedicated seats for Tasmanian Aboriginal people in the Parliament.

Mr President, that particular term of parliament has long gone. However, it is clearly unfinished business that this current parliament must address, along with the ongoing unfinished business of truth-telling and treaty.

Moving on to other unfinished business that I would like to touch on, although it did receive one cursory sentence in last week's speech, the commission of inquiry is still very much a story of unfinished business for so many Tasmanians, particularly those seeking answers when it comes to the responsibility and accountability of those who either enabled or perpetrated horrific abuse against our most vulnerable, our children and young Tasmanians.

It is unacceptable to now seek to solely focus on the government's implementation plan in the absence of those answers so desperately needed. We are hearing a lot about healing and moving forward, but for many Tasmanians, that cannot happen without certain answers, without knowing that those responsible for their pain and trauma and the pain and trauma of their loved ones, has been clearly identified and accountability taken. The failure to provide straight and comprehensive answers is to leave victim/survivors who bravely came forward to tell their stories, with the last pages cruelly left blank.

Answers, transparency and accountability form the foundations required before healing can truly begin. And, surely Tasmanian victim/survivors and their supporters deserve that.

Despite its intentions, the Blake review did not provide the State Service with a clean bill of health and in fact, raised more questions than it answered. The Woolcott Review is currently seeking public submission, so may not be in a position to provide its initial report for some time.

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

QUESTIONS

Clarence High School - Infrastructure Upgrade

Mr EDMUNDS question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER

At the last election, both parties of government made commitments to fixing the ageing infrastructure at Clarence High School to the tune of \$29 million. Can you provide any information on a time line for these works to occur at Clarence High School?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for the question. I am going to take that question on notice so I can bring those details back to the House at the earliest opportunity.

Education and Skills - Investment

Ms RATTRAY question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER

[2.32 p.m.]

In the recent Governor's Address it was stated that there will be an \$8.9 billion investment in education and skills. I expect that will be well received. It indicated that over the next six years, 16 more schools will be upgraded as part of the school building blitz. Is it possible to have a list of those 16? I might not need to have a meeting with you any time soon if one of my schools is on the list.

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for the question. I will also take that question on notice and I will do my best to come back to the House as quickly as I can with that. I would still very much like to meet with you to discuss the two schools that you have raised.

Questions on Notice - Previous Parliament - Tabled and Incorporated

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - I seek leave to move a motion without notice relating to answers to questions on the last notice paper of the last session of the 50th Parliament.

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Mr President, I am not necessarily opposed to the motion, but if there are members who have questions, it cuts into question time here.

Mrs HISCUTT - I am not going to read them out. I am just going to table them and incorporate them.

Mr PRESIDENT - I guarantee that we will not cut question time short.

Leave granted.

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

That the following answers to questions that were on the notice paper of the last session of the 50th Parliament be tabled and incorporated into *Hansard*.

As members know, they are questions that have already been answered during the session, so we need to get them into *Hansard*. I have question 40 from the former member of Hobart talking about the docking of nuclear-powered vessels in Tasmanian ports. I have question 45, the member for Murchison about Huon Aquaculture. I have question 49 for the member for Murchison, retail pricing set by the Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator. Question 50 from the member for Pembroke, local government development applications and Fire Services Levy. Question 54, member for Pembroke, for the local government non-compliance or offences under the act.

- Question on Notice - Mr Valentine - Docking of Nuclear-Powered Vessels in Tasmanian Ports - see Appendix 1 on page 73.

- Question on Notice - Ms Forrest - JackJumpers and Huon Aquaculture - see Appendix 2 page 76.
- Question on Notice - Ms Forrest - Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator - Retail Price Setting - see Appendix 3 on page 79.
- Question on Notice - Mr Edmunds - Tasmanian Local Government Areas - Development Applications - Fire Levies and Charges - see Appendix 4 on page 81.
- Question on Notice - Mr Edmunds - Local Government Act - Complaints - see Appendix 5 on page 85.

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Can I ask is that the entire suite of outstanding questions on the notice paper? I recall that the member for McIntyre had a question relating to timber resources. If I can get a clarification and if not, I will follow that up and put it on again.

Mrs HISCUTT - Can I ask the member to please put it on again? We will try to look for it. I do have others but not that one.

Lindisfarne North Primary School - Infrastructure

Mr EDMUNDS question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER

[2.35 p.m.]

I am happy for this question to be taken on notice as well, but I will ask more questions of the Education minister.

At the last election, both the Liberal and Labor parties made commitments to fix infrastructure at Lindisfarne North Primary School to the figure of \$7.35 million. Can the minister provide a timeline or any other information for these works to occur at Lindisfarne North Primary School?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for the question. I will take that on notice and obtain that information for you as soon as I can.

Libraries Tasmania - Opening Hours

Ms LOVELL question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER

[2.35 p.m.]

I congratulate the minister on her appointment to this portfolio and I look forward to working with her on this from opposition. I have already had a very good start to that, with a very open and proactive approach from the minister, which I appreciate.

My question is in relation to the recent review of library opening hours, which I understand was to look at the option of opening some libraries over weekends to enable increased access.

You have recently confirmed publicly no library will have a reduction in opening hours to facilitate any change in the opening hours of any library, which is a very welcome clarification, but can you please confirm whether additional funding will be or has been allocated to Libraries Tasmania to resource additional or changed opening hours?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the shadow minister for education. I think we are going to have a wonderful working relationship, based on the relationships that we establish here in this place.

It is an exciting time for education in Tasmania, with two of us who are really passionate. We have kids and we care deeply for the educational status of children across the state. I look forward to having more discussions with you and working together.

I appreciated you reaching out when it was in the media - about the situation with our libraries. It was good to be able to put on the record, although I had to put it on the record three or four times - certainly not with you, but in the media, to make it very clear. I know there was some discussion on it and a paper had been presented. I had no intention of seeing the reduction of hours in any of our regional libraries.

It is on the cards to look at the information supplied through the review done by Libraries Tasmania. I will be looking at what they are putting forward and looking at whether it does need more resourcing or whether it is something they already have a plan for within their own resources. It is a priority for us and we will be meeting with them shortly.

VET in Schools

Ms RATTRAY question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER

[2.38 p.m.]

I omitted to congratulate the member for Rosevears on her new appointment and thank the member for Rumney for reminding me. Congratulations on your new portfolio areas.

I think you might have retained minister for Women? You lost Women and you have gained Disability; congratulations.

My question is about the announcement in the Governor's Address on behalf of her government on VET in schools. It talked about school students currently studying VET in our schools, about 20 per cent of senior secondary students. In the past, we used to have VET coordinators in our schools and they did a fantastic job. They were gradually taken out of our schools until there were no longer any coordinators to arrange for students to have placements. Is this something that will be re-purposed by the minister or is it going to be a new approach to having VET in schools with an increase or a goal to increase this by 50 per cent by 2030?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for the question. Yes, we have made a commitment and we want to see that increased in our schools because we know how important it is for our workforce. The detail of that and the work that now begins on it from an operational point of view is how we look at doing that. The department is collaborating with Jobs Tasmania, Skills Tasmania and the Youth Network of Tasmania, Regional Jobs Hub Network and key stakeholders in the development of a youth jobs strategy. It will support young people to successfully transition into further education, training and work. It will be a very interesting space to be working in.

Supplementary Question

[2.42 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY - I appreciate the response from the Minister for Education. Will there be somebody in the school who will take on that coordination role? Teachers in our schools are already at the maximum of the work and effort they can do. Who is going to be the coordinator, or is there a coordinator's role in each school to facilitate this? When you are talking about partnering with peak bodies to design and implement vocational learning to have an opportunity to see what the various industries are, then somebody has to coordinate that at the school level when you are talking about years 9 and 10. That is what I am trying to drill down into.

Ms PALMER - Mr President, I thank the member for that supplementary question. The details of how this will be rolled out is being worked on now. I can assure you, on the record, that in the few weeks that I have been Minister for Education, I have had numerous conversations with principals, teachers, teacher aides, and those on the ground who are doing an almighty job working in our schools. I am very aware of the pressure that they are under. We need our teachers to be teaching literacy and numeracy. That is where their focus needs to be. In all the discussions that we will be having in this space, that will be a very clear focus of my -

Ms Rattray - And not coordinating where a student will go and do work experience?

Ms PALMER - We will be looking at all of this from an operational level and working through those details. I assure you it is through that lens of ensuring that our teachers are free to be able to do what they have trained to do, what they want to do, and what our students need them to do.

Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area - 2020-21 Budget Funding

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

[2.44 p.m.]

With regard to the \$10 million of funding allocated initially in the 2020-21 State Budget related to the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area under the Minister for Parks portfolio, could you please provide a breakdown of:

- (1) the allocation/expenditure of all funding spent to date, including:
the purpose of each of these funding allocations
the dates of each allocation
- (2) the amount of any residual funds, including any approved or proposed purposes for these funds.

ANSWER

Mr President, I ask for it to be tabled. It would be easier to understand, but I will read part of it.

- (1) The current budget allocations by sub-project as endorsed by the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area Management Committee held on 1 October 2021, are outlined in this particular table, which I will seek to be tabled shortly.
- (2) As noted in the above table, \$730,000 of the \$10 million commitment is yet to be allocated to specific projects. Allocation of these funds will occur in consultation with the APCMA, which is the Arthur-Pieman and Conservation Area Management Committee, as the project progresses. The allocation will be reviewed upon completion of the West Coast Off Road Vehicle Strategies. As per the 2023-2024 State Budget, funds for this project are allocated across the forward Estimates with the final year of funding currently allocated for 2025-2026.

Mr President, I seek leave to table this particular table and have it incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area - Funding Allocation - see Appendix 6 on page 88.

Road Safety Issues

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

[2.46 p.m.]

In a letter from the Australian Driver Trainers Association (Tas) Inc, which was sent to all Tasmanian members of parliament in April, they asked the following questions regarding road safety, driver training and education.

- (1) In February 2024, the Liberal team announced that every Tasmanian school student from years 9 to 12 would receive driver education.

Is this every Tasmanian school, including private schools as per the Strong Plan for safer roads statement?

When can Tasmanians expect to see this implemented?

Will it be expanded to younger years, including primary school age children?

Will this include instruction on safety for pedestrians, cyclists, skateboarders, scooter riders and other similar forms of transport?

Will it include specific input from professional driving instructors, including defensive driving and car safety and maintenance?

- (2) Will resources be made available to people who become learner drivers after school? Will there be an adult education program for mature-age learner drivers?
- (3) What was the rationale for removing the L2 driving assessment as it appeared to provide learners with the opportunity for early intervention to break bad habits formed during their formative learning months?
- (4) Will the government consider making it compulsory for international drivers temporarily living in Tasmania, i.e. temporary residents for study or work, to show an understanding of Tasmanian road rules?

ANSWER

Mr President, the Tasmanian government's election commitment will focus on a new In School Driver Education Program to be delivered in partnership with the Road Safety Advisory Council, (RSAC) and the Royal Automobile Automotive Club of Tasmania, (RACT). It dedicates \$8 million over five years to delivering comprehensive driver education in every Tasmanian school for students in years 9 to 12.

- (1)(a) Yes.
- (1)(b) The program time line is yet to be determined.
- (1)(c) No. However, the government funds a separate program for primary school children. By starting this new education program in year 9, the program will commence before students obtain a learner's licence and embed safer road attitudes from the start.
- (1)(d) The program content is yet to be determined but the aim of the program is to provide comprehensive evidence-based learning resources to ensure all young people are educated in all aspects of road safety, including vulnerable road users.

- (1)(e) The government will work in collaboration with the RSAC and the RACT to determine potential input from stakeholders.
- (2) The program is proposed to target students in years 9 to 12. It will not include an adult education program for mature-aged learner drivers. However, the government provides several existing resources for mature-aged learner drivers.
- (3) Driving assessments were removed in April 2020 in response to the declared state of emergency during the COVID-19 pandemic, to allow learners to progress through the licensing system while no assessments were able to be delivered. The Tasmanian graduated licensing system (GLS), aligns with the enhanced model under the Australian Graduated Licensing System Policy framework. There is no evidence to suggest that a two-stage learner period should be preferred over other models and the framework does not make a recommendation on staging a learner period or having multiple on-road assessments.
- (4) A person with a temporary visa can legally drive in Tasmania under their current overseas licence without the need to undertake any assessment of their knowledge of the Tasmanian road rules. This is consistent with other Australian jurisdictions. The RSAC and Department of State Growth have produced several safe driving resources for international drivers. Road safety information is also provided in hire cars and at popular tourist destinations. Short videos promoting important road rules are continually being screened on the large electronic screens at the Hobart airport. International students and visiting seasonal workers are also provided with road safety information via campaigns with the University of Tasmania and many of the larger agricultural businesses - which I can attest to, having talked to some of those before.

Conversion Practices - Release of Submissions

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

[2.51 p.m.]

Noting the Justice Miscellaneous (Conversion Practices) Bill 2024 was released for public comment prior to the 23 March state election this year, and that the bill proved controversial, not least because its many exemptions appear to allow almost all conversion practices to continue, and recognising that the release of submissions has a proven practice of helping inform public debate, does the government intend to publicly release all submissions to the consultation regarding the bill? If so, when?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for the question. The Tasmanian government submissions policy applies to all submissions made by the public, or by public or community organisations, when departments seek feedback from the public via a broad public consultation process in relation to major policy matters and proposed legislation.

Under this policy, the default position is to publish all written submissions received by the public, unless confidentiality has been requested by the submitter or an exemption applies. The policy can be viewed on the Department of Justice website at www.justice.tas.gov.au/about-us/consultations.

Submissions made during the public consultation period on the draft Justice Miscellaneous (Conversion Practices) Bill 2024 will be made available on the Department of Justice website once consideration of the submissions has concluded. This is outlined on the consultation web page and is standard practice for all Department of Justice consultation processes. Generally, the submissions are made publicly available about the time the bill is tabled in parliament.

It is intended that the Justice Miscellaneous (Conversion Practices) Bill 2024 will be tabled later this year.

Commission of Inquiry - Government Responses

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

[2.53 p.m.]

This is a question that was on the notice paper last year and now we are going through the process of putting it back on. I received answers across the summer but this is the opportunity to put them into the public domain. With your indulgence, Mr President, I ask for people to understand that they are probably seen as a bit out of date but at least it puts it into the public domain now.

With regard to the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Response to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings and the Attorney-General's commitment announced on 17 October this year, which is now last year -

Mrs Hiscutt - Before you proceed could you please give us the number?

Ms WEBB - It is smudged but appears to be 55.

- on 17 October last year to establish an independent review into whether public officers who received a grant of legal assistance during the commission of inquiry acted in good faith or whether they should be required to reimburse the Crown:

- (1) What is the process and criteria by which the promised 'suitably qualified and independent person' will be selected?

- (2)(a) Will the independent reviewer be selected from outside the state of Tasmania; and
- (2)(b) if not, why not?
- (3) What is the expected commencement date for this independent inquiry and its expected time frame of operation?
- (4) Will the government commit to making the independent review's findings and any recommendations public upon completion?

I note in the speech I began before the lunch break, I have already referenced this inquiry as being underway. I am aware we are now a little out of date, but I would particularly like to have these details on the public record, especially question 4.

ANSWER

Mr President, the answers are as follows:

- (1) The government has considered a number of suitably qualified and independent persons who could undertake this role. It is desirable that the individual is legally trained and has experience within government settings or the practice of public, industrial and administrative law.
- (2)(a) As recently announced, Sam Tatarka, OAM will be undertaking this important work.
- (2)(b) Mr Tatarka, OAM is from Victoria.
- (3) It is anticipated that this review will commence prior to the end of 2023 and report in early 2024; however, these are matters that are still subject to negotiations with Mr Tatarka.
- (4) The government will commit to making as much of the review public as is permissible by law.

Granville Harbour - Telecommunication Tower

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

[2.57 p.m.]

In the absence of the Minister for Parks and Environment, I understand the Leader has not answered this question for me.

With regard to the construction of a telecommunication tower in the Granville Harbour area as part of Telstra's commitment to regional Australia under the federal government's Mobile Black Spot Program, I am informed delays to commencement are due to matters related

to the Parks and Wildlife Service. Since I submitted this question to Mr Duigan, there has been more movement, which is a positive thing.

My questions are regarding any delays related to PWS as opposed to Telstra:

- (a) What is the reason for these delays;
- (b) Have these reasons now been addressed to enable construction; and
- (c) What is the revised timeline and date for completion and becoming operational?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for her question. I will answer on behalf of the Honourable Nick Duigan.

The Telstra communication tower at Granville Harbour has followed a standard assessment and lease application process undertaken by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Services.

The communication tower is located on Mount Heemskirk Regional Reserve and therefore must follow the Reserve Activity Assessment process. The RAA was completed in May 2023 and Crown consent was issued for the development application to be lodged with the West Coast Council.

Following receipt of the planning permit, Parks and Wildlife Service worked with the Office of the Valuer General and the Office of the Crown Solicitor to prepare the lease agreement.

Telstra provided Parks and Wildlife Service with a revised site plan on 5 May 2024 to be included in the lease agreement. The lease agreement was executed on 16 May 2024, enabling the tower to be built, once Telstra has met the agreed conditions under the lease. Telstra is responsible for the works schedule and for the tower becoming operational.

Montello Primary School - Funding Allocation

Ms FORREST question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER

[2.59 p.m.]

Before I ask my question of the Minister for Education, I will also congratulate her on taking on this very significant portfolio.

One of my first phone calls after the election to congratulate her, particularly on being Minister for Education, was to raise a long-standing concern I have on behalf of my community of Montello, about the inadequacy of the current funding allocation to upgrade Montello Primary School, to make it safe, accessible, fit for purpose and contemporary, just as every school should be.

The minister was expecting my call and committed to visiting Montello Primary School immediately after the school holidays to see it in action. She also promised to invite me to this visit. I did not receive the invitation, but I know she has visited. My questions are:

- (1) Following your visit, minister, will you ensure additional funding is provided to ensure all requested and necessary works can be included and completed on this long overdue upgrade?
- (2) If so, how much extra funding will be allocated and when? If not, what are you suggesting is cut from the essential plan to meet the budget?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for the question. Yes, I did make it a priority to get to Montello Primary School. I have been hearing about it in this place for a number of years now and it was a fantastic visit.

Ms Forrest - My spies were out.

Ms PALMER - You do not need spies. You can just ask me directly at any time, as you did in a phone call.

It was great to meet with Dion McCall, the principal, and Emma Short, the business manager, who joined us. We had a great opportunity to tour the school and have some intimate time to talk about the journey that school has been on. As you know, the construction tender has gone out for the redevelopment. I am advised it went out on 27 April and look forward to seeing the results of the tender as they come back in. We do not know how that will come back in. It did go out to tender as the full scope. I am very interested to see -

Ms Forrest - The full scope as requested by the school and the principal there?

Ms PALMER - I believe so, yes. That is what I was advised when I -

Ms Forrest - Including all the necessary components?

Ms PALMER - That is what I was advised when I asked that question. When that tender comes back, I will certainly be taking a very close look at it. Funding has been committed. Then there was another amount put on top of that. I was really moved by the passion and the advocacy of the principal and the business manager. They were very open and frank about the situation the school is in. The great thing is when that tender comes back in, I will be able to see very clearly in my head exactly the spaces they are talking about. But, until that tender process goes through, I cannot really answer any more of your question because we do not know what it will come back as. I have already displayed they are on my radar. I have certainly let the department know they are on my radar.

Ms Forrest - I do not give up. You know that. On behalf of the school, I will never give up.

Ms PALMER - You do not need to give up. You have been a great advocate.

If I could have the indulgence of the House, we are at time but I was wondering if it would all right if I could read out the list of schools for major upgrades that have been committed to as part of the \$188 million commitment. I have been able to access some information for you. I have the list of the 15 schools that are part of that \$188 million bracket. That is not inclusive of funding that has been committed to the North-West Support School and other aspects in the education area.

The 15 schools and inclusive of the redevelopment of Dodges Ferry Primary School, which is the 16th - I will get you a list so you do not have to frantically write these down: Burnie Primary School, Campbell Town District High School, Clarence High School, Deloraine High School, Dodges Ferry Primary School, Havenview Primary School, JRLF-East Derwent Primary School, Lindisfarne North Primary School, Mowbray Heights Primary School, Port Dalrymple School, Princess Street Primary School, Ringarooma Primary School, Risdon Vale Primary School, Rosetta Primary School and South George Town Primary School.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from above (page 24).

[3.04 p.m]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, before the break, I was speaking about the Tatarka review into whether legal fee payments to state servants appearing before the commission were warranted or not. It is apparently underway, but no update has been forthcoming from the government. Although, I received some belated answers to questions just now during question time, we are still not sure when the report will be completed.

The Weiss review also into the Paul Reynolds matter is scheduled to be made public by the end of June. I hope when it is made public it is in its entirety, with as little as possible redacted. Yet there remain many gaps the government could be filling in the meantime, the most glaring being that Ashley Youth Detention Centre should be closed now, not in 2026. In August last year, the commissioner's closing statement asserted the following:

It is our view that the Ashley Youth Detention Centre should be closed as a matter of urgency.

Three years to deliver that outcome is not acting as a matter of urgency.

Another clanging silence amongst the government's stated list of priorities in the Governor's Address was climate change. I am sorry, but I just cannot fathom the government's apparent ostrich head-in-the-sand approach to the climate change emergency. Somebody needs to tell the ostrich that the seas are rising and that insulating sandbank may not be there for very much longer. A recent article published in *The Guardian* on 8 May 2024 reported that:

Hundreds of the world's leading climate scientists expect global temperatures to rise at least 2.5 degrees C (4.5 degree F) above preindustrial levels this century, blasting past internationally agreed targets and causing catastrophic consequences for humanity and the planet.

I have previously stated in this place that the climate change emergency is a social justice issue as much as it is an ecological one. They are intrinsically intertwined. In fact, the United Nations refers to climate justice, which recognises how climate change will exacerbate and entrench structural and socio-economic inequalities and intergenerational inequality. For example, things many of us take for granted - access to healthy food, clean water, heating, cooling - will all become more expensive for those who can afford it least. According to the same article in *The Guardian* from 8 May, climate scientists are angry and scared at government inaction globally:

Many of the scientists envisage a "semi-dystopian" future, with famines, conflicts and mass migration, driven by heatwaves, wildfires, floods and storms of an intensity and frequency far beyond those that have already struck.

Numerous experts said they had been left feeling hopeless, infuriated and scared by the failure of governments to act despite the clear scientific evidence provided.

"I think we are headed for major societal disruption within the next five years," said Greta Pecl, at the University of Tasmania. "[Authorities] will be overwhelmed by extreme event after extreme event, food production will be disrupted. I could not feel greater despair over the future."

Five years, before there is major societal disruption. If that is not an emergency, then I do not know what is. Do we honestly believe we are prepared for that prediction? That could be the next term of government, presuming the current one goes a full term.

I call on the government to urgently reconsider and reinstate a dedicated minister for climate change as a standalone portfolio. Further, we need to incorporate climate change benchmarks into reportable dashboards across all applicable sectors, and that includes: environment and biodiversity; agriculture, marine and freshwater ecosystems; forestry; housing and construction; transport; energy and waste; domestic water supplies; planning; liveable urban environments; food security and cost of living - to mention a few examples.

A key takeaway from that climate science article is that an immediate way Tasmania could and should be acting on the climate emergencies is by protecting our unique forests, our native forests. As respected Professor David Lindenmayer AO, who is based at the ANU in Canberra and is a world leading expert in forest and woodland ecology, resource management, conservation science and biodiversity, said:

While there are many sources of emissions, it is only native forests that can remove carbon from the atmosphere at the scale and time required. Protecting and restoring native forests is a critical mitigation action if Australia is to meet its net zero emissions targets within the critical one to three decades.

In one fell swoop of a pen, ceasing the senseless logging of our native forests means we immediately protect our vital carbon banks, our lifeblood waterways, many threatened species from extinction, as well as reduce cataclysmic bushfires we have seen escalate over previous decades.

I reiterate my earlier call, along with a range of community stakeholders, for a comprehensive independent root-and-branch inquiry into the Environment Protection Authority, to ensure it is effectively delivering on its statutory roles, and also meeting community expectations in protecting and preserving lutruwita/Tasmania's treasured natural environment. Much more could and should be said on this. Suffice to say, the climate change story is being written whether we turn a blind eye to it or not. If we want to play a constructive part in that narrative - and I hope we all do - then we need to seize this rapidly shrinking moment and urgently make up for lost time.

Mr President, I spoke earlier on the unique milestone which has undoubtedly strengthened our parliament - the restoration of the assembly to 35 members. As stated in the Governor's Address, this parliament will be different from previous years and manifestly so, on so many levels. To quote again from Her Excellency's speech:

Tasmanians are fortunate to live in a democracy where they are free to speak, free to believe and free to vote - without fear.

Nobody could argue with that. We are indeed very fortunate. However, as events around the globe have thrown into stark relief, we cannot afford to take such good fortune for granted. Democracy can be surprisingly fragile.

As the current custodians of this place, we have a collective responsibility to not just ensure this parliament proves functional and effective, we must also invest in strengthening our democratic frameworks and good governance systems.

Community stakeholders have made it very clear they expect this parliament to undertake those strengthening measures. As members may be aware, earlier this month the Susan McKinnon Foundation, a non-partisan public interest entity, released its *Charter of Tasmanian Government and Parliamentary Reform 2024* document. It makes nine recommendations, spanning more rigorous political donations disclosures, strengthening our RTI laws and introducing truth in political advertising, to mention a few of its proposed reforms.

The Australia Institute Tasmania also released this month its discussion paper *Democracy Agenda for the 51st Tasmanian Parliament - Options for Reform*. This paper presents 16 key areas for reform.

Similarly, the CPSU Tasmanian Branch released its Integrity Roadmap for the Tasmanian public sector. This report offers seven recommendations by which to address eroding public trust.

In fact, we have multiple entities coming forward to provide guidance on strengthening the integrity of our democracy and governance, making it clear this is an expression of both the need and the appetite that there is in the community to do so.

Mr President, I will take the opportunity now to flag that at the conclusion of my contribution, I will seek leave to table the three documents I have just mentioned. I believe it is appropriate to do so, as they are all addressed to this parliament for action by this parliament.

There are certain key areas of democratic reform that I believe we must seize the opportunity presented by this new collaborative parliament to prioritise, including through the following that I will briefly mention.

Firstly, political donation disclosure laws and boosting the rigour of political donations disclosure laws passed last year are a key area of unfinished business in this place. We must now move to reduce the disclosure amount to \$1000, introduce donations and expenditure caps for Assembly elections, as well as introduce truth in political advertising laws. Both the Australia Institute and the McKinnon Foundation reports emphasise the need for these reforms. Additionally, we need to address the lack of equity in the provision of public funding provided for in the current laws across both Chambers - a democratic flaw also identified in the Australia Institute report.

The second essential democratic reform I would highlight is fixed-term elections. I previously called for the introduction of fixed four-year terms for the House of Assembly. Tasmania is the only state without this provision, despite former premier Ray Groom introducing it for one term in the early 1990s. As a matter of interest, both the Prime Minister and the federal Leader of the Opposition have indicated their in-principle support for fixed four-year terms for the Commonwealth parliament, which would leave Tasmania as the national outlier in this regard. As stated by the recent McKinnon Foundation charter document, the introduction of fixed four-year terms would promote certainty, support longer-term policy development and remove the advantage that incumbents have in choosing an election date for partisan purposes.

The third reform that I will briefly mention is to prioritise the establishment of a joint standing committee on electoral matters. Members will be aware I have long called for this parliament to have a joint standing committee on electoral matters, as occurs in the Commonwealth parliament as well as both NSW and Victorian parliaments.

I will not go into further detail now as I have tabled a motion to that effect in this place and am in discussions with members about it. However, it is worth pointing out that this reform is called for by the Australia Institute in its Democracy Agenda Report and is publicly supported by other election experts and analysts.

A final measure to mention under this democracy banner is some further integrity measures which would shore up public trust and also the structures of our democracy. The ones I will point to most pertinently and which I would regard as no-brainers, as per the colloquialism, include: legislating the lobbyist register and code of conduct as recommended by the Integrity Commission and developed carefully by the commission over the last couple of years; implementing the grants reforms recommended by the Integrity Commission and the work that they have put into the research papers on that topic in order to prevent pork-barrelling at election time; and the implementation of the Environmental Defenders Office's 12 recommendations to strengthen our right to information laws presented in the report that they prepared last year.

I am also calling for an immediate review of our so-called whistleblower laws, the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2002*. This is brought into sharp relief by activities at a federal level at the moment where whistleblowers are being jailed. We should be protecting whistleblowers and our laws are in need of review and updating.

While this may seem a big agenda of democratic reforms, this 51st Parliament presents opportunity and also exists within an appetite in the community and in members of this place to undertake this work. Indeed, having restored the numbers of the House of Assembly to provide a more functional parliament and stronger democracy, it is a natural extension to attend to these structural mechanisms to ensure that outcome is delivered.

Also on the topic of integrity, there has clearly been growing disquiet regarding the effectiveness or otherwise of the Integrity Commission's capacity to deliver on community expectations of what it should or could do. I do not intend to repeat those concerns here now in great detail. However, I place on the record that I share some of those concerns and believe that it is timely for there to be an independent and comprehensive review of the Integrity Commission's current legal framework, and whether it is fit for purpose.

Of equal importance to restoring public confidence and trust is to strengthen transparency and accountability of complaints and potential misconduct within Tasmania Police. I note here that, relevant to this topic, just today in the other place, the Bugg report, the independent review of the use of surveillance devices in prisons, has now been tabled. I have not yet had the opportunity to read that report in detail, but I welcome its completion and its publication. It is being made public today. We will look forward to seeing what lessons can be learned from that investigation.

Ms Forrest - It was tabled here, too.

Ms WEBB - Was it?

Ms Forrest - Yes. I have a copy of it.

Ms WEBB - Regarding restoring that public confidence and trust about complaints and potential misconduct within Tasmania Police, I am calling for an appropriately resourced, empowered and independent police oversight authority to be established within the life of this parliament. Such an authority should have a mandate for holding police accountable for potential criminality and misconduct, and driving cultural change through that accountability.

I acknowledge the hard work undertaken by our police force, often in tricky, if not dangerous, circumstances. However, recent episodes, including but not limited to the Paul Reynolds matter, have raised serious concerns and crises of confidence within both the community and for some serving police officers. Internal investigation is now perceived as self-regulation, and that does not cut it for many people, further entrenching distrust and eroding confidence. This in itself is unfair to the many police officers with unblemished records. The time for self-regulation of police is long over. It is in the public interest and it is in the interest of all police officers for there to be an independent police oversight authority in this state.

In February this year, I undertook a study tour of New Zealand's parliament, with a specific interest in its integrity and ethics models and frameworks. This was an incredibly interesting and informative process. A key takeaway for me was the role and contribution made by their independent public service commission. There are lessons in that model for Tasmania, as there are in models from other states, such as the Western Australia Public Sector Commission.

Of course, Tasmania previously had an office of the state service commissioner, which was abolished in 2013. I note that in the recently released Blake Review, recommendation 9 of that review states that government, or the head of the State Service, initiate a review of the decision to abolish the state service commissioner model in 2013. I cannot claim an in-depth understanding of why the commission was abolished in 2013, but Blake notes that it was a policy decision of the government at the time. I have heard reflections that that abolition was perhaps the easier option pursued at the time rather than a re-examination of the appropriate functions of such a commission and a recommitment to appropriate funding of those functions. However, the decision may have been a false economy and we may have thrown the baby out with the bathwater in abolishing the commission. Given the considerable governance failures and poor practice identified by the commission of inquiry, I second the comment that is made by Mr Blake in his report that:

It has now been more than 10 years since this change was made and I believe it timely for the success or otherwise of this to be evaluated in comparison made with practices in other jurisdictions.

This echoes comments also made by Dr Watt, AO in his independent review of the Tasmanian State Service where, in relation to the abolished office of the State Service commissioner, he noted, 'The option of reinstatement, should however, be kept under consideration'.

Before I move on from integrity matters, I am looking forward to attending in July this year the Australian Public Sector Anti-Corruption Conference hosted in Darwin by the Northern Territory's Independent Commissioner Against Corruption. This conference will hear from Australian and international anti-corruption experts on risk identification and management, emerging trends, innovative approaches to combat corruption and heightened workplace integrity systems. There will be plenty to learn from there and you can be sure I will bring some of that back for discussion.

I have covered some key matters of unfinished business and some opportunities to strengthen our democracy and governance. Now to highlight some areas for reform as opportunities in this 51st Parliament. As coincidence would have it, this week we are celebrating Law Week. Yet, it is surprising how silent the government is on its legislative agenda.

I have already mentioned some key areas of law reform, but others I would hope are also on the government's top priority list include moving on its promised Expungement of Historical Offences Amendment Bill. This is a significant acknowledgement of the serious impacts of past laws that criminalised male-to-male homosexuality, the discriminative nature of these laws and the harms they caused. Expungement is important to set an appropriately inclusive time for all Tasmanians, crucially through these laws we must also include financial redress recommended in the 2020 independent review of *Expungement of Historical Offences Act 2017*.

Another long overdue law reform I am hoping the government is prioritising, is its redrafting the proposed laws to implement the promised ban on conversion practises, as recommended by the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute Report No. 32, released in April 2022. I hope we see a response to the community consternation at the draft bill proposed so far, and a reassessment and redrafting of that bill more in line with the TLRI report.

Speaking of the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute, members may recall in late April this year the TLRI released its update report on a Charter of Human Rights for Tasmania. This timely report recommends that:

... the laws in Tasmania be reformed to provide and promote specific, better, and accessible protection for human rights through the enactment of a Tasmanian Charter of Human Rights or a Human Rights Act.

This is the second time the TLRI has made this strong recommendation. The first time being in 2007. The latest report also recommends, amongst 21 recommendations, the establishment of a parliamentary human rights scrutiny committee, a human rights unit and a human rights commissioner. I will not detail all 21 recommendations here now, but it is clear this parliament must seize the opportunity to write this part of our history. It is long overdue. It has been 17 years since we were first told Tasmanians deserve to have their human rights formally protected via legislation. I also flag my intention to seek to table, at the conclusion of my contribution, the TLRI's update report on the Charter of Human Rights to Tasmania, dated April 2024.

Another topic which is not just an opportunity to reform but given its urgency, could as easily have been discussed as unfinished business. Lutruwita/Tasmania faces significant fiscal challenges which are now looming. We have been alerted to this by independent experts such as economist Mr Saul Eslake, and strongly by members in this place, such as the member for Murchison who speaks on it regularly. We know our state cannot rely on business as usual to meet the significant fiscal challenges we face. We will need to take the politically awkward action of reforming Tasmania's taxation and revenue base. Therefore, we have an opportunity in this 51st Parliament to plan and take these politically awkward actions together as a product of collaboration. We can seek to share the political risk, rather than seek to avoid it or use it as a weapon for political self-advantage.

The call for structural reform of the state's taxation base and revenue streams is not new, nor is it a challenge only faced by Tasmania. We know from Treasury's own modelling that the need for reform is pressing. We cannot continue to keep putting this fundamental work into the 'too hard basket.' We all know we cannot rely upon pulling the same tax and revenue levers just a little harder, when those levers cannot keep up with the needs and the priorities of Tasmanians.

We all know in this place, plain as day, that robust taxation reform for our state is now desperately overdue and necessary, to ensure the sustainability of Tasmania's overall fiscal position. Many times we have been warned by Saul Eslake and others, that fiscal sustainability for our state cannot be attained solely by relying on economic growth or by other single solutions such as constraining health expenditure, or public sector efficiency, dividends, and the like.

It is certainly a nonsense for any government claiming to have a 2030 Strong Plan for our state that such a plan appears completely devoid of thorough structural reform of the state taxation and revenue base. I reiterate the call I made in this place after the 2021-22 state budget, that we must have a comprehensive, independent review to our state taxation and revenue system to ensure it is as robust as possible and pulling appropriate levers to drive necessary sustainability, while improving fairness and efficiency.

I propose, in this 51st Parliament, with its new collaborative atmosphere, there is an opportunity to establish an independent expert panel, commissioned by parliament to undertake a review into state taxation and revenue reform. It is finally time to pull off this bandaid.

I will move on to another topic of which I am fond, and I believe presents us with a significant opportunity for reform, one that I am happy to be an active contributor to progressing in fact, and that is the topic of our privacy legislation and protections in lutruwita/Tasmania.

In late 2019, I made a referral to the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute, which was accepted by the TLRI board in December of that year. I asked the TLRI to inquire into and review and report on:

The current protections of privacy and the right to privacy in Tasmania and any need to enhance or extend protections for privacy in Tasmania;

The extent to which the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004* and related laws continue to provide an effective framework for the protection of privacy in Tasmania and the need for any reform to that act; and

Models that enhance and protect privacy in other jurisdictions in Australia and overseas.

I thank the TLRI for continuing with that referred project, especially through a difficult time of constrained funding in recent years, which delayed the progress for a while. After the release by the TLRI of an excellent issues paper for comment on the topic in March 2023, I very much look forward to the culmination of their work in a final report.

The issues paper identified that there is no comprehensive privacy regulation in Tasmania. Rather, privacy protection is fragmented across different laws that protect different types of privacy in different specific circumstances. Further, that despite Tasmania's *Personal Information Protection Act* being the state's primary privacy framework, it said 'there are multiple gaps in its scope, operation and enforcement that can jeopardise privacy.'

I anticipate the final report from the TLRI will provide an excellent roadmap for reform and improvement in our legislative architecture relating to privacy, addressing those noted gaps and fragmentation and bringing an opportunity for better privacy protection for our fellow Tasmanians.

Another area which some members here will recall I have raised and will continue to raise is the need to incorporate, as an automatic part of any assessment of government policy-making, the rigorous and informed use of a gender lens. Whether it is in discussions on matters ranging from public transport routes, through to construction, prioritised investments or boosting our workforce - an effective, rigorous and consistent application of a gender lens on all areas of policy is an integral to a just, fair and equitable Tasmania.

Currently, Tasmania's chapter in this regard looks a bit like the least liked part of the government's homework. It is a bit tatty - a scribbled note in the margin of an unformed draft, where an assessor would comment 'more application is required'.

There are many opportunities for collaborative work on improving this area. I believe there are members across both houses of this place who would be more than happy to look at contributing to that work.

Mr President, I welcome the commitment made by the Premier as referred to in the Governor's Address, that:

... the new government's decisions and actions to be taken in the best interests of the state and to be a government that listens to all Tasmanians.

I welcome that commitment. Too often over the last few iterations of government we have seen deaf ears turned to many sectors and groups within our society, notably many vulnerable Tasmanians. Too often we saw decisions made which were arguably in the best interests of the government, and more specifically the party in government.

I am focused in my contribution today on opportunities presented by this new 51st Parliament, and I am not going to get bogged down in detailed critique of the government's 2030 plan. There will be a budget reply speech during the year for that.

In the spirit of optimism on opportunities before us, I acknowledge and welcome a range of government initiatives and commitments outlined in the Governor's Address, which I see as positive and welcome for the Tasmanian community, including the electorate of Nelson. For example, the energy bill relief for households and small businesses to be provided this winter will be a tangible assistance for those struggling to cover the basics.

The halving of bus fees and fares and Derwent River ferry fares from 1 June will be an important support to those on low incomes relying on public transport. It is also a welcome incentive to make public transport a more attractive option for all and assist us in reducing transport emissions.

Having mentioned ferries, I note the exciting announcement of three additional ferry terminals, including one in Sandy Bay, which is of course at one end of the Nelson electorate. I look forward one day to celebrating an announcement of a further expansion of the Derwent River ferry service to also link Kingston, the other end of the Nelson electorate, into the current routes. I hope that is part of the planning.

I welcome and applaud the continued support and extension of the Healthy School Lunches Program in schools. This may seem a small matter, but it is an essential. It is a matter of not just supporting the educational outcomes of children attending school by ensuring that they have full bellies while they are there, but it is also especially important for overall wellbeing and will flow back into families and into communities as a positive impact.

I also celebrate the continued commitment to building 10,000 more social and affordable homes by 2032. That is an ongoing move in the right direction - in particular, the target of at least 2000 specifically social housing homes by 30 June 2027.

Other housing initiatives that are positive include the enhanced MyHome program, around home ownership; the Private Rental Incentive Scheme being boosted by an extra 200 properties, and incentives to switch properties from the short stay market into the private rental market. These efforts are not enough, and it is unfortunate that other housing policies

will work to exacerbate from the other side rather than ameliorate the housing crisis in lutruwita/Tasmania, but I am not delving into detailed criticism today. There are some good initiatives there.

It is excellent to see four new Child and Family Learning Centres being added to the existing network across the state. These are beautiful facilities and effective community-based support for families and children during early years. We are certainly excited to see the Saltbush Child and Family Learning Centre being built in Kingston, and due to open this year. It will be a wonderful addition to the Kingborough community.

Staying on the topic of supporting Tassie children, I welcome the announced Early Years Workforce Fund which includes scholarships and incentives to attract and retain early childhood workers, speech pathologists and psychologists. These are sorely needed positions in this state.

It is excellent to see the commitment to implement evidence based structured literacy in all schools, including phonics and a year one phonics check for all year one students. This provides the opportunity to make a generational change in our literacy levels in lutruwita/Tasmania.

Health is an enormous task for any government in this state. I note this government continues to seek new initiatives and solutions to tackle the multitude of challenges it presents. I particularly note efforts announced in the Governor's Address to improve access to GPs, which we all know is an urgent issue. While health announcements overall still have the feeling that we are desperately sticking our fingers into the cracks in the dam wall, I know there are many with expert knowledge and experience working to develop better policy and investment approaches in this area. I hope and trust that the government is listening to those experts. At budget time we will certainly delve more deeply into that space.

This government continues to focus on developing vocational education and training opportunities. With the need to ensure workforce availability in our state, that aligns with the government's future infrastructure plans, which they also layout in the Governor's Address. Both these areas important in planning for a future in which lutruwita/Tasmania can thrive. Before I conclude, I seek leave to table the reports I mentioned earlier in my remarks.

Mr PRESIDENT - I am advised that many of the documents are public documents already, but the call is yours.

Ms WEBB - As many documents tabled in this place. I am just tabling them to be associated as they are directed to this parliament, be part of the parliamentary record. I seek leave to table the documents.

Leave granted.

Ms WEBB - Mr President, thank you for your indulgence and for the support of others.

Clearly there are many other areas we could include in the discussion here. However, I am aware of time and the patience of others, which I appreciate. Instead, I will conclude my comments by reiterating the optimistic welcome I give to this 51st Parliament.

I genuinely hope to see and contribute to positive opportunities in the term of this parliament, especially the opportunity to progress reforms that require collaboration and may otherwise be too politically challenging. We are all involved in writing history here, writing the next chapter of lutruwita/Tasmania's story. Posterity will judge us if we continue to write the same old preferential treatments and silencings and absences. I hope we may seize this moment in all its potential for the benefit of all Tasmanians. I note the Governor's Address.

[3.37 p.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, I rise today to observe the Governor's Address, having represented this wonderful electorate in the Legislative Council since 2011. Having commenced this new parliamentary term, I am filled with optimism and also mindful of the challenges we all face together as Tasmanians, and the ones which are specifically affecting people in my electorate.

First, I commend the government on its re-election. I congratulate the ministers in this place on their appointment and again welcome the Legislative Councillors for the electorates of Prosser, Hobart and Elwick on being elected and trust they feel embraced and supported as they join us in representing their communities.

I note in Her Excellency's Address that the government has many initiatives it is promoting in the weeks and months ahead for our families, our children and our young people. I know how especially important it is to keep our young Tasmanians engaged in their education and to provide access to healthy food for lunches and breakfasts.

Education is the cornerstone of growing up, and nourishing our youth, both academically and physically, is essential for their development. The commencement of the Healthy School Lunch Initiative and the continuation of breakfast clubs in schools across the state will give many families much-needed cost of living relief and ensures that children have access to healthy options that will help them to grow and succeed at school.

Providing support to people who work with our children is just as important. I am pleased to see the government's plans to provide scholarships and incentives to attract and retain early childhood workers, speech pathologists and psychologists to work and live in Tasmania. I know this will help our young families feel supported as they move through the formative stages of life.

I also recognise the importance of attracting visitors from the mainland and overseas to our beautiful island. By offering enticing opportunities for work, study and family life, we can invigorate our economy and foster a sense of community that extends beyond our shores. Indeed, the north of Tasmania boasts its own unique charms from our relaxed way of life to our pristine natural environment.

We are not only a few hours' drive from pretty much every area in the state, we're only an hour's flight away from the mainland. To this end, we need to ensure that we are providing people with safe, affordable and reliable options to get around our cities and around our state, and this includes reliable and affordable access to things like buses.

I was disappointed to learn recently that the shuttle bus between Launceston and our Launceston airport was no longer operating. I understand it was a private service and I believe that the owners had tried to sell, but were looking to retire. I have taken this on and made an

approach to Kinetic. I am very pleased to say that Kinetic is looking into the issue of a shuttle bus and will be meeting next week with management from Launceston airport. I am pleased to see that, with just a phone call to them, they are looking at providing a service. Whether they do or not, it will come down to a few different areas.

Ms Rattray - I wonder if Mr Bruce Potter has free time.

Ms ARMITAGE - I do not think he has enough time to drive a shuttle bus regularly, but I have noted and I did mention it to a very nice gentleman from Kinetic, with whom I have been speaking, that Hobart has a wonderful bus service to the airport running every 30 minutes with two buses. I hope that the other end of the state could be similarly served it would be very good. It was really pleasing to say that they took my call, they phoned me back, and I have been in communication with them. They have taken the step to meet with Launceston Airport next week to discuss it. I am pleased to see that something is at least being looked at.

I might also add, I have spoken with the Minister for Transport, who did not feel that it came under the purview of the state government. I am about to write to the Premier as the Minister for Tourism, because I believe that something like a shuttle bus from an airport to a city when not everyone has the availability of getting a hire car, or has family, and there are not that many taxis and Ubers in the north of the state at this time. We will just see how it goes.

Housing affordability and rental accessibility remain persistent issues as they do in many regional communities across the country. Meeting the ever-growing demand for housing supply is not going to be an issue that will be fixed any time soon. It will take ongoing effort, likely over many years, to get families into affordable homes and to keep our construction sector able to provide services to people who pay for them.

In addition to these challenges, we must also focus on providing cost-of-living relief to our constituents. No individual should have to choose between basic necessities such as heating or eating. It will take ongoing cooperation across the local, state and federal government sectors, and a strong determination, to weather challenging economic conditions and sensible policy decisions to keep the momentum going strong. It is our responsibility to alleviate financial burdens wherever possible. I note that several policy initiatives are being implemented for more homes to be built and to have existing dwellings in the rental market through incentivising owners to shift from having short-stay accommodation to longer-term rental properties.

Tasmania's property market invariably requires a mix of homes for purchase, homes for rent, short-stay, social housing and a myriad of other types of living arrangements to make sure that residents have plenty of options when it comes to finding a place to live. I am looking forward to finding genuine solutions to the issues people are facing in today's property market and hope that we can find positive outcomes soon.

Additionally, attracting and retaining essential professionals such as teachers, doctors and social workers is crucial for the wellbeing of our communities. We must create settings that are conducive to their success and fulfilment, ensuring that they feel valued and supported in their roles. I know the government has a number of policies to address this, but the sooner we get more talented professionals into the state and working with Tasmanians, the better.

The health sector is particularly important in this regard. A high reliance on agency nurses, locums and interstate specialists not only costs significant amounts of money, but means that Tasmanians have fewer options when it comes to choosing how to manage their health.

I acknowledge the terrific work that is being done in the Launceston community to service the northern region, including the Launceston Health Hub, which continues to expand and provide more services and options to its patients. The Bubble, a woman's and mother's service speciality, which recently won the Business of the Year in the Launceston Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards, continues to find better and more innovative ways to treat mums and bubs to give families the best possible starts in life.

I am also pleased to see the recruitment blitz for paramedics hopefully is recruiting 78 new paramedics and 51 new full-time paramedics over two years, and 27 community paramedics over the next four years. It has been said, and it is true, that paramedics are the real-life heroes and can be the difference between life and death. They are the first person who is called. Transferring patients within 60 minutes into the ED, while I understand the need for that and how it takes the pressure off the paramedics, I also see how it puts extra pressure on the nurses in the ED. We are just going to have to see how it goes because obviously, there is a reason that people have been ramped in ambulances because of the stress and the pressure in the EDS and whether the nurses are available and there to actually cope.

It is also important to encourage young people and families to settle in Launceston. It is crucial to create incentives for those born here to remain. The challenge of retaining younger residents has intensified over recent decades, highlighting the necessity of offering compelling opportunities for work, education, investment and family life within our region.

Losing our brightest talents would be a significant loss, especially when we have abundant opportunities available here. One thing which Tasmania has and few other places can boast is our precious, pristine and world-renowned environment. Tasmania's environment is a treasure trove of natural wonders characterised by vast wilderness areas, unique flora and fauna, and UNESCO World Heritage-listed sites. From rugged mountain ranges to pristine coastal habitats, Tasmania's diverse landscapes captivate visitors and residents alike.

Recognition of Visitors

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, while you are captivating visitors, we have some visitors captive in our Chamber. I welcome to the Gallery today the University of Tasmania International Pathway students. Welcome to the Legislative Council.

We are currently noting the Governor's Address. We have recently had the Opening of Parliament and that is attended by the Governor, who gives an address. Members in the Legislative Council then give their reply to that address. At the moment the member for Launceston is giving her contribution.

On behalf of all members, I welcome you to the Legislative Council today and hope you enjoy your tour of the parliament.

Members: Hear, hear.

Ms ARMITAGE - Mr President, preserving our natural environment and enhancing our infrastructure is paramount. We must prioritise the cleanliness of our urban areas and enhance the acceptability of our roads, ensuring all members of our community can navigate our region safely and efficiently. Cleaning up the kanamaluka/Tamar River and giving our residents a chance to enjoy our recreational areas is also integral to having pride in where we live.

I also hope to gain a better understanding of how the government is planning to manage the construction of a new bridge across the Tamar River. I understand \$80 million has been promised, which the Liberals have promised at the previous two elections. I am keen to hear more details on what exactly this \$80 million is slated for. Is this going towards more studies, feasibility papers or more consultancy? The need is very much there for a second bridge and constituents ask me about it often.

We know a second bridge will better service northern communities, transportation and provide better connection to both sides of the kanamaluka/Tamar River.

A bit less focus on consultancy and a bit more on consultation would also be highly welcomed, particularly where bridge height and placement are concerned. The government would be well served to consult with river users, boat organisations and associations. While the second bridge will provide enormous benefits, there really is there really is only one chance to get it right and I would urge ongoing discussions with river users as the business case for the bridge progresses.

At the end of the day, the longer we leave it, the harder it will be to get off the ground. I implore the government to follow through on their promises and avoid spending too much time and money on studies and consultancies and actually make a start taking particular note of the opinions of the river operators and sailors in the process. The northern economy community and road and river users will be so thankful.

As representatives of our communities, we must uphold the values of transparency, accountability and responsibility in our governance. We must always prioritise the needs of our constituents, above all else, advocating for their rights and interests, even if it means being a voice in minority or dissent. Keeping our public services, agencies, utilities, councils and government open and accountable is a priority for every member in this place. Looking after my constituents is one of the most satisfying things about my job, and standing up for them and their rights against those who are more powerful, better resourced is one of the reasons why I am here.

We must also celebrate the diversity of our communities and strive to create a welcoming environment for all, particularly new Australians and those without family support. By supporting civic events and initiatives, we can foster connections and promote inclusivity within our communities without necessarily reflecting on the other place. I note the importance of having independent, unaffiliated members in our parliament. Being chosen by one's electorate is both a huge honour and a huge responsibility to bear. One must remember that you serve not only those who voted for you, but those who did not. Everyone deserves a voice in Tasmania and it is up to us to speak for all those in our electorates.

It is a privilege to serve in this place. We owe our constituents and each other the obligation to work collaboratively, to make lives better for Tasmanians, to disagree and

compromise when we need to, and to ensure that we live up to the high expectations our community has of us.

I note the Governor's Address and I look forward to our new parliamentary term.

[3.51 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I congratulate the government for the speech prepared for the Governor. I believe it is possibly the first speech in this parliament to be prepared by AI. AI is such an amazing tool. If you feed in a wish list, instruct the ChatGPT bot to access every possible motherhood statement in cyberspace and press the button and what you will get is what the Governor read out last Tuesday.

My comments are not a reflection on Her Excellency the Governor in any way. As we know, she reads out what the government gives her. She would have been more likely to use the word electrician rather than 'sparky' if she had the opportunity to alter the speech in anyway, let alone all the other bits. It really was an amazing speech, completely disconnected from the reality facing us. There were no details whatsoever to our current fiscal position and not one mention of where funds will be coming from to do everything listed.

It continued the pattern of the election campaign, which highlighted a conspicuous lack of discussion about our current budgetary position. The only thing that mattered was pitching proposals for more spending. No consideration has been given as to where the funds are coming from. The Liberals were silent. The Labor Party's fiscal strategy was an absolute disgrace - a polemic rant that did not address any of the issues. I do not know if anyone took the time to read it but I would not bother. The Greens did not even bother with the fiscal strategy. The Jacqui Lambie Network went one better; they did not even trouble us with any policies.

So here we are, back in the land of the living, picking over a speech by what could and likely was prepared, at least in some part, by a ChatGPT bot. There was nothing particularly new revealed in the speech. It was more a wish list one would hear at an election campaign launch, not a program from a government entrusted to govern for another term. I expected more detail from the party in charge of the last 10 years, which must be aware of every challenge. Even an indication of the plan to address these real challenges, the so-called 'strong plan', but no. Nothing.

It is not as if we have been ambushed by our fiscal problems. They have been evident for a long time now. The reality was revealed for all in the revised estimate report in February 2024 and confirmed by the pre-election Financial Outlook Report a couple of weeks later. What was revealed there is that we are spending more than we are receiving in revenue. In the current year 2024-25, there will not be enough operating revenue if capital grants are excluded to cover operating expenses, especially once the funds in the supplementary appropriation bill before the House currently, are spent.

This does not include interest on loans and payment for unfunded superannuation for retired members of the defined benefits scheme. It does not even include that. Interest this year is expected to be \$128 million, possibly more, given the supplementary appropriation bill had not been factored in. Unfunded superannuation payments are expected to be \$352 million. That is another \$480 million that needs to be borrowed. That is right - another \$480 million that will need to be borrowed.

Then there is what the government plans to spend on capital expenditure. Fortunately, we do get federal government grants to cover almost half the capital expenditure costs, but we still have to come up with the other \$590 million from our own funds. That will mean another \$590 million in borrowings. Then there is the cash that needs to be put into government businesses - another \$317 million to be borrowed, according to the revised Estimates report. I am not making this up; Mr President, it is all in Treasury reports.

There is no respite on the horizon. The forward Estimates suggest lower cash deficits in future years, but that assumes the \$300 million in budget efficiency dividends can be found. Even if they are discovered, one can only guess where the \$1.4 billion in election promises are - to fund and build a stadium, for example.

On the other point, we are yet to hear any more details of the government's plans for Macquarie Point 1.0. It was originally planned for the Macquarie Point Development Corporation to oversee the planning and delivery of the stadium. Stadiums Tasmania would become the owner and operator. That is clearly outlined on the Macquarie Point Development Corporation's website. However, a couple of weeks ago, there was talk about a new public/private partnership arrangement with Plenary Partners when Cox Architecture was granted a design contract for almost \$40 million - for exactly what, we are not quite sure, but part of the \$715 million stadium budget, we are assured. I will have a question about that later - but do not get alarmed folks, 'it is all under control'.

If this really was the case, why would you not tell us how we are going to do all this; or do we have to start asking directly? The answer is probably 'yes.' There are a few questions that I will follow up at another forum; but who are Plenary Partners and what are they doing? Just sniffing around? Or has the government started doing deals with them and signing agreements with them?

I thought the regular meetings with the Jacqui Lambie Network members would have already ensured a steady flow of information as to what is happening. Not yet. I have not detected any noticeable change in the amount of information that is coming out.

Getting back to the specifics of the Governor's speech, there was one matter that I thought I detected a change in the wind. I note from the speech - and it is a shame the minister for Energy is not here, although I appreciate he is unwell - it said:

In recent years, Hydro has drifted from its foundational principles. Hydro will return to those foundational principles with a new Ministerial Charter and directive that Tasmanian prices and Tasmanian jobs must come first.

What exactly does that mean? It is a shame the minister is not here to answer the question, but I am sure he will have an answer when he comes back at a later time. I am sure he is watching what I have to say. What are the foundational principles? I hope that the minister does get the opportunity to reply to the Governor's Address at a later time so he can make it clear what that is. The old Hydro built and owned generation facilities. The speech goes on to say:

Hydro will be directed to partner with energy generators to build and deliver energy products to market that benefit Tasmania.

That is not returning to the foundation principle, is it? That is what they did. It sounds like public-private partnerships are going to take over power generation, as well as the stadium. I ask the minister, who is probably listening: is that the case, minister? Is that what we are talking about here?

The biggest problem with public-private partnerships, as we all know, is that government ends up with the losses and the privateers end up with the gains. If you do not believe me, just have a look around the country to see how they mostly pan out. It does not make much sense, from my perspective, for the government to borrow to make losses alongside a private partner who borrows and makes profits. That is the classic problem for government borrowing for infrastructure. Not enough importance is given to getting a return for government. Most of the returns accrue privately.

The speech at one point said:

We shall keep our economy strong so it can deliver the infrastructure and services Tasmanians need and deserve.

We can only deliver the infrastructure and services Tasmanians need and deserve, if we get a return when we spend funds to improve infrastructure and services.

Will the stadium satisfy the government's Strategic Action No. 9 in their Budget papers - part of the government's fiscal strategy?

Sitting suspended from 4.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from above.

[4.31 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, before the short break, I was asking a question about whether the stadium will satisfy the government's strategic action No. 9, part of the government's fiscal strategy, which is about the minimum cost-benefit requirements needed before a project proceeds. This is the government's own strategy; they were advised a number of years ago, as you probably recall. No-one yet has made it clear whether that will meet that strategy. Obviously, it is a matter that can be followed up at later time later this year with the Budget, because it will again be referred to there.

The revised Estimates report said, in February, that the standards are still being developed. I ask, how is that going? Can you give a green light to a project if you are yet to develop the standards by which the project needs to be judged? If a public-private partnership results in the government bearing the losses and the private sector making the profits, then how will the government be sustainable? Did we not learn that lesson from Basslink? If a public-private partnership results in the government bearing losses and the private sector making profits, then how will the government be sustainable? One thing is crystal clear, if the private sector cannot make a guaranteed return, then they will not become a partner. Because the government has shown its hand on this whole matter, it is not in a good bargaining position

right now. We also know that they are perhaps not the best negotiators going around when making deals with our money, if the AFL agreement is any guide.

In this negotiation, everyone knows that the government is not even holding a pair of twos. He will not be able to bluff anyone, and it all suggests that we are about to get screwed. What has been interesting in some respects, and quite disconcerting, is the recent commentary about Tasmania's unfair treatment by the federal government.

The Treasurer, Michael Ferguson, and representatives of his party at the federal level, have chosen to point the finger at the Commonwealth, which is handing out grants to states, for the alleged mistreatment of Tasmania. Mr Ferguson accused the federal Treasurer, Jim Chalmers, of leaving Tasmania off the fiscal map, saying that state requests for funding for the Launceston General Hospital Masterplan, the Greater South East Irrigation Scheme and the Burnie Court Complex have fallen on deaf ears. Those are his words.

I argued in a recent *Mercury* opinion piece that this was a bogus proposition, as those grants will be quickly clawed back via reduced GST distribution. Senator Duniam reportedly called out the 'unfair' decision to exempt the Brisbane Olympics sporting infrastructure from GST calculations, while the Macquarie Point stadium was not being afforded the same treatment. He said the move was 'a crippling blow' to Tasmania's finances. With GST flows being the state's single biggest source of revenue, we are getting ripped off, he reportedly added.

One of the biggest advantages Tasmania has enjoyed is having a body like the Commonwealth Grants Commission determine the way the GST pool is distributed between the states. It has been a blessing, particularly for Tasmania, to have a clear set of rules predicated on the unquestionably fair desire to see all states being able to deliver equivalent services to their populations; and being a small population state, that is critical for us. Whether we, as a state - or any state - spend that to deliver equivalent services to their population is another issue. The Grants Commission's remit is to give every government equally the opportunity to do so.

What is the alternative, if we just ignore that, as is being suggested? A sports rort, as was perfected by the Morrison government perhaps? Introduce a spreadsheet with colour-coded electorates to replace the system based on revenue-raising ability and measurable need. The latter, a system based on revenue-raising ability and measurable needs, is what the Commonwealth Grants Commission does. It is a fair system, and it has served Tasmania remarkably well. The idea that we will be better off if specific purpose grants are not considered when splitting the GST pool is based on a flimsy understanding of how it works.

I asked members to imagine for a moment that all specific purpose grants were quarantined - grants like Macquarie Point Urban Renewal funds, for example - and quarantines not considered during the Commonwealth Grants Commission's assessment of our relativities. Tasmania would get a lesser share of the GST pool. If all specific grants were quarantined, Tasmania would get a less share of GST. That may sound counterintuitive, but it is true. Tasmania would get this lesser share because the GST is divided. A chunk is given to states to square up after specific purposes or grants are assessed.

More specific purpose grants, including national partnership payments, work out at roughly to be the same on a per capita basis. I am not saying they are done on a per capita

basis - it is far more complicated than that; the basis for each grant varies. But taken as a whole, specific purpose grants work out roughly equal per capita basis across the Commonwealth.

If specific purpose grants were instead allocated based on the Commonwealth Grants Commission assessed relativities, states like Tasmania would receive more. Hence, states like Tasmania get a top-up, sourced from the GST pool, to square it up.

This is complicated. It is hard to understand. There are not many people who fully understand it. I certainly do not; but there are people in our Treasury who do. I have worked very hard to try to get my head around it and we have had our Committee A look at this in the past as well. I am saying that we get a top-up of untied funds to use as we like to square that away, and Tasmania's a recipient.

We get about a \$1.80 at the moment, for every dollar, because of our relative disabilities.

GST funding is untied - we use it for what we decide as a government through parliament and ultimately through the budget process. These are funds used for healthcare, education, public safety, et cetera. We surely will want more of that. A crucial point in understanding the system, is that if all specific purpose payments were quarantined - in other words ignored by the Grants Commission - Tasmania would get a lesser share of the GST pool. What some of the Liberal members are asking for - including the Treasurer here - is for us to get a lesser GST share out of the pool. I am not sure he is actually asking for that, but that is the implication of what he and other members have been saying publicly. There would be less to square up and we would have less of a share of the GST pool that is untied funds to the state.

Ms Rattray - There is no way you can split those two buckets or items?

Ms FORREST - The GST pool is the whole system that works. I will come to that more and it might make it a little bit clearer. It is clear as mud for most people. I honestly do not think many of those arguing for these grants to be quarantined realise this reality. Otherwise, I am sure they would not be asking for that.

Why would you essentially demand we get a lesser share of the GST pool based on how it works? The more grants are quarantined from the GST assessment, the less of the GST pool we will receive. It is a squaring away after those things are. That is why the specific purpose grants are not quarantined, except in exceptional circumstances. There is a whole paper on the Commonwealth Grants Commission website if you would like to have a look and happy to forward to anyone. That includes the treatment of the Brisbane Olympics.

Ms Rattray - Is that called an exceptional circumstance?

Ms FORREST - It is a national and an international event, so considered differently. It explains how and why. For those arguing for grants to be quarantined, they are actually playing a risky game. For me, it is dumb politics. It is white-anting a system that has served us well. It is not a wonder the Department of Treasury and Finance in the submission to Committee A's inquiry into the horizontal fiscal equalisation was unequivocal when it stated in its submission. This is on our website:

Treasury does not support the quarantining of Commonwealth payments except in exceptional circumstances.

We have had some exceptional circumstances and I will come to those. However, as a corollary, if more specific grants are handed out by the Commonwealth that are not quarantined, we will receive a bigger share of the GST pool as a larger top-up, because that will be needed to give us the fiscal capacity to deliver the same service as the other states.

If anyone wants to go back and read this afterwards to make it clear in their heads, it is counterintuitive to start with, but the more grants there are, the bigger the squaring away and the top-up needs to be for small states like Tasmania who have a greater level of disadvantage. Again, that might sound counterintuitive but it is how it works and there is a lot of fantastic information on the Commonwealth Grant Commission website if you are interested in learning more about it. They do write in an accessible way on an obviously complex topic.

Those agitating for the Commonwealth to spend less on specific purpose grants need to realise that this in turn is more likely to lead to a lesser share of the GST pool coming to Tasmania to achieve the principles of horizontal fiscal equalisation and balance the gap. I cannot think of any reason, apart from dumb politics, why we cannot have a nonpartisan agreement to do all we can to support the current Commonwealth Grants Commission approach.

The preferential treatment of Western Australia has had a deleterious effect on the integrity of the system. We should not be suggesting making it worse. Claiming that the non-quarantining of the urban renewal grant or any urban renewal grant is ripping off Tasmanians is not much different from Western Australians claiming they were being ripped off by receiving a lesser share of the GST pool than they might have been entitled to without their mineral riches. If mineral royalties rise, Western Australia's GST share remains unaffected. The extra pay to Western Australia ends up being a quarantined grant as part of the deal that was made with Western Australia.

How can we rail against the injustice of Western Australia? I must admit I do, from time to time. Being handed a quarantined grant each year but at the same time claiming they should do it for us. If it undermines the system, why would we undermine it further? It seems that our memories are short. Tasmania has done well over a number of deals done that saw large amounts of money granted to the state quarantined. This is those 'exceptional circumstances'. Whether other states agree with them or not, we certainly agree with them because they were extraordinary.

The first one that I will bring to members' attention is the \$735 million Mersey money, we call it, that was provided by the federal government to last 10 years to run the Mersey Community Hospital. It was received seven years ago and it was fully quarantined. That was received, transferred over to TASCORP to manage it, so it did not create a huge blip in the government's financial reports. That will run out in 2026-27. Then what? Not quite sure what will happen then, but that is a matter for Treasury and the Treasurer to exercise their minds.

There was also the \$200 million or thereabouts for the restructure of the forestry industry about 12 years ago via the Identity Governance and Administration (IGA) process that was quarantined. Now some may think that was a poor decision, but for Tasmania it was an important decision and one of the reasons they actually managed to get the deal up, in my view.

Too much quarantining would cause the downfall of the whole system and we would effectively end up with a sports rort with colour-coded spreadsheets.

The sports grants are not specific purpose payment. They fall into the COPE category, which stands for Commonwealth Own Purpose Expenditure. The Commonwealth Grants Commission does not consider COPE amounts; they are excluded. With hindsight, this was a loophole that allowed the Morrison government to utilise the sports grants methodology, knowing it would not affect states' GST shares. A loophole created that. Maybe it should consider those payments under COPE payments. It might make it fairer. It certainly was not very fair when that happened, if members remember correctly.

It is important to be careful of what you wish for. As elected members, we must seek to understand how the system works and how it benefits Tasmania before seeking to undermine it. It is disappointing when our own Treasurer's comments effectively undermine it.

The Governor's speech stressed the need for certainty. The government should practise what they preach. The people have elected quite a different-looking parliament and other members have spoken about this. It will take goodwill from all sides to ensure the people of Tasmania are well served.

We need the government to be much more open and transparent. For example, why was the extra \$80 million to TT-Line for the new vessels not actively disclosed? We all understand the pressures facing all those in the construction sector, from houses to boats or ships. Cost increases, staff and skill shortages, supply chain challenges - it is not news to anyone. I sincerely hope the government is true to its word and its partners and the Jacqui Lambie Network members and proactively provides the truth about the state of the state's finances and other matters, including not tucking away \$80 million off to a government business, easy to hide away, and wait for someone to uncover it, to lift the rock and think, 'oh hello'. We should not have to do that. I will not hold my breath, but I will hold the government to account.

I do not intend to raise many other matters in this reply. There will be many other opportunities to do this. Before I move on to my final point that I want to discuss, I want to acknowledge the contribution of members who are no longer in this House, who have gone to the other place, particularly the former member for Hobart who has retired. He was watching today because he started texting me as soon as I quipped about that. He said it is a bit hard to step away entirely, and it must be extraordinarily difficult. He was here, he was dedicated to the place and I have just moved into his office. I thank him for his contribution for many years of public service.

What annoys me about that is the same as for the former member for Windermere, when he missed his opportunity to do a valedictory speech because parliament was prorogued and an early election was called. The same thing happened to the member for Hobart. He had made a decision not to recontest, to retire, and he was offered no opportunity to make a valedictory contribution in this place. After all those years of service, he was not afforded that opportunity. I know the government calls elections when it suits them, but two of our long-serving members have both missed the opportunity to make their final comments in this place. That is a travesty.

I want to focus on the key issue of our financial position as this is not sound and how can we continue to deliver the services people need? We hear far too often of the delays in accessing healthcare, the lower than average national educational outcomes, our higher rates of homelessness and the shocking frequency of family violence. These areas are all crucial to each of us and core business for this government.

When people do not have a roof over their head, food on the table, or are not safe and warm, we are not doing our job well enough. There are many pledges in the government's election commitments and reflected in the government's address. To us, they are all admirable in terms of what they say they seek to achieve, but there is no indication at all as to how much of this critical work will be funded and how it will be funded.

We already have a very high reliance on the federal government, but we also need to take some responsibility as a state. I hear and have heard absolutely nothing during the campaign, nor in the Governor's speech as to how this is to be done, rather than just put another \$1.4 billion on the tab.

As I recently wrote in an opinion piece, all is not rosy with the state's financial position, yet again, after the opportunity to be open and transparent with the people about how the government will address these very real challenges, what do we hear? Crickets.

Whilst the Commonwealth this year, 2023-24, says it will achieve a cash surplus of \$9.6 billion on operating revenue of \$689 billion or \$0.96 for every dollar raised, the same cannot be said for the state. The federal budget reports deficits will return in 2024-25 when \$1.04 is expected to be spent for every dollar of revenue, swapping around moving into deficit. In the 2024-25 year, estimates show that the Tasmanian government will be spending \$1.11 for every dollar of revenue. That figure had been made known before the 2024 election spending commitments and the other boondoggles are included. How would it actually look after all these costs are included? We know it will not look any better.

We know that the federal government has many more weapons at its disposal in terms of dealing with these fiscal pressures.

Ms Rattray - Like looking at the tax.

Ms FORREST - Yes, they have a tax and transfer system and they also own the Reserve Bank. I will come to that. Despite all the talk about the level of federal government's gross debt, its net debt is at a comfortably low figure, as roughly one-third is held by the Reserve Bank of Australia, the bank we own.

As I wrote in the opinion piece in 2021-22, the value of the Commonwealth's consolidated debt fell by over \$100 billion when the RBA bought most of the government bonds it now owns and has not moved much since inflation, as inflation has reduced the fair value of the debt, despite a few more bonds being issued. Who said there are no winners with inflation? The RBA assisted the Commonwealth Government through the COVID storm and gave enormous support to the banking system, but the states, the crucial service deliverers, were given far less support.

What this means for the Tasmanian government strong plan for 2030's future is that it is being built on very shaky foundations. Our lifeline, the federal government, is slowly becoming preoccupied with its own survival, especially as the next federal election looms, and it is less likely to prioritise helping the states.

The fact the states have done little help themselves makes it easy for the Commonwealth to keep its distance. It is crystal clear that economics is struggling to explain the new world, with 10 out of 12 predictions most recently being wrong.

Most economists first spotted the rising interest rates in their rear vision mirrors, while cheerily endorsing the use of interest rates to reduce inflation, despite having no credible theory explaining how or when it occurs or how COVID changed everything.

We have a federal system that is not fit for purpose. We, as a nation, led by our state leaders, need to work together honestly, openly and transparently to not only acknowledge the problems, but take a much broader view. State and federal relations as part of the federation, are important. The world has changed, and we need to change with it.

As I conclude in my opinion piece, every time we see a problem or see an approaching storm, we have been turning a blind eye and praying for a rainbow. It does not work.

The people of Tasmania have elected a different mix of people to represent them and we owe it to them all to work together as a state and as a nation, and we need to start by being a bit more honest with ourselves.

Mr President, I note the Governor's Address.

[4.55 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Thank you, Mr President, for an opportunity to make my contribution in reply to the Governor's Address. I have already referred to it a couple of times today in question time so I have used a couple of my areas up as well.

I add my congratulations to the government as they enter into the 51st Parliament of Tasmania and for being returned for a fourth consecutive term, the first time in the state's history, as has been pointed out. Sincere congratulations to the Premier, Jeremy Rockcliff, and his team.

It is interesting to listen to the Governor's speech. I have heard a few of them now, because I have just celebrated the 20-year anniversary of my service to the parliament and very much appreciate the acknowledgement by the Legislative Council that came to the office on Friday. I was reflecting on the times that I have listened to Governor's speeches and I also thought during this speech that it was a little bit different from what I have heard before. Whoever put together the speech is somebody who has not done one before, perhaps. That might be my assumption -

Mrs Hiscutt - It was a real person, so be careful.

Ms RATTRAY - I am not saying it is not a real person; I am just saying that I felt it was quite different from what I had heard before. I have not heard 20 of them, but I have heard a number in my 20-year term. I know there are members in this place who are not far behind me.

Ms Forrest - We have probably heard about the same number of governors' addresses.

Ms RATTRAY - I arrived in this place in 2004 and when you have a look at the picture, I think I look quite a bit younger than I do now, but that is to be expected. As we know, people who retire from this place instantly look 10 years younger. That is something to look forward to.

I also acknowledge the former member for Hobart, Robert Valentine, for his service to the parliament, and to community service in general. I believe there may be an opportunity to do something about that at a later time.

I have already welcomed those members who have been elected to this House. I acknowledge Josh Willie, the former member for Elwick, who has gone to the other place, and Jane Howlett, the former member for Prosser. We heard a little bit of her inaugural speech in the House of Assembly this afternoon. I wish them both every success as they take a different path on their journey of community service.

I was encouraged by parts of the Governor's speech, particularly when she talked about her belief that it is incumbent on all members of parliament to provide the stability and certainty Tasmanians deserve and need. I believe that we are all here for the right reasons. When it comes to representing our communities and the needs of fellow Tasmanians, I certainly have that front and centre in my mind when I am going about my activities and business that I attend to. Serving Tasmanians is not something I think about every day, but in your general work you certainly have that opportunity to do what is best for the people that you represent. Sometimes that stretches just a little outside your own electorate. I remind myself on regular occasions that this role is not just about serving the people of McIntyre, but it is also the wider Tasmanian community.

I appreciated the member for Murchison's extensive contribution on our state's finances. I know she has a really strong understanding of that. It is going to be difficult to make some requests that I have in my list here, given that finances are tight, but I will do it anyway - because that is the commitment that I have given to those people who have raised matters to me. It is certainly not lost on me that we do have some significant financial challenges ahead of this state.

It was very interesting to unpack the Grants Commission process, and how Tasmania is funded by the Commonwealth. I will take the opportunity at a later time to re-read the member's contribution, and again try to have that firmly ingrained in my mind. Finances have not always been high when it comes to my focus, but I have given a commitment to the member for Huon, and I will try to keep it when it comes to trying to tighten the belt.

I was also interested in the government's commitment to social housing. I heard on the radio on the way here that the housing waitlist now has increased to 4600. A second news item a bit later in the day said 4700 people were on the waitlist. That equated to around 95 weeks for priority one; 94.6, close to 95 weeks. That is a very difficult number to hear. We will all know the circumstances of some of those people, and we have probably had them in and out of our office doors or on the end of telephone, trying every avenue they possibly can.

In light of what I have just said, I want to share a recent story. I drive past a house that I know is public housing. It has been vacant for months. I know that nothing is as simple as me just seeing a vacant house. However, when we are in such desperate times, for the people that we represent, why? It is three-bedroom brick home, so you cannot tell me that it is completely falling down. I can see from the outside that it needs some maintenance. I know that is only one home, but it is a three-bedroom home that so many families are looking for. So, I continue to put that into the system.

Recently, we had a contact in the system, but that contact has now gone to an email address. We are no longer able, from our office, to call the person we used to make contact with. That person may not want to hear from us anymore or it may just be a new process. I am not entirely sure what that is. Just sending your concerns continually to an email address you never know and nobody gets back to you and says thank you for your email and your situation or your comments are noted.

The other small story is in the town where I have my office: three units have just been built potentially for people over 55. We know a portion of our community - often women - whose circumstances have led them to be homeless or perhaps in a caravan in the backyard of somebody's home while waiting for public housing. These homes from the outside look pretty much built but not finished. I made some inquiries. The builder is no longer able to continue. Whether they have had financial troubles or whatever, they are no longer able to finish. We know it is very difficult to get people to take over a part-build. The member for Huon will know exactly what I am talking about. For someone to step in and sign off on work they have not done is a very big ask.

Surely, Homes Tasmania, that wonderful body set up in the last session of parliament to streamline some of these issues have some mechanisms in place. They are well aware of this situation because it is not the first time I have raised it. Here we have three brand-new units pretty much finished. I have someone living in a caravan in a backyard, coming weekly to my office asking, 'Have you heard anything?' Nothing. To say there are no homes available is absolutely wrong. There are homes available. Yes, some of them might not be in pristine condition and in this case, sadly, some of them are not completed. If it is only the grounds around the units that are the hold up or the window furnishings, some people might be very happy to move in without the blinds, put up some temporary curtaining measures and go without a landscaped area just to get a roof over their head in the immediate time frame.

I want to press upon the government and know the Leader is very sympathetic to what I am saying. There has to be someone who has to take responsibility for some of these issues we continue to deal with on a daily basis. We can provide every lunch under the sun for kids at school, but if they do not have a proper uniform or clothes that have been washed, if they have not had a decent sleep in a warm home, then lunch might sustain them a little during the day. It will not help them fit in with their classmates and their school if they do not have all the other support mechanisms around them. They will still possibly be picked on at school. It is our obligation that we do everything we can to put these families in homes so they can thrive.

It was a heartfelt plea and I will try not to make every part of my contribution quite like that. I am really passionate about this because I see it so often. If I see it in my small areas, imagine what there is in the other bigger areas. There must be the same situations. There must be. The number on the wait list, just gets bigger and bigger the longer I stand here and talk. I asked the question about the schools, which is also referred to in the Governor's Address, and it talks about the previous investment. It is fair to say that nobody is particularly interested in previous investment. They are interested in what investment is coming forward.

I noted with interest - and it is an observation on my behalf - the Montello Primary School at Burnie. The Public Works Committee had a reference for it and was going to visit it in February. I noted the tender had been let in local daily about a month ago, , but it has not gone through the public works process that I am aware of, unless there is some delegated authority that I am also not aware of. It will be interesting to follow up. I am not saying that

it is not warranted and not needed, but I am interested in how that tender process was let when, to my knowledge, that Montello Primary School reference site visit was cancelled because of the proroguing of parliament. That is one for the department to address its mind to at a later time so that when the Public Works Committee meets for its first time, then it is something for us to consider as well.

I am very pleased to be reappointed to that committee and I welcome a new member for the committee, the member for Huon. I feel sure that some of his expertise in the building industry will be very valuable, because some of that previous expertise is not there any longer.

Health is always a big issue for our communities. I made a couple of notes about rural hospitals. As you are well aware, the electorate of McIntyre has a number of rural hospitals, which are very valuable to their communities. They are being significantly under-utilised. I am well aware that one particular hospital that I know well has to have relief staff on a regular basis because there is not enough full-time staff allocated to the hospital itself. Whenever there might be an influx of patients, they have to try to find relief staff from outside the area. If local staff had permanent positions, then there would be some continuity for the services provided at those rural hospitals.

There is an opportunity to cut out a lot of this relief staffing, particularly in those more rural areas and that might well go right across the health system because you hear so many times of people on contracts and in relief positions. If they were offered a permanent position or more part time, if they did not want to work full time or a full-time position, then it would take away some of the requirements for relief and casual staff to cover shifts. That has to reduce the cost of providing staff.

For a number of years I have asked, and I will continue to ask, what is the government's future and the Health department's future for the former James Scott Wing? It is a large building and in good order. There are no maintenance issues that I can see. I am certainly not a builder, but it is a fairly new building. There is a child health type facility there and that is about it. We have a number of visiting health specialists who come into the area and recently they were using the upstairs room at the library and having to hire that space, and here we have a health precinct up the road with valuable space not being utilised. So, I believe it is time that the department and the government decided what we are going to do with that building.

It is the same for the St Helens facility. Again, I am aware that there has not been a formal process to say 'this is the future of the old St Helens hospital.' Here it is, prime real estate, virtually on the main street of St Helens. Some of these departments are a bit too idle. These facilities are important to the community, so get them organised.

Community transport issues - I spoke this morning about the Dorset transport volunteer system that was being set up to complement the Dorset Community House, which struggles for volunteers. We cannot necessarily rely on volunteers to undertake all these roles; but we also need to be mindful that we have to encourage people to come forward and take up these positions. As I said, I do not necessarily mean that we need volunteers for all of them; but those drivers are very important to people who have appointments outside of Dorset. It would be the same for those who live at St Helens, St Marys or Deloraine. You will find that most of the specialists they are trying to access are in Launceston.

There needs to be a more coordinated approach. We need to be working with the federal government, because they also fund some of the health aspects of community transport.

Ambulance services is another issue. I am not sure when we are ever going to get this right, but I know that we are still having significant waiting times for ambulance services because if the ambulance is away from the St Helens station or the Scottsdale station or the Deloraine station, then they are waiting for ambulances to come from George Town or Campbell Town or Launceston. To my mind, there has to be a more coordinated approach for providing those ambulance services.

Sadly for the north-east, the ambulance services are taken up with people who have come into the area, come off their mountain bike, and then they need the ambulance to get to Launceston; and then someone who lives in the area may have an issue and they are the ones that are waiting and waiting.

We have to think a little bit more strategically about this. I expect that, unless it is a very serious injury, perhaps someone who was riding with those people can pop them in the car and take them to get the broken wing repaired or whatever. It might not be a significant issue. If you have had a heart attack or a stroke and you need to be at the LGH and you cannot access an ambulance because they have just gone to Derby to pick up somebody off their bike, who may well be a visitor to the community, then they start to get pretty niggly about that; and then I get the phone call asking what is going on.

Mr President, it would not be a contribution in this House from me if I did not talk about road infrastructure.

Ms Forrest - And white lines. You haven't touched on white lines for some time, I might add.

Ms RATTRAY - I am not going to spend a lot of time on the white lines this time around.

Interestingly, as a member of the Public Works Committee, I am quite forensic in looking at the works and plans put forward. To my delight, a number of years ago, after a few delays, the Tasman Highway, the Sideling, as it is affectionately known by many, had the upgrade put in place. The committee at the time begged the department and the minister to shut the road and get some heavy machinery in. I give credit to the former member for Lyons, John Tucker, who had some knowledge about big machinery. He endorsed that, and said to get some heavy machinery in, shut the road; we have other access in and out of the north-east and the work will be done in a much timelier manner, and you will move a lot more of that rock.

Did that happen initially? No. Too inconvenient - I am not sure for whom. I acknowledge that the Nunamara store was impacted by less traffic. People chose to go one of the other two ways. Other than that business, it was difficult to see who was going to be significantly negatively impacted.

They did a lot of works and then they had a rock fall in another area. And guess what? They had to shut the road. So a bit more work got done in a timelier manner. The rock fall was addressed, but a lot of the other work that was going on as well was done, and people just accepted it.

Once the road was open again and we had some sealing, I took my first journey up the Sideling. All the way through discussions, I talked about the two identified slow-vehicle turnouts or passing bays. There were two informal ones already on the highway. I was very particular in the Public Works Committee to talk about their importance. The road was completed, the Armco railing went up - then it went down, but then it went up again.

And what do we have? Two short stopping bays because there is not enough length in the slow-vehicle turnouts or pull-off bays. You can imagine my surprise at that. I can assure you that there are not too many slow vehicles stopping dead to let people go past. What a waste of time and effort, and huge amounts of money.

I am not sure if you have been over it of late, Mr President. It is probably a harder drive than it was before. There are more bends and they are sharper. They push you out to one side. We do not have the two supposed slow-vehicle turnouts. It was one of the reasons that I was very keen to get back on the Public Works Committee. It was such a lot of money and it was a great opportunity. If you could not fit two, why not just have one of the links where you could overtake a slow-moving vehicle? They are about 100 metres apart.

Back to the Governor's speech. I am trying to give my contribution and line it up with what has been delivered by our government. I asked this question of the Minister for Education during question time today - about using coordinators in schools to assist with the VET program. It is a good initiative put forward by the government. I thought it was a good initiative when it was already in schools a number of years ago. I know other members in this place felt that it was a useful program. Having a VET coordinator took away that obligation for teachers. They did not have to have a teaching degree to be good coordinators, to knock on doors and facilitate an opportunity for a student in years 9 to 12 who might like to try out in a particular area of industry.

It talked about early education, care services, tourism, hospitality, health and community services, agriculture and manufacturing, a wide range. This is something that will receive excellent support, because I know how well it was received in our communities a number of years ago. Those coordinators in various schools were doing excellent work. They were very disappointed when the government of the day decided they no longer wanted coordinators in schools to facilitate those who were looking for work experience, as we called it back in our day. I acknowledge that.

I highlighted the interesting statement that in recent years Hydro has drifted from its foundational principles. It says Hydro will be returned to these foundation principles with a new ministerial charter and directive, and that Tasmanian prices and Tasmanian jobs must come first. I already thought that was a policy. My understanding was that has been a long-held policy. How does that work now? I listened to a commentator on a radio station yesterday talking about the 15 per cent increase been planned for electricity prices in our state.

Ms Forrest - Requested, for TasNetworks to the regulator.

Ms RATTRAY - Yes. Then we were told that only 37 per cent of our electricity bill relates to those.

Ms Forrest - To networking.

Ms RATTRAY - Yes. When the Minister for Energy is in the House at a later time - and I do wish him a speedy recovery and congratulate him on an additional portfolio - I am interested to understand this particular part of the Governor's speech. I was absolutely certain in my mind everything that has been outlined here was part of their charter. That will be one for when we have some more information in the Chamber.

I note with interest the member for Rumney asked the minister about library hours today in question time. I am also very interested in that response from the minister regarding library hours. My understanding is there is going to be a reduced number of hours. That comes from someone who has a significant interest in libraries. They made an appointment and I visited. I will follow up with this when we get to Estimates at a later time or somebody in the other committee will follow up, I hope. It is about the loss of knowledge that comes with book repairs. Apparently, there is only one book repairer in the state. It is quite a specialised field and we only have one left in our state. We need to have someone being taught how to do that. It is quite a specialised area. That was another part of the issues with the library; the fact that the person may well need to step away from that at some stage and we do not have anything to replace it.

We all received information about driver training, according to my list - unless some of the newer members did not. I am happy to share it. Maybe there are a couple of our newer members who would not have received this. I am happy to pass it on.

The member for Launceston asked a question about learner drivers. They have sent a letter and it outlines their concerns for the safety of all road users and it is of interest to me because I feel like I live on the road. L-plate supervision and behaviour, lack of programs for learner drivers and their supervisors and not just school-based; P-plate driver behaviour, international licence holders, job network provider wanting 80 hours in one month for multiple clients. There is an issue regarding that and road safety programs in primary schools.

I thank Helen Skeggs, the President of Australian Driver Trainers Association (ADTA) Tasmania for being proactive, being on the front foot and highlighting some of the issues that she sees as a driver trainer, and that her people in the industry see, that may suggest a way to make our roads and those drivers safer. I will continue to look at some of those issues that have been raised, but thank her for that opportunity.

Another area I want to highlight relates to the new Commonwealth or a whole-of-country initiative called Agriculture Liaison Officers. They work with those in the agricultural industry on the requirements for livestock transport, for tagging sheep. Sheep are going to need ear tags in the future; the same as cattle need ear tags. Interestingly, I needed some paperwork for somebody who works in the transport industry and so I spent the best part of a day on the phone doing the ring around. I already had a draft copy of what I needed from the Department of State Growth. I rang and then they put me through to the heavy vehicle transport and then they said it was a matter for State Growth. I went back to State Growth and four weeks on, I am still waiting for a return call.

If we are going to sign up to national projects and programs, you have to allocate somebody in a department to take a lead. When people get advice from their peak bodies that this is what you will have to comply with if you are transporting livestock, you have to have a tag on your trailer. Where do you get the tags? We do not know because nobody in the department knows. As I said, four weeks on and I have a list of people who were supposed to

know, but nobody rang me back and I am not going to name and shame them. Perhaps they have never been given the information that they need.

Again, if we are going to sign up to nationally consistent policies, if the minister is going to go to Canberra or wherever they might meet and say, 'We think sheep and goat electronic identification is fantastic or we think tagging all your trailers which you are going to cart livestock in, having a national approach, fantastic'. Find somebody in the department who is willing to take the lead because, at this point in time, still waiting for the call back. If there is no tag on the trailer and there are no ear tags in the sheep, it is not because I did not try.

I have a number of matters I could talk about, but I am not sure I want to progress everything in my folder that I have gathered over the last few months.

My Railton community had a large flood in 2011 and another flood in 2016. There is some concern in the community. I attended a public meeting in Railton a few weeks ago. I would like to put on the record the General Manager, Gerald Monson, announced his retirement at that public meeting and there was an opportunity to thank Gerald Monson for his contribution to not only the Kentish Council and the Railton and Kentish communities but also to the Latrobe Council, as the Latrobe general manager. I have known Gerald for many years. We sent him from Scottsdale and he has done well.

Mr Monson has announced his retirement and I want to acknowledge that publicly and thank him for his service to those communities and previous communities, and also to local government.

Back to the Railton community, there has certainly been some work done by the council in flood mitigation for that community. Obviously, there will need to be some funding from the state government and perhaps even from the federal government. I would encourage the three levels of government to work together for whatever flood mitigations put in place are the appropriate ones so the community can rest easy when there is a significant rain event in their community. In 2011, there were 60 houses and 14 businesses for a small town like Railton, even though when I door knock it, it seems like a lot bigger. There is still anxiety. You could feel at the meeting there is anxiety in amongst the community that their property is still not protected at this time. I will continue to advocate on behalf of my community on this.

Another matter I cannot leave without speaking about is the real challenges for child care across a number of my centres. I expect that is not unique to McIntyre. In my Flinders Island community, Whitemark Centre, it is called the Duck Pond. There are days when they cannot even open.

Ms Forrest - King Island is pretty similarly stretched at the moment, yes.

Ms RATTRAY - There we are, the member for Murchison has highlighted the same matter.

The Thrive Company has those centres and we are lucky to have had those centres, but getting that qualified staff is such an important aspect of keeping the centres open. Now you have to have a high level of qualification and then a number of others with various qualifications and then you have to have a ratio. I understand all that, but there needs to be some flexibility on some of that or else the centres are not open and then parents cannot go to

work. I know some of them work at the school and that type of thing; some of them work at the multipurpose centre, the MPC, and we have to have those centres open. When you have to send around a note saying, 'Unfortunately the centre cannot open tomorrow', what do people do? Not everyone has family or friends' support to look after children. That will be one I will raise with the Minister for Education. I already have a meeting in place, so it is a bit of a heads up. I want to be really firm about the fact that we need to work together to resolve some of those situations and have some more flexibility around who is actually in those childcare centres.

In the past, and it worked fine for my little girl, there were people who opened up their home. Yes, they complied with safety requirements, but they certainly did not have any qualifications. I suggest that my children were well looked after. I would not have left them in somebody's care if I did not feel that they would be well looked after. Yes, it is great if you can have many suitably qualified educational people in childcare centres. In situations where you do not have them you have to close. I think we have to be a bit more flexible with that. There are all the checks and balances regarding working with children, working with vulnerable people requirements, but do you have to have a level of education degree? I suggest in some situations, no.

Hydro Tasmania was at the Railton meeting that I went to, spruiking Battery of the Nation, with lots of glossies and maps, and all of those things. It all sounds really wonderful talking about pumped hydro and people wearing nice jackets with lots of writing over them and introducing themselves. Having that community engagement is certainly a good thing, but sometimes we might have the cart before the horse a little bit because we know that part of this is a big picture. I know we still have some work to do on the Marinus Link.

I do not have a high level of understanding of how that is all going to work. The last time I had a meeting with some of my landowners, who were very much objecting to have having new big towers on their properties, particularly those who have irrigation infrastructure in the ground and it was going to interrupt their ability to farm their land in the way that they want to. I suggest that that we need to be cautious about too many glossies before we have all the ducks lined up. The cart before the horse is not always the best way to achieve what you are seeking to achieve.

I put a question on the notice paper last week about CBOS and their opportunity to have mediation with two willing parties, albeit that there was not a contract for some building works in place. I am going to work with the responsible minister about when the new obligations come into place and also try to progress the more streamlined process that I felt this Chamber supported when we made the amendments last year to the legislation. I know they are not in place yet. It surprised me that they were not because the bill has not received royal assent. I am looking forward to having a better understanding of how all that works. I have been somewhat disappointed again, not on my behalf, but on behalf of a constituent I have in my electorate who has been distressed no end that we have, as I said, two parties willing to mediate over a building dispute. CBOS tells me, 'No, sorry you did not have a contract in place'. We will continue to watch that space.

My last contribution is that I am wearing this heart today; I do not think anyone else has acknowledged that this is a 'thank you'. Wearing this pin shows your support for those who deliver palliative care and the people and families they look after. I recently lost someone very dear to me, a friend, and without palliative care it would have possibly been a worse situation.

I acknowledge that I am wearing that and I do feel that special connection. It says 'matters of life and death', and that is palliative care - helping to raise awareness and start conversations around the quality of life at the end of life.

I wear that proudly today and thank all those people who undertake that work. Without those people the place where we live would be a poorer place. I know that others have said here today that we want the best for all Tasmanians, whether it be the start of their life, during their life, or at the end of their life. Thank you for the work that they do.

Thank you, members for the opportunity to deliver my contribution. It is often a little bit mixed up, but it is delivered with the right intent.

I note the Governor's Address.

[5.46 p.m.]

Mr HARRISS (Huon) - Mr President, I rise to speak in reply to the Governor's Address. As this is my first contribution to this new 51st Parliament, I wish to recognise and acknowledge the palawa people of lutruwita/Tasmania, the traditional owners and ongoing custodians of the land on which we gather. I recognise they have more than 50,000 years of connection through land, sea, waterways and sky, and pay my respects to their elders, past and present.

I possibly should have got the jump because I thought I had everything sorted out, and after the critique of AI by the member for Murchison, I have ended up with a page; so we will see how it goes.

Ms Rattray - You will wing it.

Mr HARRISS - That is right, we will make it.

Tasmanians turned out for both a second successive early election for the House of Assembly, and a once-in-a-century round of Legislative Council elections to fill three vacancies, none of which were contested by sitting members. As other members have, I join in congratulating all those who were successful and especially the new members in this place - the member for Elwick, the member for Prosser and the member for Hobart - as well as in the other place. Without people standing for election, and their passionate views and commitment throughout the electorates, we would not have the democracy that we enjoy today.

The elections have delivered a different dynamic in this parliament than we have been accustomed to in the past, and I am not sure that the full implications have yet been absorbed. I might run through just a few. We have seen a large increase in the size of parliament, with a total membership of both Houses rising by 25 per cent to 50 members, although the size of this Chamber has stayed unchanged. The reasons advanced for increasing the size of the House of Assembly from 25 to 35 were that it would enable better representation of the views of the community and that the additional numbers would reduce the workload of ministers. The Leader's second reading speech relating to the Expansion of the House of Assembly Bill 2022 said this:

... the bill also increases the number of ministers to no more than 11, one more than the pre-1998 provisions. This will future-proof the capacity of

future governments to manage the ever-increasing complexities, pace and workload that come with ministerial responsibilities. It will help to support and protect ministers from burnout so Tasmania does not lose people of experience.

It is fair to say that the increase in numbers worked in regard to enabling a wider representation of voters, even if the result was possibly not what the government had in mind. However, in terms of reducing the workload of government, it appears to me to have been far less successful. Of the additional 10 seats in the expanded House, the current government, the Liberal Party, has won just one, increasing its total number of 13 seats from 2021 to this election to 14 seats. As for the increased number of ministers to 11, that has been delivered, but I may question the allocation of portfolios.

The big issues and what is most discussed in my community are cost of living - which has been mentioned several times already - health and housing. Health is a huge issue. It is getting harder to make a doctor's appointment and if you are not bulkbilled, costs are rising. Increasingly, people are finding their only option after hours and on the weekends is the emergency department at the hospital. We know that it is overcrowded. Doctors and nurses are pushed to, and sometimes beyond, the limit and the pressures are getting worse, not better. Yet, despite the bigger Cabinet, we have a part-time Health minister.

That is in no way a reflection on the minister, Mr Barnett. It is a reflection of the fact that he is also Attorney-General, Minister for Justice and Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

Ms Forrest - Attorney-General and Justice has a huge legislative load.

Mr HARRISS - Correct. There is a wide view in the community that the Health portfolio on its own is an impossibly difficult job. No-one I talked to believes it can be done on a part-time basis.

Health is critically important to every Tasmanian. The government has acknowledged that the expanded Cabinet and expanded parliament will come at a significant cost to the taxpayer, so it is a little bit disappointing that the opportunity has not been taken up to make Health a full-time job.

During the election, both parties campaigned for a stable majority government, but, as we know, the voters decided otherwise. Whilst the Liberal Party received the largest share of the vote, it was way short of a majority and almost two-thirds of electors put their vote elsewhere.

The Legislative Council poll, as we know, returned one Liberal, one new Independent and one Green, the new member for Hobart who becomes the first from her party to be elected to this Chamber. That is a very democratic outcome and it means we have a minority government which, again, has agreements for confidence and supply but essentially must rely on the support of non-Liberal members to get legislation through either House of parliament.

That has been acknowledged by the Premier. It is pleasing to me to note the changing language from the 'go-it-alone' stable majority government mantra to the now much more realistic call in the Governor's speech for all members of parliament to provide stability and certainty that Tasmanians deserve and need.

I question the idea that the overarching need arising from the election is the need for stability. As the member for McIntyre alluded to, together with other members, I will be attempting to make this parliament work in the interests of all Tasmanians. When I talk to people across my division of Huon, stability is not the 's' word that keeps coming up. That is another 's' word. It is 'solutions'. We need solutions and, to my mind, that is what people are looking to parliament to provide. In my opinion, that is also what the election result really means.

No-one is telling me that cost of living is not an issue. No-one thinks our health system is in good shape. No-one believes we do not have a massive issue with housing and homelessness. Our education system spends more per capita than most other states and has some of the poorest outcomes. The election results suggest that voters have marked the government's report card as 'needs to do much better' and have returned the largest crossbench of minor parties and independents we have ever seen to help lift the bar. Non-government members outnumber the Liberals two to three in the House of Assembly, and it is not much different in this place.

For that reason - and it was mentioned before - I questioned the apparent government intention to proceed with its 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future without amendment, discussion or further input, regardless of the fact that almost two-thirds of Tasmanians did not vote for it. I know both major parties have committed to respect the election result and I hope this continues to shine through. However, the Premier seems to me to be much saying, 'I will do it my way', with the parliament providing the stability and certainty that Tasmanians deserve and need.

The fact is that the Liberal policy is not what the majority of Tasmanians voted for. It is unfortunate that the Government, and therefore the parliament, will not be pursuing a program that more broadly reflects the result of the election. There could be a better example across the Tasman. The member for Nelson spoke before about New Zealand and some of their positions. New Zealanders voted in October last year, with a result largely in keeping with what happened in Tasmania. The National Party received 38 per cent of the vote and to form government joined with ACT, the Association of Consumers and Taxpayers, and New Zealand First, which between them got 15 per cent of the vote. The three parties sat down and worked through each of their election policies and agreed on a joint platform which combined elements of all three. It did not happen easily or quickly, and the agreement was not announced until some six weeks after the election. It is still early days over there and we will see how it goes, but it does appear to be a genuine attempt to build a government which reflects the way a majority of New Zealanders voted.

Strict adherence to the Liberal agenda here does not seem to reflect the same approach. People trust us to represent their best interests and we need to do all we can to build and retain that trust. Transparency and accountability are equally important, and it is an area where the government is like the man pushing a barrow. It has the job in front of it.

I am heartened, in particular, by the agreement obtained by the JLN for an independent Eslake investigation into the state's finances. We know from the pre-election Financial Outlook Report from Treasury that we are heading for \$6 billion in state debt. The member for Murchison is well and truly across this better than I am. We also know from external analysis by Saul Eslake and John Lawrence that, when all factors are taken into account, we are probably

even worse off than the Victorian budget basket case and heading for our own horror budget in September.

I shudder to think what Mr Eslake will find once he gets the chance to look under the bonnet, but again, it is vitally important that we know and that the findings are shared with all Tasmanians. My concerns about the budget position have been heightened by the apparent disregard of the government for the gravity of the situation.

Despite the budget plunging headlong into \$6 billion of debt, the government took out the public chequebook and, it appears, spent without limits in the election campaign. I was particularly troubled by the ABC News report on the Community Project Election Commitment form, which was distributed to Liberal candidates as part of the 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future. This project, in reality, was industrial scale pork-barrelling using public money to buy votes for a party. The form sent to candidates stipulated a number of things. First, that it was for internal use only, so I suppose it was to be a secret. Second, Liberal Party candidates were required to complete the form, so I guess no clean hands when everyone else's were in the public cookie jar. Third, do not provide this form to any external individual or organisation. Again, no warning to anyone we are going to raid the public till for party benefit. There were 20 boxes on the form for candidates to fill in and for an unnamed party operative to provide approval, but not one of them addressed the vital question: was this in the public interest?

We know that some \$19 million is proposed to be shovelled out of the Treasury door under this plan. We also know this is the third election in a row the Liberal Party has indulged in a similar election splurge using public funds, despite being castigated by the Integrity Commission after being caught out in the 2018 election.

Treasury has advised, and it is again been discussed by previous members, the total cost of implementing election commitments from 2018 election was \$1.4 billion. Another \$1.4 billion was added to the public bill from the 21 election promises and the total cost of Liberal promises in these elections is either \$1.4 billion or \$1.7 billion. I have seen both figures.

But when we are already heading for \$6 billion in debt and, as the member for Murchison pointed out, we are living so far beyond our means that we have to borrow to meet interest payments, we urgently need to clean up our act. None of us individually would be so irresponsible to run up a multimillion-dollar debt so we could live high on the hog and simply hand the bill to our children or grandchildren. Yet, that is exactly what we are doing as a state, and it needs to stop. We have to find a way to stop political parties playing monopoly with the public credit card and we need to require a rigorous public interest test to every allocation of public money. We would be totally irresponsible to allow this situation to happen again.

Since the election there have been a couple of announcements I wish to turn my mind to. The first is the announcement by TasNetworks that is proposing a 15 per cent increase in network charges for the next financial year. That appears to be an exorbitant amount. It is roughly five times the latest CPI increase. We are constantly reminded in this place that the cost of living is the number one issue of concern for all Tasmanians. It is certainly the number one issue for people in the Huon electorate. When people are battling, it is incumbent on government to help where it can and to provide an example in its business dealings for other businesses to follow. We should not be setting an example in how high we can crank up taxes and charges, no matter how difficult the budget situation might be.

The second is the 30-year population projections issued by Treasury this month. They serve as a strong reminder we need to do much better in our forward planning of infrastructure and government services. The Governor's Address reminded us of how quickly things can change with Tasmania's population increasing by 60,000 in the past 10 years. That, as we have seen, is a welcome driver of economic activity, but services, infrastructure and housing have struggled to keep up.

We are now advised by Treasury on its medium growth projections we will see a similar sized increase over the next 30 years and on its high growth projections, the potential increase could be 140,000 people. These are projections, not predictions, but it would be remiss of the parliament not to plan for such an eventuality. We are seeing now desperate attempts all around Australia to build new housing in attempts to catch up with demand. We must not keep repeating the same mistakes. Our planning must take account of all aspects of infrastructure and service provisions.

One matter we have to come to terms with is the arterial traffic movement through Hobart. Getting to work or any appointments is already a huge bugbear for the people of Huon.

Ms Forrest - Are you going to declare an interest? You have been caught up. I know you were supposed to be in the ABC studio.

Mr HARRISS - I did. I was caught on the side of the road. That was not planned, by the way. I gave myself ample time to get there.

If Treasury projections are realised, it will become an absolute nightmare. Some people will obviously ride bikes or scooters, some will take a ferry, but for everyone else a car will remain essential, whether it is powered by diesel, petrol, electric, hybrid or anything else. We need to protect the right of freedom of movement and their standard of living by providing a road system that can meet their needs.

Mr President, I am coming to the end of my contribution.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That at its rising the Council adjourn until 11.00 a.m. on Wednesday 22 May 2024

Motion agreed to.

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

That the Council do now stand adjourned.

Tasmanian Integrity Commission - Complaint Dismissed

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I would like to make a statement on adjournment.

On 18 March this year, I was informed by the Tasmanian Integrity Commission of its determination to dismiss a complaint against me, which the Integrity Commission had accepted for assessment under section 35(1)(B) of the *Integrity Commission Act 2009* on 28 November last year. This complaint related to statements I made in the Legislative Council following the release of the final report of the Commission of Inquiry into Tasmanian Government's Response to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings. I will not go into the details of the complaint out of respect for the complainant, who may not wish to be further publicly associated with the ongoing debate around the commission of inquiry's final report.

As a point of clarification, the first I knew of this complaint, or the Integrity Commission's assessment of it, was upon receipt of the Integrity Commission's determination to dismiss, dated 15 March, which I received via email on Monday 18 March. I mention this not as a criticism of the process undertaken but to reassure my constituency that I have not tried to hide in any way the fact this complaint process was underway.

The Legislative Council's first non-ceremonial sitting day of the new parliament, today, has provided the first opportunity for me to provide this update in a formal and accountable manner.

As I stated on the public record in the Legislative Council on 1 November last year, all elected representatives should be held accountable for their actions, including me. Further, while not taking lightly the steps I took in parliament, I have a responsibility to do my job, particularly in pursuing clarification of such serious matters as raised by the commission, no matter how uncomfortable that may be for all potentially involved, including me, while standing by the difficult decision made to raise serious questions based on specific content of a publicly tabled report.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the following. I did not make allegations against individuals or entities, but in the public interest call for clarity about how and why they were cited, as they were, in the notes section of the report. In light of the description of the commission of inquiry of the processes undertaken and constraints experienced, as I stated at the time, and reiterate now, those individuals deserve that clarity to be provided and independently verified as to all those who engaged with the commission, including victim/survivors.

It is shocking and a disgrace that eight months after these matters were raised, this necessary clarity, necessary for commission respondents, witnesses and victim/survivors has still been denied. I wish I could remove that cloud. Sadly, those responsible for that clarity - and in a position to provide it - refused to step up and be accountable. In the meantime, I have been held accountable for my actions.

I will continue to strive to be accountable while undertaking the difficult responsibilities of my job, as is right in our democratic system. Thank you.

The Council adjourned at 6.08 p.m.

Appendix 1

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Question No. of 2023

Legislative Council

ASKED BY: ⁴⁰ Hon Rob Valentine MLC

ANSWERED BY: Hon Leonie Hiscutt MLC

QUESTION: With regard to the docking of nuclear-powered vessels in Tasmanian ports, can the Government please provide:

- (1) details communicated to the Tasmanian Government by the Australian Government, and/or its relevant regulating authorities, on the docking exclusion zones currently in place in each Tasmanian port where such zones have been implemented;
- (2) technical detail on the extent of each area excluded;
- (3) reasons given as to why the exclusion zones were necessary in the first instance;
- (4) the date of implementation of each exclusion zone;
- (5) details, including copies of any communications, between the Tasmanian Government and the Australian Government, and/or its relevant regulating authorities, in the lead-up to the most recent announcement of intended changes in status of any Tasmanian ports with respect to the docking of nuclear-powered vessels;
- (6) details on approvals required from the Tasmanian Government for any change to docking exclusion zones;
- (7) details of any consultation, community or otherwise, undertaken by relevant authorities that has taken place in the State that the Tasmanian Government is aware of, associated with the intended changes to the status of any Tasmanian port in relation to the docking of nuclear-powered vessels and, if such consultation has occurred, the results of the consultation; and

ask
Tabbed and
incorporated into
Hansard
L. Hiscutt
21 May 2024

- (8) a copy of the latest Management Plan in the event of a nuclear accident.

ANSWER:

1. The Defence Operations Manual (OPSMAN 1), maintained by the Australian Government Department of Defence documents and prescribes the conditions, procedures and responsibilities for the conduct of port visits to Australia by nuclear-powered vessels. All conditions and procedures have been implemented by Tasmania to ensure that the safety of the public is maintained.
2. The OPSMAN 1 establishes emergency planning zone boundaries for submarines and NIMITZ Class aircraft carriers. Specific details on each zone boundary are documented in Section 3.55 for submarines; and Section 3.56 for NIMITZ Class aircraft carriers.
3. Emergency planning zone boundaries are a requirement of the Australian Government Department of Defence, as documented in OPSMAN 1. The emergency planning zone boundaries have been developed to ensure that the safety of the public is maintained during visits of nuclear-powered vessels to any Australian port, including Tasmania.
4. The Australian Government Department of Defence released Edition 11 of OPSMAN 1 on 27 June 2023, establishing the most recent emergency planning zones.
5. Communication between the Tasmanian Government and the Australian Government on the anchorage of nuclear-powered vessels in Tasmania is classified information.
6. The Tasmanian Government, in consultation with the Australian Department of Defence and other appropriate Australian Government departments, sought approval through the Visiting Ships Panel (Nuclear), a standing interdepartmental committee.
7. Consultation occurred with representatives from relevant Commonwealth, State and local government authorities through established governance arrangements. This included the Tasmanian Government Nuclear-powered Warship Visits Committee and the Tasmanian State Emergency Management Committee.
8. Management plans specific to Tasmania in the event of a nuclear accident, including an accident involving nuclear-powered vessels, is classified information.

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

Hon Felix Ellis MP

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management

Date:

Appendix 2

45

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Legislative Council

Albark
Tabled & incorporated
into Hansard
L. Hiscutt
21 May 2024

ASKED BY: Hon Ruth Forrest MLC

ANSWERED BY: Hon Leonie Hiscutt MLC, Leader of the
Government in the Legislative Council

QUESTION:

With regard to a JackJumpers media release of 25 September 2023 titled "JackJumpers launch into schools with Huon Aquaculture", the release states:

Huon Aquaculture will be the presenting partner of the JackJumpers in Schools Program delivering educational outcomes across Tasmania...

Designed by Tasmanian teachers within the Australian Curriculum, the JackJumpers Schools Program has been carefully crafted to align with the Tasmanian education curriculum for Years 3/4 and 5/6, exploring themes of health and wellness, focusing on both mental and physical health and giving students the tools they need to become healthy and happy versions of themselves.

With reference to the contents of this media release:

- I. Are the teachers referred to DECYP employees; and
 - a) if so, who paid for them to develop this curriculum; and
 - b) how does this align with the DECYP Sponsorship and Commercial Arrangements for Education Settings Procedure and with the whole of government purchasing and procurement policies?

CA

2. What is the total value of the program including:
 - a. any payment of teacher's time to develop the program;
 - b. the implementation of the program; and
 - c. how does the funding align with DECYP Sponsorship and Commercial Arrangements for Education Settings Procedure and with whole of government purchasing and procurement policies?
3. How does the program align with the DECYP Partnering with External Organisation Policy, in particular this: Partnerships must only be established with organisations whose values, products, services, purposes and objectives are consistent with the Learners First commitment, values, goals and priorities; and
4. What evidence can be provided to demonstrate how the programs aligns with these values based on matters including healthy eating, environmental principles and sustainability

ANSWERS

1. Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) employees have not been involved in the development of this program in the course of their Government employment.
The teachers referenced in the recent Jack Jumpers' media release are not Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) employees acting in the course of their official duties.
2. The Jack Jumpers in Schools Program has not received funding from DECYP.
3. Individual schools who choose to engage with this program need to comply with the *Partnering with External Organisation Policy*.

4. DECYP has not undertaken any analysis of this program and cannot provide comment in relation to these matters.

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'R' followed by a horizontal line.

Hon Roger Jaensch MP

Minister for Education, Children and Youth

Date: 15/11/23

Appendix 3

NOTICE OF QUESTION

Question No. 49 of 2023

Legislative Council

*Tabbed and
incorporated
into Hansard
L. Hiscutt
21 May 2024*

ASKED BY: Hon Ruth Forrest, MLC

ANSWERED BY: Hon Leonie Hiscutt MLC, the Leader of the
Government in the Legislative Council

QUESTION:

With regard to the way retail pricing is set by the Office of the
Tasmanian Economic Regulator (OTTER), and noting:

- the current energy mix in Tasmania;
- the model uses Victorian forward pricing as the reference and variable inputs from Hydro Tasmania to then set the wholesale contract price that can be charged;
- that this mechanism has been in place since January 2014; and
- the Tasmanian energy mix has additional wind farms that are not part of the formula used by OTTER although onerous contracts have been entered into for this generation to be provided to Government owned businesses, Hydro Tasmania and Aurora Energy;

Can the Government advise:—

- (1) Is this methodology now considered outdated; and

- (2) (a) Will this methodology be reviewed to ensure the power price setting formula remains relevant; and
- (b) if so, when?

ANSWER:

- (1) No. Tasmanian wind farm data are already included in the calculation of prices for Tasmanian regulated wholesale contracts that are used as inputs to calculate the Wholesale Energy Price when determining standing offer prices.
- (2) (a) Given the current approvals in the Instrument expire on 30 June 2024, the Regulator is currently conducting a Wholesale Contract Regulatory Instrument pricing investigation.
- (b) An investigation draft report and the draft approvals are scheduled to be published by 3 April 2024 with the investigation to be completed in June 2024. A new Instrument containing the new approvals will then be published by 30 June 2024.

The Regulator will invite submissions from interested parties in response to the draft report once published. Submissions must be in writing and must be made within four weeks of the publication of the draft report.

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

Michael Ferguson MP
Deputy Premier
Treasurer

Date: November 2023

Appendix 4

QUESTION ON NOTICE Legislative Council

ASKED BY: Hon Luke Edmunds MLC

ANSWERED BY: Hon Leonie Hiscutt MLC, Leader of the
Government in the Legislative Council

50
Tabled and
Incorporated
into Hansard
L. Hiscutt
21 May 2024

QUESTION:

For each Tasmanian Local Government Area, please provide for the past three financial years:

- (a) The number of development applications received;
- (b) The number of development applications rejected;
- (c) The average time between a development application being lodged and a building permit being issued;
- (d) The rate charged and total revenue collected through the fire services levy from:
 - (i) Commercial;
 - (ii) Industrial;
 - (iii) Primary production; and
 - (iv) Residential property owners.
- (e) Total rates collected; and
- (f) Total waste charges (including landfill levy).

ANSWER:

- The annual Consolidated Data Collection (CDC), which is published and administered by the Office of Local Government, captures a range of council data on the receipt, processing, and assessment of development applications and building permits.
- The CDC includes data on development applications received and approved or refused, the number of applications that are processed within the relevant statutory timeframes, and the average number of statutory days to determine applications.

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- The CDC also captures data on building applications, including total number received and number determined within the statutory timeframes.
- The CDC does not capture the average time between a development approval and the subsequent issuing of a building permit in respect of that approval. It is important to note that it is at a proponent's discretion as to whether they proceed to the building permit phase at all and, where they do, within what timeframe. For instance, a proponent has two years to proceed to the building permit stage and may extend this for a further two years on application to council.
- The CDC also contains councils' total rate revenue, as well as all waste charges.
- CDC data is routinely published and publicly available on the Tasmanian Government's data portal – LISTdata – <https://listdata.thelist.tas.gov.au/opendata/>
- The LISTdata portal has CDC data for each council for every financial year from 2000 to 2022.
- Data on development applications can be found on the Land Use Planning and Approvals page of each council's CDC workbook.
- Councils also report their fire levy, rates, and waste charges revenue on the Financial Data page of their CDC workbook.
- Councils' fire levy revenue is only reported at the total aggregate level, not by property type. That level of granularity in fire service levy revenue data would need to be requested of and provided by individual councils directly.

- As part of the Future of Local Government Review, the Local Government Board published a Tasmanian Council profile data dashboard, to present a range of CDC data in a more user friendly and transparent way.
- This Dashboard can be found here - <https://www.futurelocal.tas.gov.au/council-data/> - and contains easy to read data for each council for the last six financial years on development applications received, and the average time taken to assess development applications, as well as total rate revenue (including the fire levy).

QUESTION:

For each of Tasmania's 29 councils, please provide:

- (a) The current number of planning applications that were lodged more than six months ago and which have not yet received building approval; and
- (b) The current number of planning staff (FTE).

ANSWER:

- The Tasmanian Government does not routinely collect data from councils outside the CDC process.
- While the CDC does not capture applications that were lodged more than six months prior to reporting that have not yet received building approval, councils do report on the number of development applications which have rolled over from the previous financial year.
- Data on planning FTEs specifically for each council is not routinely reported.
- However, a Functional and Capability Analysis of Tasmanian Local Council Report was prepared by SGS Economics and Planning for the Future of Local Government Review. That report is published at <http://www.futurelocal.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Functional-and-Capability-Analysis-of-Tasmanian-Local-Councils-Report.pdf>.

- To inform that report, councils were surveyed on the number of full-time equivalent positions involved in Development Application Assessment and Approval functions. The results – for those councils who responded – were as follows:

Break O'Day	3.5
Brighton	3.8
Burnie	1.7
Central Coast	4.0
Central Highlands	0.0
Circular Head	3.0
Clarence	15.0
Derwent Valley	4.0
Devonport	6.0
Dorset	3.8
Flinders	No data
George Town	2.0
Glamorgan-Spring Bay	5.0
Glenorchy	14.8
Hobart	29.1
Huon Valley	16.0
Kentish	2.0
King Island	No data
Kingborough	2.9
Latrobe	3.6
Launceston	18.0
Meander Valley	6.0
Northern Midlands	9.2
Sorell	2.4
Southern Midlands	5.7
Tasman	4.1
Waratah-Wynyard	8.0
West Coast	2.5
West Tamar	5.7

 APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

The Hon Nic Street MP
Minister for Local Government

Date: 28/11/23

Appendix 5

QUESTION ON NOTICE Legislative Council

Mark
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incorporated into
Hansard
L. Hiscott
21 May 2024

ASKED BY: The Hon Luke Edmunds MLC

ANSWERED BY: Leader of the House

QUESTION:

The Director of Local Government is responsible for administration of the Local Government Act 1993, including formal investigations of non-compliance or offences under the Act.

A Department of Premier and Cabinet Right to Information – routine disclosure for the period 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023 noted that the total number of complaints that had been concluded was five and that these complaints had been upheld or referred to another agency or body or to the Court of Petty Sessions.

Can the Leader advise in respect of each individual complaint:

- (a) What was the nature or subject matter of the complaint?
- (b) Which council did the complaint relate to?
- (c) What were the sanctions that applied?
- (d) Were any findings made against elected officials or council employees?
- (e) Which agency or bodies were complaints referred to?
- (f) Were any Court of Petty Sessions proceedings initiated?

ANSWER:

- Details regarding the five complaints disclosed for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023 are as follows:
- Complaint 1
 - a) Subject matter: Improper administration by Council of the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993.
 - b) Council: Dorset Council
 - c) Sanctions applied: n/a
 - d) Findings made: Nil to date

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- e) Referrals made: Dorset Board of Inquiry
- f) Court of Petty Sessions proceedings: n/a

- Complaint 2

- a) Subject matter: Disclosure of confidential information
- b) Council: Dorset Council
- c) Sanctions applied: n/a
- d) Findings made: Nil to date
- e) Referrals made: Dorset Board of Inquiry
- f) Court of Petty Sessions proceedings: n/a

- Complaint 3

- a) Subject matter: Improper decision making and poor governance by Council contrary to the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993*.
- b) Council: Dorset Council
- c) Sanctions applied: Nil
- d) Findings made: Nil to date
- e) Referrals made: Dorset Board of Inquiry
- f) Court of Petty Sessions proceedings: n/a

- Complaint 4

- a) Subject matter: Multiple instances of the improper use of statutory authority.
- b) Council: Dorset Council
- c) Sanctions applied: Nil
- d) Findings made: Nil to date
- e) Referrals made: Dorset Board of Inquiry
- f) Court of Petty Sessions proceedings: n/a

- Complaint 5 – Multiple and ongoing failures by Councillor to abide by Code of Conduct
 - a) Subject matter: Derogatory and offensive comments made publicly against community members and unsupported allegations of corruption against various authorities, including elected and non-elected Council officials, the Code of Conduct Panel, the Director and the Office of Local Government.
 - b) Council: Glenorchy City Council
 - c) Sanctions applied: The Councillor vacated office prior to further sanctions being imposed.
 - d) Findings made: Nil to date
 - e) Referrals made: Nil
 - f) Court of Petty Sessions proceedings: n/a



APPROVED NOT APPROVED

The Hon Nic Street MP
Minister for Local Government

Date: 19/12/23

Appendix 6

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Legislative Council

ASKED BY: Hon Ruth Forrest MLC

ANSWERED BY: Hon Nick Duigan MLC, Minister for Parks and Environment

✓
Tabled &
incorporated
into Hansard
L. Hiscutt
21 May 2024

QUESTION:

With regard to the \$10 million of funding allocated initially in the 2020-2021 State budget related to the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area under the Minister for Parks' portfolio, could you please provide a breakdown of:

1. the allocation/expenditure of all funding spent to date including:
 - a. the purpose of each of these funding allocations;
 - b. the dates of each allocation; and
2. the amount of any residual funds including any approved or proposed purposes for these funds.

ANSWER:

Question 1:

The current budget allocations by sub-project, as endorsed by the Arthur Pieman Conservation Area (APCA) Management Committee meeting held on 1 October 2021, are outlined in the Table below.

Sub-Project	Allocation	Total Project Expenditure as at 19 February 2024
1. West Coast ORV Strategy The preparation of a West Coast Off-Road Vehicle Strategy will be used to inform a significant part of the investment of the \$10 million for driver safety, track	\$5,050,000	\$127,305

management, and new amenities to improve off-road experiences across the whole West Coast.		
2. APCA Shack Node Roads Including engineering assessments of existing shack node roads and subsequent maintenance works	\$900,000	\$573,110
3. Management Plan This project component is an allowance made should a review of the Management Plan for the Arthur Pieman Conservation Area be considered necessary.	\$750,000	nil
4. Support Services and Initiatives Includes improvements to the gateway to the APCA and PWS Field Centre infrastructure and resources	\$2,570,000	\$398,910
Unallocated funds The APCA Management Committee continues to provide advice on the remaining allocation of the Government's \$10 million investment.	\$730,000	Nil
	\$10,000,000	\$1,099,325

Question 2

As noted in the above table \$730,000 of the \$10 million commitment is yet to be allocated to specific projects. Allocation of these funds will occur in consultation with the APCA Management Committee as the project progresses, with the allocation being reviewed upon completion of the West Coast Off-Road Vehicle Strategy. As per the 2023-24 State Budget funds for this project are allocated across the forward estimates with the final year of funding currently allocated in 2025-26.

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

Hon Nick Duigan MLC
Minister for Parks and Environment