

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA
DEBATES OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

DAILY HANSARD

Wednesday 2 September 2026

Preliminary Transcript

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UNCORRECTED PROOF

Wednesday 2 September 2026

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Member for Braddon - Mr Ellis

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Honourable Speaker, I advise the House that minister Ellis will be absent from Question Time today. In his absence, I will take questions in relation to his portfolios.

QUESTIONS

Risdon Prison Kitchen Renovation

Mr WILLIE question to MINISTER for JUSTICE, CORRECTIONS, and REHABILITATION, Mr BARNETT

Eight weeks ago you said that the \$20-million Risdon kitchen would be fixed within three to four weeks. Has the kitchen been fixed and resumed producing meals or are Tasmanians paying to fly 3000 meals a day in from Victoria?

ANSWER

Thanks very much, Speaker, and I thank the honourable member for his question. It is an important matter and, as I did advise in recent weeks, I thank the honourable Independent member for Franklin for his interest in this matter as well in recent weeks and months.

A slip hazard was identified in the new Risdon Prison kitchen in connection to the epoxy flooring, as it did not achieve a P5 slip resistance rating. This issue was identified under the defects liability period and I'm advised that the contractor has accepted responsibility for the slip hazard and is currently rectifying the floor at their expense.

However, I reiterate that I am frustrated; I am frustrated at the delay to the kitchen becoming fully operational. I've made it clear to my department that I expect a full review of how this occurred and what will be done to prevent any similar contractor errors in the future. I have requested that independent review from the department and they've taken that on board and will progress that.

In terms of providing a safe and operational kitchen, that remains a priority of our government. As this flooring issue is being fixed by the contractor, it's my expectation that it is fixed to the proper standard to be fully and safely operational.

Mr Willie - You said three to four weeks.

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Mr BARNETT - In terms of some of those costs in the second part of your question, you made reference to the costs: I'm advised that the meal services have continued without interruption throughout the rectification works. Wherever possible local -

Ms Finlay - Where are the meals coming from?

The SPEAKER - Just ignore them, Deputy Premier.

Mr BARNETT - Wherever possible, local Tasmanian suppliers have been engaged with only one interstate provider used only where the required capacity and operational requirements could not be met locally. I've made clear previously that the Buy Local Policy here, in Tasmania, is to be implemented and likewise consistent with the Treasurer's Instructions.

I reiterate again, there's some disappointment in the process, and that's why I've asked the department for an independent review.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - The Tasmanian taxpayers have spent \$20 million on this kitchen and every day it's not open we're flying 3000 meals in from Victoria and paying for it. When will the kitchen reopen?

Mr BARNETT - Thanks very much, Speaker. I don't have an answer to that question in terms of the exact date of the reopening. I have indicated to the department my disappointment with the process. I've requested an independent review. My expectations are high; they will remain high.

Risdon Prison Kitchen Renovation

Mr WILLIE question to MINISTER for JUSTICE, CORRECTIONS, and REHABILITATION, Mr BARNETT

[10.05 a.m.]

I'll ask a cost question again because you didn't really answer it. Deputy Premier, it has now been two months since the \$20 million Risdon Prison kitchen stopped producing meals. Since then, Tasmanian taxpayers have been footing the bill to purchase and transport 3000 meals a day from Victoria. How much has the government spent to date on replacement meals, freight and other costs caused by the kitchen's failure?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and ongoing interest in this matter, and it is an important matter. Keeping our community safe is a top priority. That's why we have a very important Risdon Prison and why we're investing heavily in corrections facilities - \$100 million is in the Budget to continue to support upgrades at our correctional facilities. That includes not just the kitchen, but the building of a \$46 million maximum security aspect of the prison.

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Mr WILLIE - Point of order, 45, relevance. The question is very specific about the cost of the meals. They're flying in 3000 meals a day in from Victoria. I'd ask the minister to address the question.

The SPEAKER - I ask the Deputy Premier to reflect on the points raised in the question.

Mr BARNETT - Thanks very much, through you, Speaker. Of course, you're asking questions which are operational questions relevant to the corrections facility.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order, the honourable Deputy Premier still has a minute and 50 seconds to go. None of us know what the Deputy Premier's going to say, so I ask that he be heard, please.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much, Speaker. The point I was making there: you were asking questions about the specific operations of the prison, and I can get back to the honourable member.

Members interjecting.

Mr BARNETT - Through you, Speaker, it's very hard to make a point when there's interjections and noise. If you're interested in the answer, perhaps you could listen.

The point I was making: for operational questions, I'm more than happy to get back to the honourable member once I've made inquiries in terms of those costs, but I'd like to make it clear the Buy Local Policy does apply, wherever possible. The local providers who -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. Honourable members to my left, the Deputy Premier still has a minute to go. You still have another five questions that you can ask on this matter. I ask that he be heard in silence, please.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, of course, we're getting meals from the mainland, but we're also getting many meals and support locally. Wherever possible, the government's Buy Local policy applies. I'd like to thank all the local providers who engage with the Department of Justice's supply and feed our prisoners. I'd also like to personally thank Custom Catering in Moonah, Launceston Catering Company, PFD Foods Services and National Pies for their continued efforts to provide supplies.

I'm advised that the flooring issue falls within the normal defects liability period for the period for any new build project. The department's managing those issues, I am advised, through the normal contractual defects process, but I'm more than happy to respond in terms of an update to the honourable member.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - Deputy Premier, I can help you here. There's been \$1.1 million in emergency catering contracts awarded. Is that the full amount or are there freight, storage and staffing costs that you haven't disclosed?

Mr BARNETT - I'm more than happy to take that on notice.

AI Data Centres - Wesley Vale

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.09 a.m.]

Last week George Town Council claimed they had no choice but to approve a new AI data centre at Bell Bay, against overwhelming community objections. In effect, councils are seemingly being forced to rubberstamp your data centre agenda. All of this because you made a secret deal with a convicted fraudster during the election campaign who now runs a company with no track record in data centre construction. Understandably, the Tamar Valley community is now in shock and feeling betrayed. When it comes to the Wesley Vale data centre, are you going to stand alongside your own community or with Firmus?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for your question. I reject the accusations in your question outright. What we're about is ensuring that we bring investment and opportunity to Tasmania. That's why, for example, we had \$25 million on the table to support the reopening of the Mount Lyell Mine, and what a fantastic day for Queenstown - 300 jobs, \$490 million of investment.

Mr BAYLEY - Point of order, honourable Speaker. This is a question about data centres and your approval.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. A member is on their feet. I ask that interjections cease, please.

Mr BAYLEY - Mt Lyell and mining were not mentioned once in the question. Just get to the question, please, Premier.

Mr Abetz - Any good news you don't like.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I characterise the question in investment and economic opportunity. It is a very proud day for the people of Queenie today, and Tasmania. I well remember I was just a few weeks into the role of Deputy Premier when the mine closed, and it's taken a lot of work -

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Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, 45, relevance, honourable Speaker. The Premier is being completely disrespectful. The question was about AI data centres and whether he's going to stand with his own community in Wesley Vale.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Premier, I draw you back to the original points raised in the question, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank the honourable Speaker for the ruling, but I might just say that question was littered with disrespect. We welcome opportunity when it comes to AI factories, data centres, because they provide employment in construction and further employment in operation. Indeed, they were a subject of national Cabinet last Wednesday, where nationally we're putting guardrails to support the community in terms of AI factories to ensure there are those guardrails. Also, given the huge opportunity these present to Tasmania but also to the companies themselves, my expectation is there must be significant community benefit provided to the community from the companies as well.

What I can say is we won't stand in the way of investment and opportunity. We have a robust planning system to support these opportunities, and local governments are there to make decisions. My suggestion to anyone who wants to stand for local government in October is if you're not prepared to make a tough decision, don't stand. I'm prepared to make tough decisions and tough calls, and I support the opportunity of working with whoever wants to -

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

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - The Premier did not answer the question. It was about listening to the community.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. The only one who should be speaking right now is the honourable Leader of the Greens.

Dr WOODRUFF - It was about him listening to the community. The community have genuine concerns. The disrespect is not towards an industry, it's about your disrespect to your community. Will you stand with people in Wesley Vale and listen to their concerns about the development of data centres and the fact that they are not being consulted about it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank the honourable member for the supplementary question. As I said in my previous answer, Tasmania has a strong, well-established planning framework for assessing new development, including data centres and AI infrastructure. Of course, these developments are regulated through Tasmania's Resource Management and Planning System, which incorporates the Tasmanian Planning Scheme. This system provides a comprehensive and consistent approach to land use decision-making across the state. That is the robustness of the planning system that I speak of and that's the planning system that I support.

Recognition of Visitors

The SPEAKER - I'd like us all please to welcome the years 4, 5, and 6 students from Riana Primary School. Welcome to parliament. You've come a long way, thank you for coming down.

Members - Hear, hear.

Firmus Bell Bay AI Data Centre - Major Project Assessment

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

[10.15 a.m.]

Your government's 2020 major projects pathway requires that a project meets two of three criteria: one, significant impact on a region's economy, environment, or social fabric; two, strategic importance to a region; or three, significant scale and complexity. Minister Jaensch said projects that have the potential for substantial impact should be assessed by independent expert panels. The Firmus Bell Bay data centre is a \$2.7 billion 288-megawatt facility, a scale you've called staggering, yet when asked why it wasn't escalated to a major project, you said it did not tick all the boxes. Minister, which two of the three statutory criteria does Bell Bay fail?

ANSWER

There was no application at all. Thank you for the question. When you think through it, there was no application or communication from the councils to assess it. The planning scheme is very strong in this area and there are options, as I explained yesterday. However, the situation is that the council is the appropriate place for this to be dealt with and they are the appropriate people to deal with it.

There is flexibility there to do different things, but do you really want political interference in some of these decisions because, once again, we touched on the awkwardness that you start to get if you start to pull, shake, take out and throw things into the political arena. We all want the system to stay strong in local government and I see no reason at all why that can't happen.

We can all pull lines out of various acts and different parts of the legislation to twist it to how we'd like it to be assessed and everything, but at this stage it still firmly sits with George Town or Latrobe Council and that's where I believe it should be until I'm told anything different. Thank you.

Supplementary Question

Ms BURNET - Thank you, minister, for that answer, but you and your government has been quoted as saying that these projects don't meet the major projects guidelines. Do you stand by that?

Mr VINCENT - I stand by the fact that the planning scheme is still strong and it is being assessed where it should be at the moment, and that's by the council. Once again, we can pull

various lines out and say this could be looked at this way or that way, but at the moment there's been no request from councils to assess it any differently. They know their role in this and they want to keep that role. If the community is strong about this, regardless of whether it's for or against, that's where it should be assessed and that's where it is. Thank you.

Urban Transit Solutions - Outsourced Jobs

Ms BUTLER question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT

[10.18 a.m.]

Two weeks ago, Labor asked whether work cut from Building Tasmania would simply be outsourced to expensive consultants. The Treasurer dismissed that concern. We have now been contacted by a former State Growth employee who coordinated the school bus data project and worked directly with bus operators across Tasmania. Her contract was not renewed following your restructure and has now been handed to Urban Transit Solutions, a Melbourne-based company with no previous involvement in the project. Why did your government get rid of an experienced Tasmanian worker, only to outsource her job interstate, and how much is Urban Transit Solutions being paid?

ANSWER

Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. It's obviously a subject that everybody is very passionate about. I will have to seek more detail on the specifics of that for you so I can give you an accurate answer on that. As to the internal workings of how some of those voluntary redundancies or how the positions are filled or how it may be with the contract that might have been in place beforehand, I'm not aware of the exact details, but as with all my commitments to this House, I will find the right information and return it to the House.

Supplementary Question

Ms BUTLER - Minister, this worker knew the Tasmanian system perfectly, the Tasmanian school bus network and also all the data. How many more Tasmanian jobs will you cut before paying interstate consultants to do exactly the same work? Is it okay that this is happening on your watch?

Mr VINCENT - What I can give you is assurance that everything that comes under my watch and what we are trying to achieve under my watch is about making sure that we build sustainability and economic sense into what we're doing.

Members interjecting.

Mr Willie - You're outsourcing jobs. It's waste- you'll end up paying heaps more.

The SPEAKER - Honourable members to my left, the honourable minister still has quite a bit of time left. I ask that he be heard in peace, otherwise I will move on to the next question.

Mr VINCENT - Of course, when there are voluntary redundancies, some of the flow of work changes and, as I stated in my first answer, I am more than happy to find out exact details.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Sorry, honourable minister, if the honourable members are not interested in hearing what the minister has to say, I'll go on to the next question. It is up to the honourable members to my left if they want to hear it or not, but your constant interjecting makes it very hard for Hansard to recall and for anyone else in this room to hear what the minister's saying.

Mr VINCENT - It's certainly not appropriate if you talk about one individual position -

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

Firearms Reform - Grandfathering Provisions

Ms JOHNSTON question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.21 a.m.]

Your Police minister yesterday declined to say who advised him to include a grandfathering provision in his proposed firearms bill. We know it wasn't the Police Commissioner, but after scanning the submissions, I could find only one calling for grandfathering provisions, and that was from One Nation. The grandfathering provisions, which was not in the version circulated for public consultation, now appears in the bill. Is minister Ellis weakening our gun laws in Tasmania to capture One Nation votes? Is it acceptable that your Police minister is taking advice from One Nation but not his police commissioner?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for the question and I understand the sensitivities around these matters, particularly in the state of Tasmania, and I recognise the diversity of views across the parliament. Just yesterday, Mr Di Falco said, if I can quote you, 'Our laws go too far - our proposed laws go too far'. Others in the Chamber say they don't go far enough. We want to ensure that we have a balanced position that ensures safety is the number-one priority for our community. One firearm in the hands of a criminal is one too many, and we need to ensure that our law-abiding firearm owners can go about the work that they do. This was also a subject, of course, of national cabinet. One of the criteria of the national cabinet, for example, was the banning of 3D printing for firearms, which we have done, and are ahead of the game.

We are actually one of the only states that have proposed and put forward a reclassification scheme to a higher category. That remains, honourable member, as you well know.

Mr Willie - One Nation told you to grandfather it.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I reject that. We are working across the community and listening to people, listening to our farmers, listening to our recreational hunters and the like, and listening to community safety advocates as well. I might point out that we are, in terms of where your question would be coming from, in terms of gun safety, ahead of the Labor state of South Australia, who are not participating in buybacks or reclassification. We are ahead of the Labor state of Victoria and, of course, ahead of Queensland and the Northern Territory. That's why we are listening to the community. The minister has said that he's taken 600 submissions, and we've listened to people. We listen to people when we go about our community work, whether that be at Agfest, whether that be on the street, and people have lots of opinions, and passionate opinions, on both sides of this discussion. We have put forward a number of firearm reforms to strengthen community safety, including -

Mr Mitchell - How is unlimited guns making us safe?

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Lyons.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Most importantly, that includes changes when it comes to those that break the law in terms of stolen firearms or in possession of stolen firearms, and very clearly. Then there's national responsibilities, Mr Ellis pointed out yesterday, when it comes to intelligence sharing across states and between states with the Commonwealth.

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

Supplementary Question

Ms JOHNSTON - The Premier in his response indicated that the government is taking a balanced position that goes to safety and listening to stakeholders. Clearly, from the submissions, the only changes made from the draft consultation to the bill tabled was grandfathering, and that's an idea that comes directly from One Nation. The police commissioner in her submission said that caps would enhance community safety. How's this government taking a balanced position when it's failing to listen to the Police Commissioner?

Mr Abetz - What did she say on mandatory penalties? We can ignore that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank the honourable member for the question and respect the diversity of views across the parliament; the views that say we're going too far and the views that say we're not going far enough. What we are doing is strengthening penalties for stolen firearms, enhancing the firearms register, reclassifying a number of firearms - most other states are not doing that - introducing controls around borrowing and lending of firearms, and the buyback of firearms. Most other states, including Labor states, are not doing that.

Firmus AI Data Centre - Bell Bay

Mr BAYLEY question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr DUIGAN

[10.26 a.m.]

Along with the scale and speed of data centre development in Tasmania, people at gobsmacked at their energy consumption. Firmus have announced plans for three new AI factories with a combined energy demand of at least 444 megawatts; that's about 25 per cent

of Tasmania's power. Tasmania has no binding obligation on companies to make them generate new energy. Firmus's energy policy says 'For every one megawatt, we're building two'; that means building at least 888 megawatts of new generation on-island. Two of three Firmus developments now have planning approval. Only one of them has an energy agreement and it is short term. Firmus's development at Bell Bay has just been approved. What is the energy arrangement for this site? Which new additional renewable energy generation projects is Firmus building, when and where?

ANSWER

Thank you, Speaker, and I thank the member for the question and, of course, the interest which exists in this space is topical. As the Premier has mentioned already, we welcome investment here in Tasmania. That is a very positive thing. The new data centre AI factory build out is a very, very large-scale build out which is happening here in Tasmania, across the country and indeed across the world. There is perhaps the philosophical argument that I think the Greens would like to reduce this to around AI and its uses, but the very fact is that there are investment opportunities and jobs opportunities here, in Tasmania, right now and huge demand. Our job, as government, is to help facilitate that investment in our state for the prosperity that it brings to the people of Tasmania.

It's very important to also recognise that in Tasmania we have power and have prioritised power for our existing industries, our heavy industries. Noting conversations that are occurring at Bell Bay at the moment, there is no suggestion that it is one or the other; we can have both here, in our state. It is very clearly the expectation not only of the Tasmanian government -

Ms Finlay - Only if there's new generation.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr DUIGAN - but of the national Commonwealth Government and, indeed, every state in the country, that new load brings new generation. Here in Tasmania, new load will need to bring new renewable generation and that is very clearly set out. We're doing work with the Commonwealth around legislation that will be progressed later in the year about how that will be realised.

Ms Finlay - After you've given them all your power contracts.

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

Mr DUIGAN - The Tasmanian government is releasing its draft expectations of data centres and AI infrastructure. So, we are leaning heavily into this. We will ensure that data centres bring not only their own new generation, that they are placed in areas where it benefits the network, that's important, if there is augmentation required for transmission that that will be at the cost of the data centre and, of course, that there is no negative impact to existing customers. These are the pillars upon which we would see these new investments roll out in Tasmania. As I say, my role, as Energy minister, is to make sure our energy system is in such a position as to be able to supply that and -

Dr Woodruff - Well, tell us what you've decided.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Leader of the Greens.

Mr DUIGAN - We welcome those discussion.

Supplementary Question

Mr BAYLEY - Look, that was all very interesting, but you didn't answer the question, minister. You mentioned that there's a large scale build-out, there's a huge demand, we completely agree with that. The issue here is that another data factory has just been approved. What is the energy arrangement for the Bell Bay site? Which new additional renewable energy generations is Firmus building - that's what they say, they're building - and when and where are they going to build them?

Mr DUIGAN - Thank you Speaker and again I thank the member for the question. Obviously, as you say, it is a large quantum of energy that is required for Firmus. They are having ongoing discussions with Hydro Tasmania about how that energy will be procured -

Ms Finlay - Will the energy be online before the load comes online?

The SPEAKER - Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr DUIGAN - and of course what the build-out of renewables to support their load will be. Those are conversations as I say that are happening as we speak. As government our job is to facilitate investment in Tasmania. My job as Energy minister is to ensure that our energy system is in good shape, that there is no energy security risk posed to the people of Tasmania through these contracts -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr DUIGAN - that Hydro might enter into. We look forward to continuing those conversations for this new industry being developed here in Tasmania. We think it's very important, but we all understand the opportunity -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - The member's time has expired.

Housing - Cradle Coast

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

[10.32 a.m.]

I welcome the students from Riana Primary School.

Minister, the Cradle Coast region is on the cusp of major economic investment. There is \$15 billion in proposed renewable energy projects, major mining projects, and the long-awaited arrival of the new *Spirits of Tasmania*. This renewable energy investment alone is expected to

bring up to 1900 additional workers into the region. The rental vacancy rate in Burnie is 0.7 per cent, and Circular Head has reported zero new dwellings over multiple quarters. On 8 April, minister, you attended a housing action and worker accommodation roundtable in Campbell Town, and committed to planning with the region. The Cradle Coast Authority, business, and industry, have all called and continue to call on your government to commence housing and workforce planning for the region - and you've done nothing. Minister, what is your plan to house this workforce, and will you commit today to ensuring this investment leaves a legacy of much-needed new permanent housing stock in the region?

ANSWER

Thank you for your question, a very relevant subject right around the state, because the growth that you talk about on the north-west coast is fairly evenly spread throughout Tasmania. There is a \$40 billion projection over the next 10 years of capital projects with even amounts spread in each area of the state - but I know you're talking about the north-west coast and I did attend that meeting in regards to that. As little as yesterday we were meeting to discuss the land use strategies, which does allow for a lot of the growth that is being talked about. The Cradle Coast Authority has been one of the leads that we've been dealing with -

Mr Willie - Being talked about? You need to house 1900 workers.

The SPEAKER - Order. Honourable members to my left, if you're going to keep interjecting - the honourable minister can have the option of answering the question or not, or we can resume your seats. Honourable minister, it's your choice.

Mr VINCENT - It is very exciting that we have so much development happening under this government in this state. We acknowledge that that growth does create both opportunities and some difficulties in dealing with it. But you need to deal with it correctly. The land use strategies for the north-west, the north, and the south are vital, along with the urban growth boundaries and other parts of the planning scheme to ensure that we cater for that growth. We are working through that as quickly as possible. The north-west coast hasn't been as easy as probably where the south and the north are at the moment, we've got a timeline in place for that to be addressed and we've been communicating that with councils and the Cradle Coast Authority. We'll be doing more so with discussion over the next couple of weeks.

The other thing that's happened is I have met with at least one of the wind farm operators and have had discussions about what they need, where they need it, and how they need it and we're working through some of those issues with it at the moment. All those energy related employment opportunities still sit with the minister for Energy and progressing through as they need to with those developments. We'll continue to have discussions to make sure that land and the system is available. Our biggest problem still in this state is not having enough trades to cope with the amount of houses we need.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Just ignore them.

Mr Abetz - Everybody else does.

Mr VINCENT - Thank you, Speaker. All those issues we are working through and had a lot of discussions, even last week, with a lot of major builders of homes on how we can do it more efficiently. I think I met with six different builders last week to have those discussions. Seeing how the workforce can change, how many more apprentices they can get on and how the training might work. We'll continue to work on all aspects -

Ms Butler - What legacy will you leave the north-west coast?

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

Mr VINCENT - that this exciting opportunity of \$40 billion dollars' worth of work produces.

Supplementary Question

Ms DOW - Look, there seems to be a lot of talk and not a lot of action. Minister, regional leaders are asking for a coordinated plan before this investment commences and that's in less than 18 months' time. Will you establish a regional task force to coordinate housing, workforce and infrastructure planning, including worker accommodation that can become permanent, social, affordable or key worker housing in the future?

Mr VINCENT - Thank you honourable Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to have a supplementary. I'm not sure whether another task force is what we really need when all these things are being discussed as we speak now.

Members interjecting.

Mr VINCENT - Cradle Coast is a very good authority representing the councils up there, we have the same in the north.

Ms Dow - They need resources to coordinate it

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Braddon, Ms Dow, this is your first warning.

Mr VINCENT - We have a lot of good people in place working through this. My opportunity is with the planning system to make subtle changes and bring in the land use strategies so all this works properly. I think there'd be a far bigger argument if we weren't -

Ms DOW - Point of order, 45, relevance. Community leaders are calling for this task force to be established because they're dissatisfied with this government's approach. Will the minister commit to that today?

Mr VINCENT - Happy to answer it. I've had no correspondence from any community leaders regarding a task force. Thank you.

Ms Finlay - Oh goodness me. Just do nothing.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you've already got one warning.

Payroll Tax Relief for Construction Companies Employing Apprentices

Mr O'BYRNE question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

[10.38 a.m.]

Since 2017, your government has provided a payroll tax relief for medium and large construction companies employing apprentices. You have now axed this subsidy. I know the budget requires tough decisions, but this decision could not have come at a worse time. We're in a housing crisis requiring us to build more houses and we're about to soon start building our multi-purpose stadium. Master Builders Tasmania estimates the state needs around 40,000 construction workers by 2033, we currently have about 29,000. Construction apprentices in training in Tasmania fell 17.2 per cent over the year to December 25, the steepest decline of any state. This skilled worker shortfall combined with the ever growing costs faced by builders means the need for this subsidy is greater than when it was first introduced. Treasurer, will you reverse this decision so we can get more Tasmanians into stable employment and more Tasmanians building houses and delivering on our major projects?

ANSWER

Speaker, I must confess I thought that might be a question I was going to be asked by the Labor Opposition, but it falls to an Independent member to ask a serious policy question, and I thank the member for Franklin for it. Like the honourable member for Franklin, I am concerned about the wellbeing and ongoing pipeline of apprentice's, who then become our tradies who will continue to build our state. In making decisions in relation to the Budget. The Treasury analysis suggested that the number of employees in the scheme had fluctuated in line with general employment trends and, therefore, as a return of taxpayers investment - and let's remember this is taxpayers, paid for by our fellow Tasmanians - it was not delivering that which we had anticipated in 2017. To be clear, those that are in the program will continue to have the support over the next two years. But the point that the honourable member makes, I think is very important and that is the best way to grow apprentices and new tradies is to facilitate new developments in our state, and he hit on it with the stadium, with data centres, with the North West Transmission Developments and with the Mount Lyell reopening that's being announced today: All these opportunities, and dare I even mention, Speaker, something in your electorate and the member for Franklin's electorate and mine, namely the Huon Aquaculture development of some \$200 million - more opportunities for apprentices.

Therefore the question becomes how do we support opportunities for our apprentices? The evidence seemed to suggest payroll tax relief, which then only applies, might I add, to the bigger builders with bigger payrolls - the small home builder with a small payroll doesn't get that benefit - so what we needed to do as a government, we believe, was to help facilitate those developments within our economy that will see growth and opportunity, which of necessity then lends itself to a pipeline for especially young people, but there are apprentices of middle age, et cetera, that will provide the opportunities to ensure that we get the tradies we need for the future.

Supplementary Question

Mr O'BYRNE - I thank the honourable Treasurer for the answer and the dry Treasury advice, and I actually think that proves the point - Treasury advice is such as that, but these are

people in the real economy employing people and taking on these big jobs. There is a massive shortfall and the advice, in effect, perpetuates that shortfall of tradies required to do the jobs that we're planning to build in Tasmania. I ask you to reconsider that. Will you reconsider that advice and talk with Master Builders and large construction companies to talk about resolving this issue?

Mr ABETZ - Speaker, as a government and personally, I'm always willing to reconsider positions on the basis of evidence provided to me, but as I see it, before 2017 when the subsidy was introduced, we had a pipeline of apprentices, and the best way to get a pipeline of apprentices is to get infrastructure being built. As I just sat down then, the minister for Health reminded me that in my list of developments around the state, I should have included health infrastructure as well, where the government is providing opportunities. Those larger builders will then be able to provide apprentices with the opportunities that both he and I would seek for the benefit especially of our young Tasmanians. But the government has made a decision. Are we willing to reconsider? Of course, we're always willing to reconsider, but the evidence at the moment does not suggest we should.

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

Tasmanian Beef - Woolworths' Decision

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

[10.44 a.m.]

It seems like every week I'm asking you about another bad outcome for Tasmanian farmers - mop-top, diesel and fertiliser prices, bird flu, outrageous FPA finds, Simplot and now Woolworths, which you described as 'beyond disappointing'. That's just in the last 12 months. Your Tasmanian Red Meat Industry Strategic Plan vision statement says:

A thriving and resilient Tasmanian red meat industry globally recognised for its excellence in sustainability, climate resilience and superior animal health and wellbeing.

Would you agree it is hard to be globally recognised if Tasmanians can't even find our meat in their local supermarkets?

ANSWER

I thank the member for raising this important issue, and in fact I thank all colleagues in this place for the representation that I received from constituents in your electorate, particularly around the issue of red meat. As to the issue of the commercial change in Woolworths' operations of sourcing red meat, particularly beef, from the great state of Tasmania, the Premier and I have already shouted that from the hilltops -

Mr Shelton - It's all local at Vermey's meats.

Members interjecting.

Mr PEARCE - That is not on. Whilst that is a commercial decision, it will have consequences going forward. I want everybody in this place to consider that it's only in the past four or five years when Woolworths used to buy out of the sale yards. There was a time when I as an Angus producer was proud; I stuck my chest out when I had a pen of cattle knocked down to either Coles or Woolworths or a reputable local butcher. It was a badge of honour, it was pride in my stock going to a butcher to be cut up and sold back to locals in local communities. I live for the day - I call for the day - where we can get back to that. Tasmanians deserve to eat Tasmanian produce.

When Woolworths and many other big suppliers went to a centralised system of cutting up and processing those animals offshore - on the mainland - we didn't know what meat we were getting. They did that for obvious commercial reasons, to get that critical mass and to shave everything off and return back to the bottom line, but it took away something very valuable. It took away locals feeding locals.

My message today is that we need to get back to that. There are many local butchers right across the state. You know who the reputable ones are. In fact, 99.9 per cent of them are. They're a business just like Woolworths are, but they don't have the fat that these big companies have. These are mum and dad operators who are buying local beef out of sale yards or auctions, or maybe even direct supply whereby a farmer - a producer - has an arrangement with a particular butcher to produce X amount -

Mr Mitchell - What are you doing about it?

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

Mr PEARCE - Eat local.

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

Northern Tasmania - Events Pipeline

Prof RAZAY question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.48 a.m.]

I have been advocating for a northern events pipeline for some time. We have suffered the loss of Boags, Liberty Bell Bay, the Hawks, and now the Bell Bay aluminium smelter is now in jeopardy. It's encouraging to see that the Northern Tasmanian Economic Summit's summary report identify events as a strategic economic driver and specifically propose an events pipeline similar to an infrastructure pipeline. While major projects such as the proposed Launceston convention centre will take some time to be delivered, my question is what can we do right now to immediately boost our economy, and what is the government doing in the next 12 to 24 months to build a stronger pipeline of major and regional events for northern Tasmania?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for the question and also the themed tie around events as well; I commend you on that. I concur with the honourable member that events are a very

important part of our hospitality and tourism industries. They bring people to the regions and bring people to Tasmania. This is evidenced by Party in the Paddock, the Foo Fighters performing earlier this year and the wonderful Festivale. I'm talking about northern Tasmania because you're the member for Bass, but there have also been events in the north-east at Bridport as well. What we're doing is delivering on our commitment to northern Tasmania with a number of economic-boosting initiatives. It was fantastic to be at the top of one of the floors of the new Fragrance Hotel meeting a number of tradies the other day and seeing that construction as well, seeing a crane above us not far away, a crane above the Princess Theatre to your subject of events as well, which is a wonderful investment. As part of this work, as well as a \$200 000 as will be provided to Business Events Tasmania, to deliver more conferences to the region. You mentioned the convention centre. I understand the DA has gone in or is soon to go in with respect to the Launceston City Council. We're contributing some \$10 million investment in partnership with that as well.

Business events are very important. People, as I understand it, enjoy the experiences. They see a bit of a small snapshot of the area that they visit, but most importantly, they tend to bring their families back as well, which is fantastic, which is why we need to continue business events, which brings significant benefits to local accommodation providers, hospitality venues, retailers, tourism operators and the like.

Of course, it's projected that, if we get business events right, it will inject some \$6 million into economic activity for Northern Tasmania as well. That's why we're also taking, to your question around a pipeline, a far more coordinated approach to establishing the entity of Creative Tasmania where we're having tourism, hospitality, events all coordinated and working together to ensure that they're not only be coordinating the large events such as the Festivale, such as Dark Mofo, but also the smaller events that matter to regional Tasmania. The events in the Huon, events in the north east Tasmania, Circular Head, of course, on the islands, including Flinders and King.

So, I agree with you when it comes to providing a very strong events pipeline, that's my expectation. I might also mention the other investment-

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

Risdon Prison Kitchen Renovation

Mr WILLIE question to MINISTER for JUSTICE, CORRECTIONS and REHABILITATION, Mr BARNETT

[10.52 a.m.]

Newly published tenders show that your department awarded three emergency catering contracts worth more than \$1.1 million after the new \$20 million Risdon Prison kitchen failed. You previously said additional repair costs were expected to be covered under the construction contract, but more than \$1 million has now been committed to feeding prisoners while the kitchen is out of action. Who will pay those costs? The contractor responsible for delivering the kitchen or taxpayers, and if so, what are you cutting to pay for it?

ANSWER

We've been very open about this, and you've made mention of the tender, which is on the website. So, in terms of openness and transparency, it's very, very clear. I've also made it clear in the past that they've acted quickly in terms of the defect policy, the defect liability policy, and that's been in place and they've acted on that. Repairs, in terms of the slip hazard, has been identified and that's in terms of the epoxy flooring and in terms of achieving a P5 slip resistance rating, it's been identified under that defect liability period and I've been advised-

Ms HADDAD - Point of order, Speaker, 45, relevance. The question was specifically who's paying for it and if it's a taxpayer, how the minister is coming up with that \$1 million from his own budget? He's gone nowhere near it.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, of course, there was an early part of that question that related to the prison and the kitchen itself and I'm providing an update in terms of the rectification and they're acting in accordance with that defect liability period policy, so that's in place. I'm also advised by the department that they'll be acting in accordance with the contract in terms of being refunded under that contract for relevant costs related to that defect liability policy.

So, that's the advice I've received and in terms of those reimbursements of those funds, that's an expectation that I've been advised by the department will occur.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - Just for clarity, Deputy Premier, are you saying that the department will recover the costs for the food that's been flown in from Victoria? 3000 meals a day from the contractor, and if it's taxpayers that are footing the bill, what are you going to cut from your budget to pay for it?

Mr BARNETT - Thanks very much, Speaker, and I thank the honourable member for his question. As I've said, they'll be acting in accordance with the contract. There is a defect liability period. They're acting in accordance with that -

Mr Willie - That's for the infrastructure, we're asking about the food.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - in terms of the rectification and the reimbursement of funds that is identified under the contract. My advice is that they will be seeking the reimbursement of those relevant funds, and that's a matter for the department. I've indicated my expectations are very high expectations, to do everything possible to ensure that we protect taxpayers. We need to deliver a sustainable budget. The Treasurer has made that clear and the Premier has made it very clear. We need to ensure that there are efficiencies and productivity. What is at the forefront of our minds in this government is ongoing support for those in the health sector, education, and community safety -

The SPEAKER - The Deputy Premier's time has expired.

Bird Flu - Little Penguin Vaccination

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

[10.57 a.m.]

Mr Wes Ford of biosecurity made clear on ABC radio today that bird flu has gained a foothold across the north of the state and will inevitably spread across the rest of the island. On victorious Phillip Island what is probably the world's largest vaccination program on a wild penguin population is underway and apparently on schedule. Minister, what have you learned about that little penguin program that could be implemented in Tasmania, where our penguin colonies are smaller and perhaps more suitable for a vaccination effort? Are you considering a vaccination program for some, if not all, the little penguin colonies? If not, why not?

ANSWER

I firstly thank the Independent member for his question and his concern. In fact, it's a concern that we all share, not just for our little penguins but for all species. There have now been a number of detection of H5 bird flu right across the state, and there have been some positive detections of H5N1 in little penguins, *Eudyptula minor*. As background, there are in excess of a million pairs of little penguins in the state, and they are not considered threatened, however they are absolutely vital for our wildlife ecosystem.

In terms of the guidelines for the vaccination process, which you speak of in your question, we as a state follow the national guidelines. The advice is very clear in relation to that species, and that is that it is not an efficient use of resources to vaccinate little penguins in bulk at this time. The program that you talk of on Phillip Island - and I think there's another one in New South Wales also - is where states and territories have moved away from the national plan.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr PEARCE - We are monitoring that very carefully. It is going to be interesting and we watch that with interest there. What are we doing here about this? The advice that I've been given is that there are immediate measures -

Dr Woodruff - Terrible. 'We're not interested, we're deeply concerned'.

The SPEAKER - Order. Honourable Leader of the Greens, this is your first warning. There are other questions that the Greens can ask on this as well. I ask that the minister be heard, please.

Mr PEARCE - There are other measures that we can employ that will immediately help them. One such measure is predation. The pressure that is on those little penguin colonies in terms of feral cats, for instance, is incredible. We've stepped that up. There was a suggestion from the independent member Mr Garland in relation to gill netting adjacent to rookery's small little penguin colonies. We took you up on that and they're working through that program now to put that into place, a good suggestion. Other measures include ensuring that that wildlife

species, once infected and out the other end of that, can continue to repopulate and strengthen their reproductive biomass. All of these things put together is where we are placing our effort.

In terms of our vaccination program for endangered species - and we continue with their orange-bellied parrot program. That is something that we're proud of.

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

Supplementary Question

Mr GEORGE - Minister, it sounds to me that it's a lack of resources and a lack of money available to put into the little penguin colony. So, the little penguin colonies on Phillip Island are considered to be very suitable for vaccinations because they follow the same track every single day. One is able to produce a vaccination twice for these penguins. So, is it really a question that you don't have the resources and you won't put the money to it?

Mr PEARCE - You've almost answered your own question. The situation in Phillip Island is completely different to the vast spread of populations that we have in Tasmania. The best scientific advice that I have is that we could do more damage than good in this. Remembering that you've raised the very question: we have to herd these things, they have to have two injections, they have to be microchipped, and they have to be monitored. At the end of all that, you now have to look at the duration of that virus and what protections that will give that species for subsequent boosters.

Dr Woodruff - Well, you're doing it to orange-bellied parrots, and they're tiny.

The SPEAKER - Order, honourable Leader of the Greens.

Bell Bay Aluminium - Federal Government Assistance

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.02 a.m.]

We all agree that securing the future of Bell Bay Aluminium is a critical priority for the state. What are the details of the package your government has submitted to the Commonwealth, including the amount requested, the form of assistance sought and the contribution your government has committed?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for his question and, of course, recognise the enormous interest in the future of Bell Bay, not only to the local community around George Town, but also to the entire northern region, but also, given the importance of Bell Bay Aluminium to Nyrstar, to the electricity network right across Tasmania, which is why we are backing the 550 workers at Bell Bay Aluminium and have advocated very strongly to the federal government to play a role and play their part. We have submitted a proposal in terms of writing to minister Ayres and minister Bowen. Minister Ellis and minister Duigan have corresponded. I have spoken to minister Ayres personally myself last week around a number of aspects of that letter, highlighting to minister Ayres as, indeed, from my recollection, the letter also around the

support for New South Wales to the tune of \$1.2 billion, importantly, for that community. But Tasmanian community is just as important. We are a nation of states, including two territories, and we expect the federal government to play a very key role. I'm not going to detail those matters but, of course, I will at the appropriate time. We're going through negotiations at this particular time. I know minister Duigan and, indeed, Hydro are working through matters around energy pricing. We will play a significant role, as we have done and continue to do, when it comes to supporting our major industrials with the subsidised power arrangements. And for good reason, Hydro industrialisation was set up for the reason of attracting investment to Tasmania. So, we will definitely play a key role, but we cannot do it alone, we must have Rio coming to the table - and I remind the honourable member of the significant billions of dollars of profit of that company - and that must be said. That must be said, the responsibility of that company to this community and northern Tasmania, it must be said. So, Rio, the Tasmanian Government and indeed the federal government. We cannot do it alone; we must work together and that we will.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - Premier, has a formal proposal been submitted to the federal government, or is it just a letter from you? And what is the contribution from the state? What people are looking for here is for you to bring the relevant parties together and work through a deal to secure the jobs and the supply chains in northern Tasmania.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We already have significant investment on the table in terms of Tasmania playing a key role. I'm not going to detail the contents of the correspondence yet and, indeed, the ask, but we will provide that for the Tasmanian community. It is significant because the approximately \$60 million figure is the indicative gap between negotiating positions. It is not a settled payment, it is not the increase in BBA's power bill, and is not a cheque we have agreed to write. This is a real commercial gap between what Hydro can responsibly offer and what Rio says BBA needs. Our direction to Hydro to offer a certain energy price does not make that gap disappear. Yes, Hydro in Tasmania needs to play a role, Rio needs to play a role.

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

AI Data Centres - Expectations

Ms BADGER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.06 a.m.]

There is a fundamental lack of trust between the community and the AI data centre industry that is deepened by a lack of transparency, no public consultation and zero binding guardrails. At Estimates, the Office of the Coordinator General (OCG) said that they are in discussions with around 10 data centre companies wanting to set up here, but Tasmanians have been kept in the dark about these resource-intensive proposals. In mid-August, the minister, Mr Ellis told this place that your AI data centre statement of expectations would be released in coming days for community consultation. It hasn't been released. Where is it? Exactly who are the data centre companies the OCG is working with? Where do they want to set up? What will their energy and water consumption be?

ANSWER

The matter you refer to, in terms of the expectations, they will be released very shortly. More broadly, the Coordinator-General is charged with not only engaging with potential AI factories and data centre investors, but also a range of investors to Tasmania across a range of industry sectors. That is the key role that they play. We welcome the opportunity, when large corporations and large businesses and large investors knock on Tasmania's door to want to employ Tasmanians and invest in Tasmania. We will welcome them.

Of course, that also comes with expectations as well. We've spoken previously about the guardrails as expectations, and that will see draft legislation nationally, as I understand it, towards the end of this year - November. They are likely to be in the federal parliament towards the beginning of next year, if my memory serves me correctly. So, this is a national discussion, one that we need to involve ourselves in and embrace. Other states around the world are embracing these opportunities. Around the world they're embracing these opportunities.

Ms Badger - Then tell us about it.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Honourable members of the Greens, you've asked a question. I ask that the Premier be heard. You still have a supplementary to go, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What is also important to your question is that the community is able to have a say, and we are listening to the community and their concerns. Some of those concerns are well-founded and others are going straight to that conspiracy theory, which often happens in these circumstances. So, we will welcome opportunity. We have a robust planning system. We have an opportunity for community to engage. George Town Council made their decision the other day. They made a decision and they voted for that opportunity, as is their role.

Supplementary Question

Ms BADGER - The Premier says he's listening to the community concerns. The community have spoken loud and clear that they want to know, they want to understand which of these centres are coming to this state and how much of public resources they are going to be consuming. That was the crux of my question. How many and which of these companies is the OCG talking to and how much public resources will they be consuming?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, of course, this information will be available as the process -

Ms Badger - What, when the DA gets lodged? That's too late.

Mr ROCKLIFF - When the process progresses and when it comes to development applications-

Ms Badger - It's too late then, Premier. You're not listening to them.

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Lyons, Ms Badger, I remind you that if you're not satisfied with the Premier's answer, there are other forms of this House that you can use to

raise your concerns. I ask that whichever minister is on their feet be heard because there's other forms of the House for all members that they can use to get further information.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe I've answered the supplementary question.

Ms Badger - No.

Bell Bay Aluminium - Negotiations and Assistance

Ms FINLAY question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.11 a.m.]

People in my community are living what's happening at Bell Bay every day. There's a pressure, as you said, not only in northern Tasmania, but right across the state. My question to you is simple: when businesses like Kempe Engineering and Hicksy's Hardware rely on what happens at Bell Bay Aluminium, they need answers and certainty. When will the negotiations with Hydro come to an end - this week? More importantly, when will you table the proposal that you put to Canberra? We want to do everything possible to secure those jobs and those supply chains, but we can't do it unless you make that proposal available to us to understand.

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for her question and I look forward to the honourable member changing Labor's position on advocating to Canberra. I want Labor, through the Deputy Leader, to change their position and do a backflip for the good of the Bell Bay community.

Mr WILLIE - Point of order. The question wasn't about Labor; it was about a very serious matter at Bell Bay. We are advocating for the federal government. I want the Premier to take this seriously. People's livelihoods are on the line and he should answer the question.

The SPEAKER - Thank you, honourable Leader of the Opposition. Honourable Premier, I do bring you to the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I promise you that if you change your position I won't put out a media release calling it a backflip because we will welcome that change in position, because the people of Bell Bay and northern Tasmania -

Mr Willie - They don't want your blame game anymore.

Mr Mitchell - You're a joke.

Mr Willie - They're over it.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - They expect their local members to stand up for their community, and that's what we are doing.

Mr Willie - They are over your blame game.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order, all honourable members. I ask the House to please settle. We're nearly to the end of Question Time. I appreciate that all sides of this House are very passionate about this issue and I ask the Premier to return to the points that were raised in the original question, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The honourable member who asked the question is famous for saying, 'Stop wasting your time, get over trying to chase the deal because it's not there'. Well, the deal has to be there for that community.

Ms FINLAY - Speaker, I take personal offence at the disrespect of the Premier misquoting me when they were the words of Susie Bower, former Liberal candidate, and I ask him to withdraw.

The SPEAKER - That is a misrepresentation. The honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition can use Standing Order 127 at the end of question time.

Ms Finlay - It may be a misrepresentation, Speaker, but I am personally offended.

The SPEAKER - Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I've offered you an opportunity to do it. It is not the time for debate right now, so you have a choice whether you do it at the end of question time or we will just move on. It is not for debate.

Ms Finlay - Speaker, I have a thick skin, but I am offended. I ask him to withdraw. I take personal offence and ask him to withdraw.

The SPEAKER - Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I've explained to this House on numerous times the differences between Standing Order 144 and Standing Order 127. This is a misrepresentation of a policy or party position or something previously said. It was not about you personally where they said that you were a name or anything. It is a misrepresentation. It is Standing Order 127.

Ms Finlay - I'm not going to cry in the parliament, but I am deeply offended. Ask him to withdraw.

The SPEAKER - It is Standing Order 127.

Supplementary Question

Ms FINLAY - Members of my community are deeply offended by the efforts of this government, your people. Premier, people are offended. They have no certainty. They do not understand your disrespect in moments like this. When will you table the proposal that you have submitted to Canberra?

UNCORRECTED PROOF

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank the honourable member for their question. I simply say that we all need to work together to find a solution.

Members interjecting.

Mr Willie - That's rich, coming from you.

Mr Mitchell - You're a joke.

Ms Finlay - Table it.

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

Mr ROCKLIFF - Occasionally I have a look at your comments on social media and what I see is people also demanding of you what is your position, what is your solution and are you going to stand up for Tasmania?

Ms Finlay - Speaker, I'm asking for a date. When will the Premier table the proposal?

The SPEAKER - Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I again remind you that there are other forms of this House you can use if you are not satisfied with an answer being provided, but coming in here and shouting and raising your voice is not an appropriate form of action. I remind the honourable member that you can ask further questions today, you can raise it on adjournment and there are other forms of this House, but I will not have members in here shouting and causing disruption -

Ms Finlay - Point of order, 45 - relevance. When will he table the document?

Member Suspended

Member for Bass - Ms Finlay

The SPEAKER - The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is now suspended until after lunch.

Ms Finlay withdrew.

The SPEAKER - The honourable member for Braddon, Mr Garland, has the call.

Mr Mitchell - You think you can just tell a blatant untruth and get away with it.

Members interjecting.

Member Suspended

Member for Lyons - Mr Mitchell

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Lyons, Mr Mitchell, you're now suspended until after lunch too under Standing Order 149.

Mr Mitchell withdrew.

Wedgetail Eagles - Impact of Wind Turbines

Mr GARLAND question to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT and CLIMATE CHANGE, Mr BARNETT

[11.17 a.m.]

Anyone who knows me knows how much I love our wedge-tailed eagles. There is something truly special about seeing one of these magnificent birds soaring over Tasmania. The far north-west is a stronghold for wedge-tailed eagles, but they are endangered and their survival is precarious. It takes around 12 chicks to replace the loss of just one adult eagle. With more than 100 turbines approved for Robbins Island and further wind and transmission development planned across the north-west, every additional adult death matters. Minister, are you satisfied we are doing enough to ensure wind turbines do not cumulatively push our wedge-tailed eagle closer to extinction?

ANSWER

Thanks very much, Speaker, and I thank the honourable member for his question and his ongoing interest in his part of the world, particularly with the iconic eagle species - the wedge-tailed eagle - and no doubt the white-bellied sea eagle.

I should acknowledge right up front it's a priority for our government in terms of the protection of that eagle species. There is a range of concerns in terms of the threat from disturbance, obviously roadkill, collisions with wind turbines, as you've mentioned, electrocution and impact on transmission lines. There's also poisoning and a whole range of disturbances to these eagles. There is also a robust assessment and approvals process in place to mitigate the impact of wind farms, which you've mentioned in your question, and transmission lines as well that you've touched on in your question with respect to threatened eagles and the wedge-tailed eagle in particular. That work builds on a significant amount of research and investment from industry and species experts.

I want to indicate to you in terms of an update for yourself and the House that the government has invested \$8 million since 2024 to deliver the Tasmanian Threatened Species Fund to directly support conservation activities for priority species, including the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle conservation and management plan. I had the opportunity yesterday to talk about the orange-bellied parrot, which is a seriously and critically endangered species, and the vaccination process of 350 birds between yesterday through to February, so it is progressing and that's good news. I'm meeting with Dr Magali Wright, who's head of our species advisory council, next week.

You've asked a very good question. I'm also advised the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRET) is working with stakeholders. I'm also advised the (NRET) is working with stakeholders to address key knowledge gaps about the eagle population size, distribution and behaviour, and to quantify threats to their survival. A comprehensive audit of data and knowledge gaps is underway to inform the development of updated conservation and management advice for the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle and to help regulators and other stakeholders to focus research and management efforts. Together

these elements underpin an evidence-based and fit-for-purpose conservation plan for supports that will support Tasmania's eagle protection and management. I'm looking forward to learning more and I'm more than happy to keep working with the honourable member and provide further updates as we progress on this important matter.

The SPEAKER - The Deputy Premier's time has expired.

Supplementary Question

Mr GARLAND - Minister, the eagle doesn't experience these developments one project at a time. The Commonwealth has already recognised the need to model cumulative wind farm mortality. Will you commit to a population level cumulative impact assessment of existing approved and proposed developments now, before cumulative mortality reaches a point from which this magnificent species cannot recover?

Mr BARNETT - As I say, the department's working on the protection and management plans for the iconic species. There'll be more work that's needed. I'm absolutely committed to progressing every effort to do what we can. I also want to commit to the honourable member to have ongoing meetings and briefings with yourself, not just from myself but for the department experts. As I say, I'm meeting with Dr Wright next week, the Scientific Advisory Committee (Threatened Species) Chairperson. I'm really looking forward to that. I'm sure I'll learn a lot from Dr Wright and the council does excellent work, and feeds into those protection and management plans. We want to do what we can to protect and support this iconic species. I appreciate your special interest in this. I look forward to learning from you and indeed others with respect to what more we can do as a government in this space.

Time expired.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

TasWater - Charges

Ms BUTLER question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

[11.24 a.m.]

My question is from Cindy of Perth in relation to water and sewerage charges by TasWater. Cindy states: 'We have lived at our address for 34 years and have always had two water connections and one sewerage connection. One water connection is used for our residents and returns wastewater to the relevant area. The second connection is used for our substantial vegetable garden and does not feed into any area of waste. TasWater have advised the previous sewer services were generally based on the number of ETs assigned to our property. Under the new pricing structure, residential sewer service charges are now based on the number of water connections to a property. It is an extra \$800 per year on top of our other increased water and sewerage service charges - charges for a service we don't have. Australian consumer law is

founded on a simple principle: consumers should not be required to pay for a service that has not been delivered. Minister, will you step in and review this policy?'

Recognition of Visitors

The SPEAKER - Before I give the call to the honourable member for Bass, Ms Rosol, I would like to acknowledge in the Speaker's Reserve today the honourable Michael McCormack MP, member for Riverina and also a former deputy prime minister. Welcome to the Tasmanian Parliament.

Members - Hear, hear.

Rushy Lagoon Silica Mine - Aboriginal Cultural Places

Ms ROSOL question to MINISTER for ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, Mrs ARCHER

My question is on behalf of the Melaythenner Teeackana Warrana Aboriginal Corporation about the silica mine proposed for Rushy Lagoon by North Scottsdale Resources. The proposed mine would cover 770 hectares of what is currently coastal sand dunes, making it the largest mining site in Tasmania. It would be 10 metres deep, with a 700 metre wharf also planned. This country has hundreds of important Aboriginal cultural heritage sites, including known Aboriginal burial places. However, due to the inadequacies of the state's Aboriginal heritage legislation, these sites are currently not protected, placing them at significant risk of being destroyed by the mine proposal. MTWAC are deeply concerned about the risks to this significant Aboriginal cultural landscape because of the potential mine. Minister, will you intervene and ask for a pause on the development application process for the silica mine until after the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1975* is replaced, helping to ensure protections of important cultural places.

Freycinet National Park - Infrastructure

Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for PARKS and HERITAGE, Mr DUIGAN

My constituents at Coles Bay on the east coast have been aware of ongoing discussions around plans to meet future demand and improve infrastructure at Freycinet National Park. Can you please tell them what is going to happen in the region and when they can expect to see this work begin?

TasWater Pricing

Prof RAZAY question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

My question is from a small business operating in Rocherlea, Launceston, employing 35 people in the steel fabrication sector. The business manager wrote to me regarding changes in how TasWater calculated fixed sewage charges. She says the business traditionally paid around \$630 per month in fixed sewage charges, but in July it jumped to \$3800 - a whopping 500 per cent increase. TasWater says the increase is due to it now calculating fixed charging

on pipe diameter, as opposed to the past practice of charges being set at a fixed fee based on estimated demand of the property. The Rocherlea business is now facing an additional \$40,000 per annum in basic operating costs and is asking for the Treasurer to commit to review TasWater pricing policies.

Legal Aid Services

Ms BURNET question to MINISTER for JUSTICE, CORRECTIONS and REHABILITATION, Mr BARNETT

My question is from my constituent Jason, who was unable to access services through Legal Aid, nor through the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service, due to capacity issues. He was advised to engage a lawyer privately. Despite trying, he has found that all firms he has approached are at capacity. What will the government do to ensure there are enough legal services in Tasmania and in Hobart?

Spirit of Tasmania Sailings

Ms DOW question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT

My constituent question is from John in Braddon. John asks: was it a coincidence that *Spirit IV* arrived at 6.30 a.m. on Sunday at the same time as the high tide? Why couldn't it arrive later in the day? Will sailings of the new ships be dictated by the tides?

Environmental Standards for Producers

Mr GARLAND question to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE, Mr BARNETT

My question is from Arthur from Boat Harbour Primary School. Minister, how come flow-through salmon hatcheries can discharge wastewater containing nutrients like nitrates and potentially residues from antibiotics back into Tasmania's rivers, while the dairy farmer across the road faces strict requirements around managing effluent and nutrient runoff? Minister, can you explain why these two industries appear to be treated so differently, and whether you believe the environmental standards applying to salmon hatcheries are genuinely fair and consistent with those applying to other Tasmanian primary producers?

Nepal Flash Flood

Ms OGILVIE question to

We've all seen the recent devastation that occurred in Nepal last week, and I thought the comments in the Chamber yesterday were really beautiful. Our thoughts are with everybody impacted. A number of my constituents have asked where they can find out more information. Can the minister please advise what is the best way to stay up-to-date on the situation?

Time expired.

PETITIONS

AI Data Centres

[11.29 a.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I have the honour to be the bearer of two petitions which are similarly worded. A written petition signed by approximately 33 petitioners and an e-petition signed by approximately 10,035 petitioners. The petition requests that the House call on the Government to issue an immediate moratorium on all non-complete AI and data facilities in Tasmania until the following are established: AI-specific planning legislation and regulations that adequately address the social and environmental impacts of these developments; a public transparency register that regularly reports on energy and water consumption, and operations, of all AI and related data facilities; a mechanism for parliamentary oversight of operations and resource allocation to facilities over 50MW; a guarantee for local jobs; and protections for electricity consumers from utility price increases due to the connection demands of AI and related data facilities. The petitions conform with the relevant Standing Orders and Rules of the House.

Petitions received.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE - ANSWERS

No. 41 of 2026 - Digital Vegetation Map of Tasmania

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

See Appendix 1 on page x.

No. 42 of 2026 - Climate Change Office

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

See Appendix 2 on page x.

No. 43 of 2026 - Electric Vehicles

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

See Appendix 3 on page x.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

No. 44 of 2026 - Climate Capability Framework

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

See Appendix 4 on page x.

TABLED PAPER

Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts - Report

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I have the honour to bring up the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts and its inquiry: Follow-Up of the Report of the Auditor-General Expressions of Interest for Tourism Investment Opportunities, No. 3 of 2020-21, PP No. 53, 2026. I move -

That the report be received and printed.

Report received and printed.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation Annual Report 2025-26

[11.32 a.m.]

Ms BURNET (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I have the honour to bring up the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation Annual Report 2025-26. I move -

That the report be received and printed.

Report received and printed.

PUBLIC HEALTH AMENDMENT (EMERGENCY POWERS) BILL 2026 (No. 31)

First Reading

Bill presented by Mrs Archer and read the first time.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Sitting Times

[11.33 a.m.]

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

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent

- (1) The Question before the Chair at 6.00 pm today automatically standing adjourned;
- (2) The suspension of the Sitting at 6.00 pm until the ringing of the bells at 6.30 pm;
and
- (3) The House immediately resuming debate on that Question when the House resumes.

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Look, I want to strongly support this and thank the government for taking on board the suggestion that we do suspend the sitting so as all members can attend a vigil on Parliament House lawns for the victims of the Nepali floods and the Nepalese community here today, so we can indeed physically stand in solidarity with them as we have metaphorically here with our words yesterday. Thank you, Leader.

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Thank you, Speaker. Likewise, the opposition supports the motion and thanks the government for facilitating it and yourself, Honourable Speaker. It is very meaningful, I think, when community groups gather on the Parliament Lawns, that we are able to do that, and obviously we can't ordinarily under our standing orders. So, having a formal suspension like this is not only a really important measure for us to be able to take as a Chamber, but also it shows that deep respect and shared grief for us to be able to stand with the local Nepalese community, knowing how many people have been affected by the flash flooding in Nepal and Tibet. So, thank you again, Speaker, and we support the motion.

Motion agreed to.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Waste

[11.35 a.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I rise on this MPI to talk about government waste. Really, what kind of government, what form of government - are there any governments in a Westminster system that can honestly say they don't have the capacity to feed their own prisoners? What a state of affairs when we are in a situation in Tasmania where we have a government that can't even feed its own prisoners. Now, we know that the