



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 6 September 2022

REVISED EDITION

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Tuesday 6 September 2022

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

QUESTIONS

Tasmanian AFL Team - Stadium's Role in Bid

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.02 a.m.]

When you asked for tripartisan support for a Tasmanian AFL team, which you have, you gave assurances that a stadium would not part of the bid. The task force has likewise insisted the stadium is not part of the bid. Less than a month ago you told Tasmanians: 'The stadium is not part of our bid for an AFL team.' Has this changed? Is a stadium now going to be part of the bid?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. The bid we put forward for the AFL team, as we have publicly stated, is \$10 million over 10 years as well as a \$50 million contribution. The stadium was not part of the bid.

We are doing as we said, investing some \$1.25 million on a feasibility study for the stadium, and that is still being worked through.

Our strong offer for the AFL team includes funding of \$50 million to assist in the establishment of the team's operations and, as a critical priority, to construct a high-performance centre for the team's use. Planning and design works are underway to enable the high-performance facility to be completed and ready for use no later than mid-2025. That was part of the bid I put forward, as well as funding of \$10 million a year for 10 years from the team's entry into the AFL and AFLW competitions.

While not part of the licence bid, the Tasmanian Government recognises that a Tasmanian team competing in the AFL and AFLW competitions needs a suitable modern stadium in which to play. Government has commenced pre-feasibility work for a new arts, entertainment and sporting precinct that includes a 23 000-seat stadium near the Hobart central business district. While the new arts, entertainment and sporting precinct will need to satisfy feasibility requirements and secure funding, the state Government is prepared to contribute up to 50 per cent of the site and construction costs, which would be to the magnitude of \$375 million based on estimated costings.

We are currently working with the AFL to understand their commitments to the new club. That relates to support for the new club and infrastructure plans for the local Tasmanian competition, and mutually agreeing on the constitution to oversee the licence and club. The AFL and Tasmanian Government representatives are working to finalise these key matters.

Tasmanian AFL Team - Macquarie Point as Stadium Site

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.06 a.m.]

Nearly \$130 million of public money has been poured into Macquarie Point over the past decade but you have almost nothing to show for it. Can you confirm that you are actively considering building a stadium at Macquarie Point?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Macquarie Point presents a very exciting opportunity for Tasmania as one of the last remaining vacant urban infill locations in any of Australia's capital cities. At over 9.3 hectares, it is a huge parcel of land which needed extensive complex remediation from its history as a former industrial site, preparing it for future development. Removing contaminated soils does not look exciting, as we have stated before, but without this work the site was not safe to build on and would cause a public hazard, endangering people's health and safety. Since its establishment, the corporation has remediated and removed more than 65 000 tonnes of contaminated soil, more than 2.3 million litres of contaminated groundwater and nearly one kilometre of deteriorated and redundant oil and diesel pipelines across the site.

We have also completed a major planning scheme amendment to rezone the site and allow for the development.

Progress has been happening at the site, despite what some commentators are saying. The top priority is removing dangerous contaminants to enable development to commence as quickly as possible while ensuring public safety at the site.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 45. I ask you to draw the Premier's attention to the question, which is whether the Government is actively considering building a stadium at Macquarie Point. He has not gone anywhere near answering the question.

Mr SPEAKER - Standing order 45 does not allow me to tell the Premier how he should answer the question. I will leave that up to the Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are committed to realising our vision to activate the Hobart waterfront. We believe an arts, entertainment and sporting precinct will deliver significant social and economic outcomes, and create a spectacular and iconic entry to Hobart. More than a major sporting venue, a new precinct will enable us to attract world-class entertainment acts and grow existing events like Dark MOFO.

We have always been transparent about sites being considered for a potential arts and entertainment precinct in Hobart. A report on the sites being considered has been available on the Department of State Growth's website since February. One of those sites was always Macquarie Point. All sites are subject to the feasibility work still underway.

COVID-19 - Shortening Isolation Period

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.09 a.m.]

The Victorian and Western Australian chief health officers have both raised the alarm about the National Cabinet decision you were complicit in to shorten the COVID-19 isolation period from seven to five days. There has been silence, sadly, from our own director of public health.

The Australian Medical Association and independent experts like Dr Nancy Baxter, Professor Brendan Crabb and Dr Raina MacIntyre confirm that this decision will substantially increase the number of infectious people returning to work. How on earth do you justify agreeing to this, knowing it will ensure more infections, long-term health disability and deaths in our community? If anyone thinks that is not true, do your homework. We do care about the lives of Tasmanians.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. The National Cabinet is engaged in these discussions. As the Prime Minister said, the isolation rules going from seven days to five was a proportional response. Those changes come into effect on 9 September, as do the changes relating to -

Ms O'Connor - Release the advice.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Any more interjections and I will ask you to leave.

Mr ROCKLIFF - masks on planes. We have a nationally consistent position. The number one priority for the Tasmanian Government has been to the health and safety of Tasmanians throughout the pandemic. We have always worked with Public Health, and been guided by Public Health advice.

Dr Woodruff - Give us the advice.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, member for Franklin, the same goes for you. The Premier is answering the question. Please allow him to answer.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have worked alongside our Public Health team. Other states have deviated from the Public Health advice and we have always been working with our Public Health team.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 45, relevance. I have asked the Premier a very simple question: how does he justify the decision to shorten isolation periods that will lead to more infections and deaths?

Mr SPEAKER - Standing order 45 is not an opportunity for you to interject on the Premier. The Premier was answering the question. He was talking, from my understanding, about National Cabinet and the decision, so he was answering the question. Please do not interject again on the Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As was announced last week, from 9 September the mandatory isolation period for COVID-19 will be reduced from seven days to five days, as long as the person has no symptoms. Certain workers, such as those in hospitals, aged care and disability residential care settings, will be required to avoid those settings for seven days. That is consistent across the nation. People with symptoms should continue to isolate for at least seven days. Employees in high-risk settings, such as hospitals, aged care and disability residential care will be required -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 45, relevance You have instructed us to keep the questions simple. We would like to hear the Premier justify the dangerous decision.

Mr SPEAKER - Again, that is not standing order 45. As far as relevance goes I will always ask the Premier to be relevant to the question. Standing up in this place and taking frivolous points of order when the Premier is trying to answer is also an abuse of the standing order. You can make your points of order but please do not interject on the Premier. He is trying to answer the question. The Premier has the call.

Ms O'CONNOR - On the point of order, Mr Speaker. We did not raise a frivolous point of order. This a matter of life and death. You have instructed me not to interject.

Mr SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. I will ask you to return to your seat. I will ask the Premier to continue his answer.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Speaker, as I was explaining, employees in high-risk settings such as hospitals, aged care and disability residential care will be required to avoid those settings for at least seven days. I also mentioned that from 9 September there will no longer be a requirement to wear a face mask on aircraft. These changes are a proportionate response to current risk levels as Tasmania emerges from a wave of COVID-19 infections and is in line with guidance from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC). Public Health will continue to communicate with COVID-19 cases and provide outbreak management support and advice to high-risk and priority settings.

Businesses and organisations should update their work health and safety risk assessments in light of the upcoming changes. We should all continue to practise COVID-19-safe behaviours, as we continue to do in this Chamber, and be aware of the current risk levels, and maintain good hand and respiratory hygiene. Stay home and test if you have symptoms and wear face masks in indoor spaces where unable to physically distance, especially when risk is higher.

As we adapt to living with COVID-19 in our community, we will continue to review and adapt public health measures based on Public Health advice, remaining responsive to outbreaks and risks from new strains.

Tourism - Effect of Reduced Airline Seat Capacity

Mr WOOD question to MINISTER for TOURISM, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.16 a.m.]

Can you inform the House as to what steps are being taken to address the significant reductions in seat capacity that the airlines are quietly rolling out from October onwards, noting the significant impacts this will not only have on our rebounding tourism sector but on Tasmanian businesses and everyday Tasmanians?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Mr Wood for his question and interest in this matter. It has been, and it continues to be, a particularly testing and volatile time for the airline industry as it returns to the Australian skies and responds to the strong demand that Australians are demonstrating, whether it is for business travel, reuniting with family and friends, medical care or simply going for a well-deserved break.

Mainland Australians are not separated by a body of water and generally have options to get around and complete their travel requirements. Tasmania is an island and Tasmanians do not have those same options so are more vulnerable to shifts in airline capacity to and from other states.

Having foreseen the probable actions that airlines would take, and noting that we are fast approaching a peak travel period for the state, in early August I wrote to the CEO of the Qantas Group and the CEO of Virgin Australia urging them to reconsider any changes to Tasmania's airline capacity. Having then seen significant reductions in seat capacity by the Qantas Group I again made contact with the Qantas Group CEO expressing my concerns and welcomed a meeting with the CEO during the recent Jobs and Skills Summit held in Canberra.

It is an important issue. It is not only tourism that is impacted: it is Tasmanian businesses and events that are impacted; it is Tasmanians who travel for medical care between here and the mainland; and it is Tasmanians seeking to connect with families and friends.

I note comments in today's *Mercury* from a Qantas spokesperson promising improvements, but we are yet to see action. While it was to be expected that there would need to be capacity adjustments throughout both airlines' networks, it is troubling and extremely disappointing that, overall, Tasmania, despite it being a jurisdiction most reliant on air travel, appears to have been hit with a disproportionately higher level of reduction than elsewhere.

Today, I confirm to all Tasmanians that we will continue to engage with the airlines in a constructive way. We will strongly fight for Tasmanians to have a fair go. We have all worked too hard to restore our communities and our economy after the last two tumultuous years to be disadvantaged unfairly by these airline businesses that we have strongly supported over many years.

I encourage Tasmanians and our businesses and all in this House to join this conversation alongside the Government and call for these airlines to ensure our island is not unfairly disadvantaged, and to mitigate impacts to Tasmanians and Tasmanian businesses.

TasTAFE - Electrical Apprentices Training - Cancellation

Mr O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for SKILLS, TRAINING and WORKFORCE GROWTH, Mr ELLIS

[10.20 a.m.]

Since raising the issue of your Government's failure to train electrical apprentices in this place two weeks ago, I have been inundated with stories from apprentices and employers about how poorly they are being treated by your Government. Many electrical apprentices will not see a classroom for 12 months due to the fact that TasTAFE has recently cancelled their training block for the remainder of the year. The fact that it took one teacher to resign for the year's training to be cancelled is indicative of your lack of support.

Training for these apprentices is increasingly being delivered by way of online learning, which is no substitute for hands-on teaching for a practical trade where mistakes can be fatal. These apprentices are fed up and employers are deeply concerned about your Government's lack of commitment to our electrical trades industry. Is this why the electrical trades industry was excluded from your Government's so-called 'Hi-Vis Army'?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank my friend over there for the question. I answered this broadly last week, but perhaps to update him a little, TasTAFE has new resources coming online in the very short term, in fact, as we speak. A big part of enabling that hiring process has been our fantastic reforms to the TAFE and vocational education and training system. Through the changes we have made we have been able to take on and advertise for teachers in these areas and make an attractive proposition for those people to teach at TAFE because there is flexibility, contemporary employment standards and great opportunity. We have been able to attract teachers from around the country. That is exciting because it speaks to how our TAFE is becoming more contemporary, more fit for purpose, and more learner-centred. It looks more like the businesses it is out there to serve.

That is in stark contrast to when the member opposite was in government and they blew up TAFE. They literally ripped it into pieces and did not ever bother to put it back together again. It took this Government, it took this Premier, and I am very proud to continue that legacy and that work so that we can attract more teachers into TAFE and train the record number of apprentices, including sparkies and other people involved in the electro-technology trades, so that they can get work in this booming industry.

We are seeing work right across our state, whether it is in house construction, in civil construction, in some of the amazing renewable energy projects we have going on, or even electrical transmission projects, of which the federal Labor Party is such a great supporter. Maybe the Labor Party would like to interject and tell us what they actually think about Marinus Link. Nothing? I figured.

We are very proud to have the sparkies come on board as part of this. I do not mind saying this: I will be meeting with NECA, the National Electrical Communications Association, on Friday. Ben Shaw is doing a fantastic job there. I was at one of the training events they put on the other day - I think it was his second week on the job - and they are doing amazing things around project management so that sparkies can take the next step in their

career. There are many opportunities out there and I look forward to welcoming those new teachers and new apprentices to TasTAFE.

Proposed Stadium Development - Effect on Social Housing Investment

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.24 a.m.]

Can you confirm that building a stadium at Macquarie Point will mean that the \$110 million housing investment at the escarpment will not proceed as planned? If this is the case, will the Tasmanian public be liable to pay compensation to the developers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Ms White for her question. We have always been transparent about the sites being considered for a potential arts and entertainment precinct in Hobart. As I have said before, Macquarie Point is one of those. My understanding is that it has been on the State Growth website since February this year. There is a lot of due diligence when it comes to the stadium and our arts, culture and entertainment precinct -

Dr Broad - Get your spin right - it's arts and entertainment.

Member Suspended

Member for Braddon - Dr Broad

Mr SPEAKER - Order. The member for Braddon can leave the Chamber until after question time.

Dr Broad withdrew.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Speaker, what I can say is that a new multipurpose arts, entertainment and sporting precinct in southern Tasmania will be much more than an AFL stadium. In answer to the member's question, there will be due diligence and we have a feasibility study of \$1.25 million which was announced in the Budget. It will be an important multipurpose entertainment venue, supporting conferences, entertainment, sport and arts on a scale never seen before in Tasmania.

An economic impact study undertaken as part of the pre-feasibility work has found that during the construction phase alone, for example, a 23 000-seat stadium is anticipated to generate \$300 million direct and indirect contribution to gross state product and support 1400 direct jobs. Once operational, the stadium will open new industries and support 950 full-time equivalent jobs annually and \$2.2 billion in direct and indirect GSP contribution over 25 years, or \$85 million per year. The economic generation of this opportunity strengthens our state's position and enhances our ability to invest in other areas that matter.

We are doing due diligence on a stadium and the arts and cultural precinct. This is an opportunity that we should not walk by and play politics with. Why would you have such a myopic view as those opposite when you can see the opportunity that may well present for not only southern Tasmania but Tasmania as a whole?

Tasracing - Alleged Editing of Greyhound Racing Replays

Ms JOHNSTON question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms OGILVIE

[10.27 a.m.]

On 16 August this year you tabled a response to an e-petition signed by 13 519 Tasmanians calling for the end of public funding of greyhound racing. Your response refers to improved transparency regarding animal welfare and that probity and integrity are critically important in the racing industry.

Recently, Tasracing has started heavily editing greyhound racing replays available to the public via its website to remove evidence of horrific injuries and deaths that regularly occur on your watch. For instance, on 29 March race 7 at Launceston was edited, with footage cut on the home turn when Husky Shiraz was on the outside. It then resumes on the final straight with Husky Shiraz nowhere to be seen. We know that Husky Shiraz suffered a fractured left tibia on that home turn and was destroyed. When CEO Andrew Jenkins was asked directly about the editing of race footage, he responded that:

When a greyhound falls or is injured, TasRacing does not believe the incidents should be broadcast.

That is the very opposite of improved transparency regarding animal welfare.

Are you and Tasfacing too ashamed and embarrassed to show the public horrors that occur in greyhound racing? Will you immediately direct Tasfacing to publish the full and unedited videos of each race instead of hiding injuries and deaths from the public view?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I found a bit of it a little hard to hear but I think it was about editing of video. I want to speak a bit about what we are doing in racing and give the House an update. Then I am happy to address what I think your question was; it was hard to hear.

This Government, the racing industry and I regard the welfare of animals as critical. The vast majority of industry participants provide great care to their dogs. The majority of industry participants provide great care to their animals across all three codes, of course. I am aware of the petition you mentioned, which landed on 9 June, to end the public funding of greyhound racing, which was sponsored by the Leader of the Greens. I am also aware that 13 519 people signed that petition.

It is fantastic that people are participating in their democracy. I participate in my democracy and I believe everyone should. Our Government accepts that people will have differing views on the racing industry in Tasmania. The racing industry is funded by a deed of

agreement between Tasracing and the Government. The deed was signed in 2009 and provides funding for a 20-year period. Our Government has tabled its response to the petition, and will not be reviewing the current funding arrangement, which is in place until 2029.

I am not aware of the issues of which you speak. I am very happy to seek some information if you believe there is something we could be doing better. Perhaps you would write to me so I can understand exactly what it is to which you refer. Thank you for your question.

Proposed Stadium Development - Effect on Social Housing Investment

Ms HADDAD question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.31 a.m.]

While your priority is building a third stadium in Tasmania, nearly 4500 families are desperately waiting on the social housing wait list. The average wait time has more than quadrupled on your Government's watch, from 21 weeks to a staggering 90 weeks. That is nearly two years. The ballooning wait lists and wait times mean people like Steve Jetson, whose case we have been raising with you for years, has just finished his third winter in a row living in his car. How can you justify spending so much time and money on building a third stadium when so many Tasmanians are in such desperate need for housing?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Ms Haddad for her question. I have often said, publicly and in this House, that every Tasmanian deserves a roof over their head and to live in a safe and secure environment. Providing safety and security with accommodation for those most vulnerable in our community and helping Tasmanian families into their first home, the priorities of our Government are clearly there for all to see in the investment and reforms we are making to housing. We have a strong 10-year plan which centres on building more homes for Tasmanians. Our 10-year, \$1.5 billion investment will see 10 000 new and additional homes provided for Tasmanians by 2032. This is the biggest investment in Tasmania's history.

In the shorter term, we will meet our target of 1500 homes by June 2023. Over the past 12 months, we have delivered 336 new homes, including 21 in July. Acknowledging construction programs are always lumpy, we are ramping up our delivery with 5103 homes in our pipeline. We have delivered since 2015 a total of 2200 additional new homes, lots of land and new places in supported accommodation and homeless services. There are 1503 long-term homes and units of homeless accommodation in the pipeline.

Since 2015, when our Affordable Housing Strategy commenced, we have provided 1449 more homes, including 1316 social housing dwellings and 133 supported accommodation. We have assisted 521 low income families into home ownership for the first time, released 401 affordable land lots for low-income buyers and helped 441 families into private rentals. We have constructed 69 units of crisis accommodation since the beginning of the housing strategy. We have had an extensive program of builds underway to provide more crisis and supported accommodation. This includes Harrington Street Homeless Men, a new 50-bed facility replacing the existing Bethlehem House.

Wirksworth Estate Integrated Aged Care project is a combination for 50 older Tasmanians who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Youth to Independence has three major projects, including a 26-bed facility in Hobart, 25-bed facility in Burnie and the extension of Thyne House with an additional 20 beds in Launceston. Magnolia Place receives 15 more beds to increase support for women in Launceston who are experiencing violence and homelessness.

Devonport Men's Shelter is an eight-bed crisis facility for homeless men in Devonport. The Richmond Fellowship has a 24-bed facility in Chigwell for supported mental health accommodation. In Cadbury Road there is a 14-bed accommodation facility for Tasmanians living with severe and persistent mental health issues.

We spend over \$36 million annually on wraparound services to ensure those who need help now are getting the services they need, including funding of 17 existing specialist homelessness services including Housing Connect, Front Door and support as well as crisis shelters and supported accommodation.

We are investing \$6.9 million to extend our three safe space services and outreach support for homeless Tasmanians to 30 June 2023. My time is probably up but what I have outlined is clear evidence that this Government has a strong record when it comes to supporting people experiencing homelessness and supporting vulnerable Tasmanians and we will stand by that record every day.

When compared to the record between 2010 and 2014 this Government is way ahead when it comes to the evidence that we will always support vulnerable Tasmanians.

Cost of Living Pressures - Fuel Prices

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for WORKPLACE, SAFETY and CONSUMER AFFAIRS, Ms ARCHER

[10.37 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Tasmanian Government is addressing the cost of living, in particular in relation to fuel, which is of real concern to Tasmanians?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his ongoing interest in these important matters, particularly on the cost of living.

Our Government recognises that many Tasmanian households are doing it tough at the moment, which is why we remain committed to reducing the cost of living for all Tasmanians.

As members are aware, the higher fuel prices we are seeing across the state are of real concern for Tasmanians, especially in managing their household budgets. That is why it is pleasing to see that the former federal Liberal government's decision to halve the fuel excise provided an actual reduction in fuel prices for Tasmanians. Australian families with at least one vehicle saved up to \$20 per tank, giving a total saving of \$300 over the reduction period.

This is a significant amount of money for many Tasmanians. It is making a real difference at this difficult time, especially with increasing interest rates.

This reduction of the fuel excise ends on 28 September and our Government has real concerns about the impact this will have on Tasmanians. It is extremely disappointing that the federal Labor Government has not committed to extend the fuel excise reduction period to provide much needed relief for Australians.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms ARCHER - Mr Speaker, I can hear laughing on the other side of the Chamber which I find quite disturbing on a serious issue. It is a pity they did not lobby their counterparts in Canberra.

Our Government has strongly urged the federal Labor Government to extend the fuel excise reduction until at least the end of this year. The Premier has personally raised this with the Prime Minister. I wonder whether the Tasmanian Labor Party has spoken to their colleagues in Canberra and stood up for Tasmanians -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms ARCHER - doing it tough. Their silence in the media reporting indicates not, but they are being vocal across the Chamber at the moment.

If Labor fails to take action, fuel prices will increase by 22 cents per litre, impacting Tasmanian families and businesses who are already struggling with rising inflation, an increase in interest rates as we will probably see again today, and cost-of-living pressures.

Our Government continues to listen to concerns from our community regarding the impacts of the recent fuel price spike on delivery of their services. We have taken, and continue to take decisive action on the cost of living, including fuel pricing. This includes \$250 000 of additional funding for a fuel grants program as part of our \$5 million cost-of-living booster package to help Tasmanian families with cost-of-living pressures. This additional funding will provide payments of up to \$1000 to help community organisations with the rising cost of fuel.

While current fuel prices are a global problem, our Government has already taken action in 2020 to promote competition in the local market by introducing a mandatory real-time price reporting scheme. The FuelCheck TAS website and app allows motorists to find the cheapest fuel in their area and to see price variations on their daily commute or when they travel on longer trips. The scheme increases competition amongst fuel retailers, placing downward pressure on fuel prices, and helps motorists easily access fuel price information and, most important at the moment, make informed decisions on where to buy their fuel at the cheapest possible price.

Pleasingly, there have been 217 435 downloads of the FuelCheck TAS app and visits to its website since the scheme commenced in September 2020, with 94 per cent of users

providing positive feedback for the FuelCheck TAS app. Since the beginning of 2022, 77 onsite checks have been conducted and my department continues to work with a small number of remaining fuel retailers who are not registered on the app or website.

Our Government has, and will continue, to support Tasmanians by monitoring the reporting of price information by fuel retailers. I strongly urge Tasmanian Labor to do their part and speak to their friends and masters in Canberra, to stand up for Tasmanians struggling with the high cost of fuel.

Risdon Prison - Police Secret Recordings - Terms of Reference for Review

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr ELLIS

[10.42 a.m.]

It was extremely disturbing to hear that Tasmania Police left secret recording devices in a confidential prison meeting room for two months, recording privileged conversations. The Police Commissioner has announced an independent review to 'ensure appropriate processes have been followed', but the Supreme Court judgment was clear that the appropriate processes were not followed by police.

Public confidence in the integrity of police has been eroded and must be restored. The investigation must answer whether this has happened before, if other privileged conversations were accessed - which the trial evidence suggested was possible - and how the police's faulty systems can be fixed so that it never happens again.

Will you provide the terms of reference to the O'Farrell review so the public can be confident that this investigation will be suitably rigorous?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is of paramount importance that the community has confidence and trust in the work that our police force does, and that they operate within the boundaries of the law. I have asked for a report from the commissioner in relation to the surveillance device matter as a priority, including what measures have been taken to ensure that this does not happen again, to ensure transparency and accountability. I will table in parliament not just the terms of reference but the whole report when I receive it.

I welcome the commissioner's decision to appoint former solicitor-general, Michael O'Farrell, to undertake the independent review. Work on determining the scope of the review is underway and the report is expected to be completed before the end of the year. The Government's intention is to allow this matter to be appropriately reviewed without pre-empting the outcomes or speculating on what further action might be required. We will then welcome and consider recommendations resulting from this process.

Cost of Living Pressures - Proposed Stadium Development

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.44 a.m.]

While your priority is building a third stadium in Tasmania, people across the state are struggling thanks to your massive increase in power bills - people like Maria and Peter in Ulverstone, who I spoke to last week. They are doing everything they can to keep a lid on their expenses but it keeps getting harder every day. Peter is 73 and has had to get a part-time job as a farm labourer when he should be enjoying his retirement.

What do you say to Peter and Maria, and the tens of thousands of Tasmanians who are struggling to meet the rising costs of living, to justify putting so much effort and money into building a third stadium for Tasmania instead of getting the basics right first?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. I always listen intently to Tasmanians who contact me about cost-of-living matters. It is the first responsibility of a member of parliament, irrespective of the position the member has at the time, to support the constituents who come through the door, write, ring or Facebook to let us know how life is for them.

I recognise the cost-of-living challenges many Tasmanians are facing. The Attorney-General just highlighted one of those areas: fuel prices and the potential impact of the subsidy ending at the end this month. This could further exacerbate the challenges around the cost of living, including the flow-on effects to transport costs, food costs and the like. We know the fuel price increase impacts on the cost of living in a range of areas. The important thing is that we are being agile as a government and responding to the cost-of-living pressures Tasmanians are facing.

The number one thing is we acknowledge the cost-of-living pressures on Tasmanians. That is why we have supported an estimated 94 230 Tasmanians on concession cards already receiving their \$180 payment. One customer recently contacted me after receiving their winter bill buster payment and provided this feedback:

I am an aged pensioner and received my electricity bill today. I just wanted to let you know how grateful I am for the contribution your Government has made in making it affordable to keep warm during winter. I am very frugal with electricity usage but your bonus has alleviated a lot of bill stress.

Those comments are welcomed and -

Ms White - What about the 10 000 others who do not have positive reviews? Are you going to read them?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I acknowledge the comments you, Leader of the Opposition, have outlined today. I am very mindful of the circumstances people find themselves in regarding

cost-of-living challenges. That is why we recently provided an additional \$5 million this financial year to the organisations that support vulnerable Tasmanians.

I have already mentioned the \$1.75 million for Tasmania's neighbourhood houses, with each of the 35 houses receiving some \$50 000 additional support; \$1 million in additional support for the Family Assistance Program, allowing organisations such as the Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul, Anglicare and the Launceston and Hobart City Missions to extend more support to vulnerable Tasmanians, doubling the current funding; \$1 million in additional funding to Aurora Energy for its hardship program for assistance to any customers experiencing financial difficulties, bringing the total amount available for that program to some \$2.7 million; and \$500 000 in additional funding to emergency relief providers Foodbank and Loaves and Fishes - both well-respected and trusted organisations - to help them purchase food and upgrade their distribution vehicles.

We are also increasing indexation for community sector organisation to 3 per cent for the 2022-23 year to help with rising costs of fuel and wages, with a full review of community sector indexation to lead into the 2023-24 Budget.

I am mindful of the comments that the member raises in this House, not only as Premier but as a member of parliament. We are doing all we can to support Tasmanians experiencing financial stress due to rising cost-of-living pressures. We have clearly demonstrated that with a range of measures and we will continue to listen to Tasmanians who are doing it tough.

Health - Waiting Lists

Ms DOW question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.50 a.m.]

While your priority is building a third stadium in Tasmania, 55 000 Tasmanians are on a waiting list to see a specialist. Many of these people are waiting years for their appointments, often in pain and with a considerably reduced quality of life. They need these appointments before they can even begin the long wait for an operation they might need sometime in the future. In southern Tasmania, urgent cardiology patients, people with heart conditions needing urgent care, are waiting an average of 102 days to see a specialist. What do you say to the 55 000 Tasmanians languishing on the specialist waitlist that could possibly make them believe building a third stadium in Tasmania should be such a high priority for your Government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for her question. Health will always be the priority of this Government and me as Premier. That is why I have retained the Health portfolio.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know that Tasmanians care and want the best health system that we can possibly provide. That is why as Premier I am Health minister and Minister for Mental

Health and Wellbeing. That is a clear signal of the priority of this Government. This Government's priorities will always reflect the Tasmanian people's priorities, those being health, housing, education and community safety, the priorities of Tasmanians that I listen to. The cost of living is also a key concern and priority for Tasmanians.

When it comes to health, \$11.2 billion of record funding over four years clearly indicates that health is a priority for us. In fact, when we came to government the health expenditure was around 28 per cent of the total budget, and now it is accounting for 33.6 per cent.

The member is referring to the outpatient waiting list of 55 000 people, which I have said is too high. It was 59 000, if my memory serves me correctly. When I was shadow minister for health, trying to extract information from you lot, we had to RTI all the time for any bit of data. You had to RTI, go through the process, the hidden waiting lists. Go back to the *Hansard* when I was shadow minister for health, asking for information on the hidden waiting lists.

If my memory serves me correctly, we made a commitment that we would be open and transparent when it comes to the outpatient waiting lists because we are an accountable government. We like to produce the data. Since I have become Health minister, that data is out there every single month. It was quarterly, but I made the decision that Tasmanians have a right to know the state of their health system every single month. That is a transparent and accountable government.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - At least it allows us to help you write your questions. For heaven's sake. I mean, honestly -

Ms White - What about the people on those waiting lists?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am aware of that, Ms White, which is why it is important that we are open and transparent with the Tasmanian people, where you no longer have to put in a right to information request to find the answer of the outpatient waiting list.

I have said the current outpatient waiting list is unacceptably long. You will get no arguments from me about that, although it is encouraging to see the list decrease to 55 674 as of July this year, 613 fewer patients than July 2021, even though we have been managing the impacts of COVID-19 which has been a severe disruption on every single health system in every single state and territory across Australia. I commend all our hardworking staff at the front line and indeed across the entire Health department, from Ms Morgan-Wicks right across the department, for the work they have done in managing a health system under very difficult circumstances.

This is important and that is why we are taking immediate action to reduce waiting times by providing additional appointments, increasing use of telehealth appointments and developing alternative care pathways for people who have been waiting the longest. We are developing a statewide outpatient plan for Tasmania which, like our statewide elective surgery plan, will provide a clear and focused roadmap for the delivery of innovative outpatient service models over the next four years and is being co-designed with clinicians, patients and other key stakeholders to transform the way outpatient services are delivered.

This year's Budget committed \$7.2 million over four years to implement that outpatient plan. I recognise where the outpatient plan is, but it is pleasing that we are continuing to see a reduction on the elective surgery waiting lists, which is a demonstration of our Government working alongside clinicians on a patient-focused plan, investing \$196 million over the next four years to get these elective surgery waiting lists down, and it is working.

In July 2021, if my memory serves me correctly, the waiting list for elective surgery was some 12 200 and it is now 9343, so our plan is working and I have an expectation that working with clinicians and health professionals on our outpatient waiting list will have the same effect, with our clinician-led and health professional-led and patient-focused plan and investment.

Securing Tasmania's Future - Mining Industry

Mrs ALEXANDER question to MINISTER for RESOURCES, Mr ELLIS

[10.58 a.m.]

Through my various meetings with constituents in Bass I have come across people who are working in the mining industry but they are not working in Tasmania; they are working in other states. Can you update the House on how the Government is delivering on the plan to securing the state's future, especially in the area of the job-creating mining industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Bass for her question and her interest in the mining industry. We were in the north-east in the beautiful municipality of Dorset for regional cabinet the other day and I had the honour to catch up with a new gold explorer based in Scottsdale, searching in areas around the Golden Ridge and other historic areas of mining in the north-east. That is a region in our state that is becoming a re-emerging mining area and there are huge opportunities there.

The minerals and resources sector is enormously beneficial to this state. Tasmania is one of the most mineralised areas on Earth. There is no secret that the world is rapidly moving towards a renewable energy future, despite the protestations from the Greens. This means an increasing uptake of hydro, wind and solar power, increasing electrification for our vehicles and increased use of advanced battery technology. It also means an increased demand for the resources and minerals that go into all of those important manufacturers. It means copper for more cables, it means nickel for more batteries, tin for solder, gold for electronics, zinc for wind turbines, and tungsten so important for our defence manufacturing and keeping Australia safe.

What all these minerals have in common is that they are all found in Tasmania. We have an enormous opportunity as a small island state to be able to capitalise on some of the riches that we have beneath our feet. Tasmania, with its world respected regulatory framework, a balanced approach to sustainable resource management and world-leading renewable energy credentials and ambition, means we are in the box seat to provide the minerals that the world needs for a renewable energy future. Mining these metals in Tasmania means that we are also playing our part.

As a marker of how important the sector is to Tasmania, I am delighted to inform the House today that in 2021-22 Tasmania received in excess of \$83.9 million in mineral royalties and over \$2 million in rentals and other fees. This is a record figure for Tasmania and eclipses last year's result by more than \$23 million. The value of annual royalties receipts received over the last 12 years have been over \$482 million at an average of approximately \$40 million per annum. This goes to funding the important essential services that all Tasmanians rely on, whether it is housing - in the member for Bass's former area, in her parliamentary secretary duties - whether it is more police on the beat, whether it is more teachers in our schools.

I am also pleased to advise the House that Tasmania has had its highest quarterly mineral exploration spend since ABS records began. The June 2020 quarter spend was \$12.5 million, contributing to an overall 12-month spend of more than \$32 million. That is more than 130 per cent higher than the previous 12 months. It is a huge vote of confidence in the state of Tasmania's mineral exploration sector, its mining sector, and its potential as a future provider for the renewable energy revolution that the world is going through. Mining provides more than 5200 jobs in mining and mineral processing, most of which are in regional and rural areas of Tasmania, putting food on the tables of families, just like mine when I was working on the west coast.

Ms O'Connor - Four minutes.

Mr ELLIS - I thank the clock over there for its interjection. It also contributes the absolute lion's share of Tasmania's mercantile exports, a staggering \$3.1 billion in the 12 months to June 2022. That is more than 65 per cent of Tasmania's mercantile export value. Tasmania is a mining state. It is so important that all people in this place are backing mining, because it means that we can produce the minerals better than almost anywhere else in the world. We should be doing it here, employing our people and providing the royalties that our state needs to grow and provide the essential services that all Tasmanians rely on.

Child Safety Officers - Resourcing

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.03 a.m.]

While your priority is building a third stadium in Tasmania, the number of children identified as being potentially in danger but not allocated a child safety caseworker has nearly doubled. It is National Child Protection Week this week. Child safety officers are taking industrial action due to inadequate resourcing and children are potentially being left in danger without support due to understaffing. When children are at risk, why is your priority to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on a third stadium in Tasmania?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, our Government recognises the critical role of our child safety staff in meeting the needs of some of our most vulnerable children and members of our community. We do not underestimate the challenges involved in responding to families that need our assistance and help, and children and young people who are at risk. To meet these challenges, our Government will work to ensure that the child safety service is appropriately resourced and supported. Since 2014, we have increased child safety staffing by around 40 per cent. As part

of our 2022-23 Budget, we committed a further \$5.4 million for an additional 10 full-time equivalents to be added to the child safety workforce around Tasmania.

While we have an establishment in child safety that is better resourced than ever before, the recruitment and retention is a significant challenge and there are vacancies in the services. Vacancies are impacted by a range of factors, including the significant market demand across sectors for allied health professionals both in Tasmania and nationally. Following successful recruitment campaign, 16 child safety officer appointments have been made with staffing beginning in August. That was announced by our minister a few weeks ago.

Another round of recruitment is being immediately progressed to address remaining vacancies. A number of initiatives continue to support the investment. We are approving recruitments of additional relief positions above the current full staff complement to act as backfill when there are vacancies or when staff need to take leave.

New case coordinator positions will be recruited to ease administrative workload for child safety officers, allowing them to focus on their core responsibilities to children and families. As part of the transition to the new Department of Education, Children and Young People, we will invest \$2 million in new tablets and associated equipment for child safety officers as well as upgrades to video conference facilities across the state. An enhanced student pathway is being developed with the University of Tasmania to enable fourth year social work students to be employed as case aides during their final placement.

Infrastructure Improvements - East Derwent Highway

**Mr YOUNG question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT,
Mr FERGUSON**

[11.07 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the infrastructure improvements from the Tasmanian Government's COVID-19 stimulus package, in particular the improvements to the East Derwent Highway in my electorate of Franklin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Mr Young for his question. He has been a great supporter of our COVID-19 stimulus package, our construction blitz. Every member of this House, when we took that legislation through for the extra funding, supported our construction blitz. Just as well because it was a great success during uncertain times. Who could forget the uncertainty back in those days of 2020, in particular where industries were facing unprecedented lack of certainty about the future.

We were able, as a parliament and as a government, to step in and initiate that construction blitz. In particular, that stimulus package delivered real and permanent infrastructure improvements around our beautiful state and supported our vitally important civil construction sector in every corner of our state through that time, employing thousands of men and women and creating training opportunities. It allowed food to be put on the family tables.

One of the best examples of these projects is the East Derwent Highway between Golf Links Road and Sugarloaf Road, a project which will be completed this month. Members who are familiar with the East Derwent Highway know that we had a four-lane section going to a bottleneck of two lanes then opening up to four lanes again. We have closed that problem by building out and duplicating that two-lane section so you have continuous four lanes from the Risdon roundabout to the Tasman Bridge.

East Derwent Highway is a key link in Greater Hobart's transport network, joining the Tasman Highway to the Midland Highway. It is an increasingly busy commuter road, as Mr Young will testify.

I inspected the project last week with representatives of the Tasmanian civil company, Andrew Walter Constructions, a strong Tasmanian business with a proud history and doing extremely well. I was there with the Liberal candidate for Pembroke, Greg Brown, who is running an excellent campaign as a born and bred eastern shore local who understands his community and is fighting for their needs. I have been out doorknocking with Greg Brown on the wheelie-bin-lined streets of Clarence, as he has been confronting local problems and coming up with local solutions. It would be good if the council and all the councillors could assist in sorting out their wheelie bin problem, but it is a beautiful community and a future member, hopefully, of the council, who is doing a great job, including advocating for the very successful expansion of the Liberal Government's Derwent ferry. The \$14.7 million project has built jobs for 50 people directly and a further 120 subcontractors have been engaged at various times during the project.

This addresses a range of safety concerns as well, not just the productivity and the success of dealing with congestion. I make the point that the Lindisfarne North Primary School has far better access for families coming in and out, and also new pathways and better fencing. It has been a great job performed by the Department of State Growth and Andrew Walter Constructions, 100 per cent funded by this Government and this parliament, and I am very pleased to say that the improvements are being felt right now through the community. One part that remains to be done is the testing and commissioning of the new traffic control signals there. I understand that, subject to those tests, they will come into operation this week and help them to be even more efficient into the future.

This project is just one of so many road and bridge projects underway in Tasmania. They are transforming our state, making it safer and more efficient for all parts of our network for our community. As I close, I want to say that we have seen, in the last financial year, a record achieved in road and bridge construction, with more than \$400 million invested in roads and bridges, more than three times the amount delivered by Labor in its last miserable year in office. That record will be broken again in the current financial year. We have more than \$740 million budgeted for as we continue to build jobs and make our roads safer for Tasmanians. I thank the House for their great support of our construction blitz.

Time expired.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ashley Youth Detention Centre - Response to Commission of Inquiry

[11.12 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Speaker, ensuring the safety of our children and young people is of utmost importance to this Government and indeed, I know, everyone in this parliament.

Today I want to update the House regarding the actions the Tasmanian Government is taking to ensure the safety of children and young people, particularly in response to some of the issues highlighted through the commission of inquiry over the last few weeks relating to Ashley Youth Detention Centre. First, I wish to reassure members of this House, and indeed the Tasmanian community that our Government is taking strong action to keep Tasmanian children and young people safe.

Our Government is progressing a broad suite of immediate actions in response to issues raised through the commission of inquiry hearings which I have outlined in previous ministerial statements. The Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Deputy Secretary, Policy and Delivery, routinely update me on the status of these actions and I am pleased to advise the actions are progressing.

As I have said on many occasions, while we await the recommendations from the commission, we will not wait to take action. These interim actions have been developed in response to known issues, as well as those we are learning about through the evidence from the hearings of the commission of inquiry.

In September last year, our Government announced our intention to close the Ashley Youth Detention Centre and establish new youth custodial facilities. The decision was made because it is the right thing to do and we need to achieve best-practice outcomes for children, both now and into the future. It was clear at that time that despite having taken steps to invest in the Ashley Youth Detention Centre, including introducing a more therapeutic model of care, more needed to be done. Our Government decided it was time for a major systemic change in our youth justice system and the need for a holistic approach that would give our young people a better opportunity to gain the supports they needed.

I wish to acknowledge the courage of all those who have come forward to the commission of inquiry to talk about their experiences at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. Whilst this evidence has been very difficult to hear, we are pleased that the issues are being brought to the surface and interrogated through the inquiry process, as it provides a critical learning opportunity for government.

I believe it is important to acknowledge that significant reform has been implemented over recent years to address the issues that have come to light through the commission of inquiry process. However, I am cognisant this may be of no comfort to those young people who have experienced the worst of the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. Despite what circumstances have led children and young people to be in custodial settings such as Ashley, they all deserve to be treated fairly and humanely. They deserve proper healthcare, including empathetic, trauma-informed and evidence-based psychological and behavioural support. They should be and feel safe at all times, they should have their concerns listened to, taken

seriously and responded to with respect, and have opportunities to engage in activities that support their rehabilitation.

On behalf of the Government, I am so very sorry to those young people whose lived experience of Ashley has been anything other than what I have just described. I am sorry to any past or current staff at Ashley who felt that they did not have the support or the resources needed to provide an adequate level of care to the children and young people at Ashley, and to those staff who were subject to abuse, harassment and bullying, I unreservedly apologise for this disgraceful conduct.

I fully understand and accept that the evidence heard through the inquiry has led to renewed concern for the welfare of young people at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. To the young people currently in Ashley Youth Detention Centre, please know that your safety and wellbeing is of the highest concern and importance to us all. To their families, friends and advocates, please be assured that we are listening and learning.

Mr Speaker, a culture of accountable leadership is essential for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people engaging with government institutions. Building on the previous announced actions, I have asked the secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the secretary of the future Department of Education, Children and Young People to provide the relevant minister and me with advice on establishing clear accountabilities for relevant heads of agencies for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, commencing with an immediate focus on those children and young people at risk of offending and those in out-of-home care. I am particularly interested in how a functional leadership model could improve the coordination of prevention and early intervention supports across government.

I want to ensure that we explore all alternatives to support children and young people so that detention is truly a last resort and they do not need to be remanded at Ashley. This model will further strengthen the accountability and collaboration across the State Service, ensuring that all government agencies prioritise the provision of services to children and young people who need additional support to be safe, well and to be learning.

I understand the calls to close Ashley immediately. However, it is vitally important that we take the time to get this right. The appropriate care of these young people is not about bricks and mortar. It is about having the right models of care and contemporary therapeutic approaches across the entire youth justice system. Our Government is progressing our plan to close the centre and transition to contemporary therapeutic facilities and models of care by the end of 2024.

I want to address the calls for the Government to close the centre sooner. I absolutely appreciate the concern that is driving these calls and have full respect for those individuals, advocates and organisations who are pushing for a quicker outcome. It is important to acknowledge that our Government shares the same concerns. This is what led us to arrive at the decision to close the centre; we all want the same thing. If there was any capacity to close it sooner than 2024, of course we would do that; I would not hesitate. There is no greater priority than child safety, but these young people need to have somewhere appropriate to go. If there were better alternatives to Ashley available now, we would be taking them. It is our view that we should do all we can to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the centre now, while at the same time plan for the transition out of Ashley.

Whilst a plan is in place to close Ashley and replace it with contemporary therapeutic facilities, this does not mean we have disregarded the immediate needs of young people and staff at the centre. We have been making important changes to better support young people at Ashley while the work towards the transition progresses. The Ashley of today is not the same Ashley we inherited, or even two years ago.

We have established better safeguards and protections, including CCTV technology and a new personal searches policy. We have also engaged Pentaguard, a security specialist consultant, who have commenced a CCTV review on site at Ashley today and will complete the review within the next couple of weeks. This identifies any blind spots and recommends remedial actions. The Government will implement all the recommendations from the Pentaguard review.

The centre has strong independent oversight mechanisms, including through the Custodial Inspector and the Commissioner for Children and Young People, and discussions have commenced with the Custodial Inspector regarding additional support to enable robust oversight and real-time feedback. Our Government is also exploring the use of direct telephone lines to the Custodial Inspector, similar to those provided as part of the disability royal commission.

The working environment and staffing profile of Ashley has also changed significantly under this Government. The changes our Government has made at Ashley include aligning practice procedures with recommended child-safe standards; implementing a trauma-informed model of care; ensuring robust systems are in place to respond promptly and appropriately when an allegation of abuse is reported, including notification to the Custodial Inspector and Commissioner for Children and Young People, Tasmania Police and the Strong Family Safe Kids advice and referral line; establishing a workforce learning and development framework and clinical practice; and supporting positions that ensure that staff are well supported and supervised to implement the model of care; making available regular clinical supervision, with staff assisting them to embed new learning through reflective practice; and ensuring that recruitment processes are comprehensive, which now include psychometric testing that is customised to measure cognitive ability, work style and attributes predictive of suitability to a youth worker role within a custodial environment. These requirements ensure that only the most suitable applicants who apply for frontline positions at Ashley are appointed.

There has been a significant injection of new youth workers and managers at Ashley in the last few years, which has significantly shifted the staffing demographic in cultural diversity, age, gender, qualifications and experience. We have also engaged with the Australian Childhood Foundation and the Centre for Excellence in Therapeutic Care to provide an independent authoritative view on the safety for young people at Ashley and guidance on any further actions we can take now and during transition to improve the safety of the service for young people and staff.

The final scope of work has been agreed and ACF will commence before the end of this month to review the current therapeutic practice framework and assist with the further development of therapeutic practice at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. The work of ACF will include a team leader from ACF to oversee therapeutic practice for both AYDC staff and young people to be part of the incident review team, all of which will strengthen overall safety assessment and planning at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. These positive changes

implemented at Ashley will have a tangible impact on the safety and wellbeing of young people and have been extensive.

I also acknowledge the efforts of staff on site at Ashley, who are working hard every day to meet the needs of young people. I appreciate that this is a very difficult time for you, with the matter of Ashley being played out so heavily and publicly through the commission of inquiry.

I also acknowledge that recent staffing shortages have meant that young people at Ashley have not been able to have all of their needs met. Staffing levels determine the ability to reduce time spent in isolation and whether there is capacity to routinely offer activities such as school and education. That is why our immediate priority is to ensure appropriate staffing ratios and support for the existing workforce responsible for the safety and care of young people currently in the centre.

A range of new operations and management staff will begin at Ashley over the next few weeks to support our current staff. It is this Government's expectation that this will lead to a reduction in the time young people spend inside their rooms. This includes therapeutically trained and experienced staff seconded from other jurisdictions and new recruits. Five newly appointed youth workers have completed their induction process and commenced on 5 September, while a further recruitment round has commenced.

More broadly, we are resetting our approach to the youth justice system. The reforms we are progressing extend well beyond the construction of new custodial facilities. Following the release of our youth justice blueprint discussion paper last year, comprehensive consultation has been undertaken with a broad range of stakeholders, including young people currently involved with the youth justice system and their advocates. These consultations are informing our strategic directions of the reform of the system over the next 10 years, ensuring we have the settings and services that promote early intervention, diversion and therapeutic response across the system.

This is not just about custodial youth justice. This is about resetting our whole approach to the youth justice system and young people at risk. We want to support children and families, engage young people at risk early and direct them away from the youth justice system and restore young people who do come into conflict with the law as valued and productive members of our community.

Noetic Group has been engaged to undertake a functional design brief for the new facilities based on an analysis of Tasmanian data, consultation with Tasmanian stakeholders, and review of best-practice approaches from around the world. Noetic has considerable experience working with government and non-government organisations across Australia to ensure their youth justice systems, programs and services are responsive to the needs of children and young people.

We have asked Noetic to consider how alternatives to detention that have been raised through our blueprint consultation might also impact on our detention population and therefore the design of the future facilities that will replace the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. Through our blueprint consultation and as part of evidence given at the recent commission of inquiry hearings, we have heard of the importance of greater transitional supports for young people leaving detention and more bail support options to keep young people in the community and out of remand.

Our new model will seek to address these issues, it will provide facilities that deliver differentiated responses for our young people and we expect to be in a position to provide further information on our model and potential locations in the near future. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a new youth justice system, informed by our past failures over many years and world's best practice, that will lead to better outcomes for young people and keep our communities safe.

I ask that members here and the Tasmanian community please believe in our steadfast commitment to bring about this progressive and systemic change. I know the history of Ashley has included significant failures of responsibility resulting in devastating consequences, but I also know there are multitudes of committed and hopeful State Service employees who want the best outcomes for our young people and who are working tirelessly on supporting Ashley's closure and transition to a better system.

When the commission delivers its report, we will consider how its recommendations align with our existing plan and of course we will remain open to any further suggestions the commission may have that will ensure the continued safety and wellbeing of young people in our youth justice system.

Please be assured that the Government will continue to respond to what we hear through the commission and its recommendations in due course with heart, with humanity, with empathy, with kindness and with care. I want all Tasmanians to know that this Government is listening but more important than that, this Government is acting.

[11.29 a.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the statement be noted.

There is no doubt there has been an enormous amount of interest in the evidence provided to the commission of inquiry and, in particular, evidence provided recently around the operations at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

A motion was moved in this House a couple of weeks ago for the Government to provide an update on what was happening at Ashley and its transition to new therapeutic models of care. It would have been helpful if the Government had been more transparent with this type of information at that time. The Government has been somewhat railroaded into providing an update today because of the Leader of Greens' attempts to find out what was going on a couple of weeks ago.

If the Government is turning over a new leaf and is now going to start providing updates on the improvements needed across different agencies, that is welcome news. Nonetheless, a year into a three-year transition process to close the Ashley Youth Detention Centre, to transition to new therapeutic models of care, there was not much information provided today that was not already known. That is concerning because there are young children who are still detained at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre and there are workers who are employed there. They have seen, as we have, the harrowing evidence provided through the commission of inquiry process. The community wants to understand exactly what the Government intends to do now.

I heard what the Premier had to say and I have no doubt he is genuine in his desire to see a resolution that creates much better outcomes for those young people in detention. I do not question his compassion or empathy. That alone is not going to effect the necessary changes or see the actions required to make sure we do have organisations that are safe for children. Fundamentally, that is what we are discussing: the evidence we have heard through the commission of inquiry is that Tasmania's institutions have not been safe for children.

I am not sure where the minister for the commission of inquiry is going but it is disappointing that you were not here for the entirety of the Premier's contribution and now you are leaving.

One of the things I hope we can do is work collectively to implement the solutions needed on behalf of the children of Tasmania.

The culture of secrecy that has dominated Tasmanian institutions, including our schools, hospitals and child safety, has been exposed by the commission of inquiry. That is not because of this Government; it is because of governments. We acknowledge that and that needs to change. The concerns of victims/survivors and colleagues of perpetrators have gone unheard for too long because of the networks of power that have operated to protect certain people and to silence others. There are many stories and I will not be able to share all of them in the time we have but they have been reported in the media and they are very harrowing.

We know that Tasmania has a cultural problem around openness and transparency. The Premier recognised, in his ministerial statement, the role whistleblowers have played in bringing to light some of these allegations through the commission of inquiry process, in fact, probably instigating the commission of inquiry process. I wish to recognise them too. I also recognise that we have failed many whistleblowers. There is still no safety or protection for people to come forward with their stories to highlight particularly how we are failing children in this state without fear of repercussion.

The evidence Mr Connock provided to the commission of inquiry when he was asked about the low number of whistleblowers in Tasmania is quite illuminating. He agreed that the number of State Service whistleblowers in Tasmania was historically low. He could not answer whether the reason was cultural reluctance to call out misbehaviour. He said, 'I don't know what is going on there'. I would argue it is not only a reluctance but it is also a fear that if people do speak out there will be consequences for doing so. We have already seen that for people who have participated in the commission of inquiry.

The Premier spoke about the ability for people to raise complaints. In particular, he said the centre has strong independent oversight they can use, including through the Custodial Inspector and the Commissioner for Children and Young People. The evidence we heard through the commission of inquiry is that it is not strong at all. In fact, the three bodies that have independent oversight, including the Ombudsman, the commissioner for children and the Integrity Commission, said they were not clear about what their roles were. Counsel assisting the commission, Elizabeth Bennett SC, asked, 'Would you each agree with me that this is a complex system?', after Michael Easton, the CEO of the Integrity Commission, said there was no limitation on who could complain to that agency but the case would need to be assessed as to whether his office was the best place to handle it.

The commissioner for children, Leanne McLean, said while her office did not have a complaint-handling function, she could refer people to the appropriate place to raise it but it was very unclear who that might be.

The Ombudsman, Mr Connock, said he received very few, if any, reports of child sexual abuse.

It is clear that it is not working. It is a bit misleading for the Premier to state that the centre has strong independent oversight mechanisms when the evidence to the commission was that it does not, that it is not clear and it is incredibly complex.

The commission of inquiry is a critical change moment for Tasmania. The Government has publicly accepted responsibility for driving the change needed to make our institutions child-focused and child-safe. As I said, the opportunity before us is to work collaboratively to implement values-driven change that puts young people and vulnerable people at the centre of the way our institutions operate. The cultural problems that exist across government agencies have put young people at risk and the stories we have heard have been shocking. The way whistleblowers have been treated does not encourage other whistleblowers to come forward.

The update from the Premier today on the commission of inquiry with specific reference to the Ashley Youth Detention Centre still lacks the level of detail we were hoping to see.

[11.36 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, every child has the right to grow up feeling safe, loved and wanted but all of us in here know that too many do not, that some Tasmanian children are born behind a massive eight ball. There are many Tasmanian families who need help and guidance to raise their kids. So far, the state has not been able to effectively provide that support.

Many of the kids ending up in Ashley have trauma, complex mental health issues, disability. They are damaged children. What we are doing as a state is sending damaged children into a place that demonstrably can and has damaged them more. We are talking here about a century, generations, of trauma to children.

I have no doubt that the Premier and Minister for Education, Children and Youth are absolutely sincere in the sentiments expressed by the Premier today, the statement the minister made in here - after repeated questions, I must say, in relation to Ashley's closure date. I have no doubt that they want to see a better youth justice system for Tasmanian children and young people. The issue we have here is that it is going too slowly.

This Government has had eight years to develop a new model for youth justice. This Government has had six years since Noetic released its report recommending Ashley's closure. Now the Government has commissioned Noetic to do more work on the new model and locations, and advise on youth justice reform going forward. I hope that this time the minister, and the government he is part of, listens to the experts because we have had years of delay where Liberal ministers in the child safety portfolio refused to acknowledge the extent of the problems at Ashley. They refused to accept the recommendation of the Noetic report. They dismissed the Greens when we put forward a therapeutic alternative model in 2015 exactly the same, fundamentally, as the model that has been announced. It is going too slowly.

It has been a year since the previous premier announced that the Ashley Youth Detention Centre would close. What we learnt in parliament the other week is that there has been a year of delay. My theory about that - and of course, I cannot prove it - is that for the past year we have had senior managers and executives in Communities Tasmania more concerned with covering their backsides to prepare for the commission of inquiry than they have been to deliver the new model and get those kids out of Ashley.

Because of the whistleblowers like Alysha who came forward, because of that courage, because we now have evidence before the commission of inquiry which is confronting and terrible, the momentum, the argument for moving faster is utterly compelling.

It would be good to know what this minister has been doing for the past year. We have had Pam Honan, the director of youth justice, come before the commission of inquiry. We have had Mike Pervan, the current but not much longer secretary of Communities Tasmania, both giving evidence to the commission of inquiry that it is very hard to see how that centre could be closed by September 2024 or by the end of 2024.

I heard what the Premier said in his ministerial statement, that 'the Ashley of today is not the same Ashley we inherited, or even of two years ago'. As of last week, at the last hearings of the commission of inquiry on Ashley, we discovered there are 11 children and young people in Ashley. One of them is on a sentence; 10 of them are on remand; and there were four staff. Those kids were locked in their rooms for 22 hours of the night and day: no freedom, no education. It is reasonable to ask how it got to be like that. How can it be like that only two weeks ago when this Government and this minister have known about the problem for years? It is simply not good enough. Enough delay, enough dithering.

We wrote to the Premier, the Attorney-General, and Minister for Education, Children and Youth on 31 August out of frustration, a sense of powerlessness that we could not do more to help those children, proposing alternatives to sending kids on remand to Ashley. It is our understanding that while the Youth Justice Act 1997 is outdated and punitive, there is no practical impediment to declaring another place a place of detention where magistrates may choose to send children and young people awaiting a court appearance. That can be done by gazette notice. We have a response here, from the Premier, which is reasonably argued.

Time expired.

[11.44 a.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Education, Children and Youth) - Mr Speaker, I thank the Premier for his important statement today. The safety of Tasmania's vulnerable children and young people is an absolute priority for our Government. We will continue to do all we can to ensure their safety and wellbeing, and support the staff who look after them. This Government established the commission of inquiry to uncover failings of the past - past governments, past administrations - the full history of settings like Ashley, to uncover their failings and to chart the course to a future where our institutions are child safe and provide the supports that children, young people and their families need to heal and to thrive and reach their full potential.

Last week, the commission examined the very painful and damaging history of the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. I echo the Premier's thanks and acknowledge all the individuals who have given evidence disclosing their painful experiences to help ensure that

the failures of the past never happen again. I also acknowledge the many staff at Ashley who have worked tirelessly, particularly in the last couple years, to reform the centre, introduce better safeguarding and support, and who ensure that young people are receiving therapeutic and rehabilitative care. I also acknowledge the staff who are working right now under extraordinarily difficult conditions and under intense public scrutiny, to continue providing care for those young people. Thank you.

While our reform process and our plans to move to new facilities is underway, our immediate priority is to ensure appropriate staffing ratios and support for the existing workforce responsible for the safety and care of the young people at Ashley.

The Government acknowledges the concerns raised by the Commissioner for Children and Young People and others regarding the impact of centre restrictions on the wellbeing of young people. We are doing everything we can to ensure that the centre restrictions are eased as soon as possible and removed completely at the earliest opportunity.

The Government has convened a group of senior officials across government agencies to deliver an urgent response to the current situation. This has been in operation for some time. The group is delivering immediate actions to alleviate staff and challenges to ease restrictions on centre operations and to enhance oversight and support onsite.

We now have a new executive director leading our response to the operational challenges at Ashley. Chris Simcock comes with considerable experience in delivering new youth justice approaches and facilities following the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory. We welcome him and he is doing a fantastic job.

Over the coming weeks, new operations and management staff will commence, including an additional director position beginning this week, who will add further on-the-ground leadership and oversight at the centre. This person comes with considerable expertise in delivering therapeutic custodial youth justice interventions in other states.

We are working across Government agencies to identify additional appropriately qualified staff to support Ashley youth workers, including staff recently retired from their roles in other relevant agencies and services of the government. We are recruiting suitably trained and experienced workers from youth justice settings interstate. We expect to see eight new experienced staff delivered through this recruitment process later this month. Having trained and experienced individuals who can hit the ground running will help to quickly normalise the operations at Ashley for the benefit of young people and the staff who work there.

Newly appointed youth workers have now completed their induction process and are working directly with young people. A further five new youth workers have recently been recruited and are scheduled to commence a comprehensive induction in the next week or so.

Recruitment to source staff for Ashley will be ongoing. We are increasing the employee assistance program support on site for staff, acknowledging the significant impact on the current workforce.

As the Premier mentioned, a specialist security consultancy has been engaged to review our CCTV capabilities at the site and provide advice on further enhancements in the interests of safety for young people and staff.

As the Premier has said, we have engaged the Australian Childhood Foundation to provide independent advice, views and oversight on safety and therapeutic provision at Ashley, now and during the transition to a new model. We believe that enhancing safety and oversight and ensuring Ashley has a full staff complement delivering a therapeutic model is the best option for supporting young people while we transition to new facilities. We understand the calls for closing Ashley sooner, and calls to deliver alternative arrangements for young people, particularly those who are on remand.

However, the Government is firmly of the view, and has taken strong and clear advice, that enhancing safety and oversight and ensuring Ashley has a full staff complement delivering a therapeutic model of care is the immediate priority for supporting these young people while we plan and transition to new facilities.

We will, of course, be considering alternative options for supporting young people on remand, including bail support options through our reform process. We are doing this in a methodical and considered manner. If we were to direct efforts away from the important task of securing the current operations at Ashley further, we would likely end up with multiple suboptimal responses, putting young people, staff and the community potentially at risk. We are absolutely committed to developing a fit-for-purpose youth justice system that is world's best practice.

In response to Ms White, we have introduced new oversights and safeguarding for children, including the Custodial Inspector and the Commissioner for Children and Young People, as independent monitors for the first time under this Government.

Ms O'Connor, please do not call the young people in Ashley 'damaged children'. They are Tasmanian children and we will work to provide the care they need to live fulfilling lives.

Statement noted.

MOTION

Leave to Suspend Standing Orders - Debate Motion Forthwith

[11.53 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Speaker, I seek leave to move -

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended to debate the Motion for Respect: Report into Workplace Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services; and that a joint sessional workplace culture oversight committee be established.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Motion for Respect: Report into Workplace Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services

[11.54 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That this House:

(1) Notes:

- (a) the *Motion for Respect: Report into Workplace Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services* released on Monday 29 August 2022;
- (b) that the Report provides 14 recommendations to improve workplace culture and processes, and ensure a shared responsibility for the varied workplaces covered by the Report.

(2) Acknowledges:

- (a) those who shared their experiences and apologies for the hurt and harm caused to them.
- (b) the need to improve workplace culture and process in the workplaces covered by the report;
- (c) that Tasmanians expect Members of Parliament and their officers to set the highest standards in workplace culture and accountability;
- (d) that staff employed in the workplaces covered by the Report are hardworking, dedicated and valued by Members of Parliament;
- (e) that the Report addresses a number of individual workplaces with respective needs and employment conditions; and
- (f) that each workplace must retain its individual rights to employ and manage staff, in line with best practice workplace policies, processes and procedures.

(3) Resolves:

- (a) that Members and staff in the workplaces covered by the Report have a right to a safe and inclusive work

environment free from discrimination, bullying, sexual harassment; and

- (b) that best practice workplace policies, processes and procedures enable safe and respectful workplaces and contribute towards positive culture.

(4) Supports:

- (a) the development and sharing of policies, procedures and frameworks, and relevant codes of conduct, that would ensure consistency across the workplaces covered in the Report; and
- (b) the provision of ongoing professional development and training to deliver a culture of continuous improvement.

(5) Commits to:

- (a) ensuring oversight and accountability for the implementation of recommendations by the relevant employer.

As members are aware, in July 2021 the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Sarah Bolt, was appointed as the reviewer for the independent review into parliamentary practices and procedures to support workplace culture. The review focused on workplaces across the parliament, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services staff and electorate offices, including practices and procedures, with the aim to ensure a safe and respectful workplace and to assist best practice in preventing and dealing with workplace discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying.

In November 2021 the commissioner announced the opening of an anonymous and confidential survey as the first stage of the review process which ran from 22 November 2021 until 17 December 2021. The survey into workplace culture asked participants about their experiences with discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying, using internal complaint and reporting processes, witnessing unsafe workplace conduct, and their perceptions of workplace culture.

The highest priority for the independent reviewer was, and remains, that the process was safe and the review of participants' information was protected. This was critical for participants so they could engage in the process with the assurance that written and oral material, including any comments made in the survey where the commenter may be identifiable, remained confidential.

The Right to Information Act 2009 and the Archives Act 1983 were amended to protect the information provided by review participants to ensure the process was safe and confidential. The results of the survey, together with the audit of internal policies, procedures and practices, were received and analysed as part of the review and assisted in informing recommendations made in the final report.

On 29 August our Government welcomed the release of the report into workplace culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services. As the report states, ultimately this review is about people. It is about their entitlement to a safe workplace and how that can be achieved. Today I again acknowledge the effort that has gone into this report and thank those who participated by giving frank and honest responses about their experiences, both current and historical. I say to those who took part, if you have been failed by systems, processes and behaviours, I am very sorry.

As the report clearly states, at the heart of the matter, Tasmanians expect the working environments and cultures across the MPS to be an exemplar of workplace culture where employees can work to their full potential in a safe environment in order to produce better outcomes for our community.

Please know that your participation, your insights, your shared experiences will lead to positive change and continuous improvement. As the employer of MPS staff, it is my intention to accept the intent of the recommendations in regard to MPS workplaces. Culture for me is a priority. On day one as Premier, I made this clear to Tasmanians and to my team, because at the heart of culture sits purpose, values, and behaviours.

We have an opportunity to foster positive change which will have better outcomes for staff, for performance and, ultimately, for the Tasmanian community. It is also clear from the survey and the report that employees are dedicated, hardworking and valued. As stated in the report, while many review participants reported negative experiences, it is also overwhelmingly evident that the MPS is comprised of an extremely dedicated workforce. Individuals are committed to their work and contributing to the Tasmanian community. The MPS workforce is deserving of contemporary workplace structures which builds a culture where they are valued and recognised for the contribution they make to our communities.

Their working environment should be inclusive, fair, and safe. However, the report also details some serious concerns and challenges that simply must be addressed as a priority. It is clear that in MPS and across all parties and across the parliament more generally, there needs to be a focus on improving processes and policy, as well as training and reporting mechanisms.

I again acknowledge and thank the Leader of the Opposition, Rebecca White, and the Leader of the Greens, Cassy O'Connor, who stood with me on the release of the report, together with Independent MLC, Meg Webb, to signal at the highest level our commitment to change.

I have a joint media release on the independent report into workplace culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services where it is co-signed by me and the Leader of Opposition, Ms White; the Leader of the Greens, Ms O'Connor; Ms Meg Webb, the Independent member for Nelson; Elise Archer, our Attorney-General; Hon Mark Shelton, the Speaker of the House of Assembly; Kristie Johnston, Independent member for Clark; and Hon Craig Farrell, the President of the Legislative Council. That public statement that all of us have signed up to says that everyone deserves a safe and inclusive workplace where they are respected, valued, and supported.

Today we welcome the release of *Motion for Respect: Report into Workplace Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services* by the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Sarah Bolt, which is published in full on the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner's website at www.equalopportunity.tas.gov.au. The review examined

workplace culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services as it relates to workplace discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying. This included ministerial and electorate offices, opposition offices, the parliament, members and staff, and people performing contractive services for the parliament. We acknowledge the effort that has gone into this report and thank those who participated by giving frank honest responses about their experiences both current and historical.

The report states that the survey had very high participation compared to similar surveys in other Australian jurisdictions, indicating a strong desire for change. While the report focuses on identifying gaps, it also notes evidence of an extremely dedicated workforce made up of talented individuals who are committed to their work and contributing to the Tasmanian community. Unacceptable behaviour by a small number of people should not detract from this.

However, it must also be acknowledged that the report details some very serious concerns and challenges. Some of the commentary is confronting. It is clear that Ministerial and Parliamentary Services needs to focus on improving processes and policy as well as training and reporting mechanisms. One constant theme was the lack of awareness around complaint processes. As a result, all staff have now been made aware of the formal complaints process established in their workplace and how to receive support.

We are all committed to lead by example and ensure that the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services sets the highest standard of workplace culture and accountability.

In order for the MPS to thrive as a safe and respectful workplace, it is essential that we heed the recommendations in this report and work together to improve processes, structures and support services.

MPS is a complex environment that consists of very distinct workforces, parliamentary, political and government across multiple sites. All should be inclusive, where people are treated with respect.

A joint standing committee will be established which will have a key role to play in working through the recommendations to establish a framework for implementation in relation to the parliamentary workplace. Advice is being sought in relation to establishing a similar mechanism to look at how to successfully implement recommendations in ministerial, opposition and electorate offices.

It is important that we act without delay. Some recommendations could be implemented more quickly than the given time frames, such as workplace training, which we would like to see commence later this year, starting with members of parliament and managers.

Today, leaders of all political persuasions and independents, stand together to show our dedication in ensuring our workplaces are exemplary as it is a collective responsibility and we all believe that we can and we must do better. I table that public statement.

We stand together today as parliamentary colleagues and community leaders to show our commitment to ensuring our workplaces set the highest standard on workplace culture and accountability.

In order for the MPS to thrive as a safe and respectful workplace, it is essential that we take heed of the recommendations in this report and work together to improve processes, structures and support service. As the public statement said, MPS is a complex environment that consists of very different workplaces. There are parliamentary, political and government workforces across multiple sites. All should be safe and inclusive.

Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House of Assembly notes the *Motion for Respect: Report into Workplace Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services* report was released on Monday, 29 August 2022.

The report provides 14 recommendations to improve workplace culture and processes and ensure a shared responsibility for the varied workplaces covered by the report.

Mr Speaker, I further move -

That the House acknowledges those who have shared their experiences and apologise for the hurt and harm caused to them.

For that, Mr Speaker, I unreservedly apologise.

I further move -

That there is a need to improve workplace culture and processes in the workplaces covered by the report. That Tasmanians expect members of parliament and their officers to set the highest standards in workplace culture and accountability that members and staff in workplaces covered by the report, are hardworking, dedicated and valued by members of parliament.

That the report addresses a number of individual workplaces with respective needs and employment conditions and that each workplace must retain its individual rights to employ and manage staff in line with the best practice workplace policies, processes and procedures.

That this House resolves that members and staff in the workplaces covered by the report have a right to a safe and inclusive workplace, work environment, free from discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment, and that best practice workplace policies, processes and procedures enable safe and respectful workplaces and contribute towards a positive culture.

That this House supports the development of sharing policies, procedures and frameworks and relevant codes of conduct that would ensure consistency across the workplaces covered in the report, and that the provision of ongoing professional development and training to deliver a culture of continuous improvement is essential.

That this House commits to ensuring oversight and accountability for the implementation of recommendations by the relevant employer.

To enable this to happen, I believe we will need a joint sessional oversight committee to oversee the implementation of recommendations by the relevant employer contained in this report.

As the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner said in her concluding remarks in the report:

It is further evident from both the sentiment expressed by participants and the extremely high participation rate that there is a strong appetite for change.

Ms Bolt noted that review participants shared an aspiration for MPS and the parliament to be a workplace in which they can thrive and which sets a standard of which they, and all Tasmanians, can and should be proud. I share this aspiration strongly.

Once again, I sincerely thank all participants for their truth, honesty and courage in coming forward. I can also share that additional supports have been put in place across the workplaces to assist anyone who needs someone to speak to or further support. I look forward to working together and together to champion change, and to improve any outdated or failing systems and processes, and embed a positive, inclusive and supportive culture right across our workplaces.

I also wish move a second motion - that this House supports the appointment of a joint sessional oversight committee with the power to send for persons and papers, and leave to report from time to time, to oversee the implementation of any accepted recommendations by the relevant employer contained in the report. I will move that following the debate of this motion.

[12.11 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I can indicate that the Labor Party will be supporting both motions moved by the Premier and his contribution just now. The working group that was established was able to be briefed by the commissioner prior to the public release of the report, and had worked quite collaboratively.

I do not want to dwell on this too long, but the motion before us now was provided late last night for members across both Houses to provide feedback on in a show of collaboration from the Government. I point out that it would have been nice if we had had a little more time to work on the details to make sure all our voices could be heard in the motion before the Chair. Having said that, we will support the motion without amendment.

This is a vitally important matter not just for us in this Chamber but for the entirety of the MPS. I take the opportunity to thank the commissioner and the staff at the commission for the work they have undertaken putting together this report, and I will take the opportunity to name them. There was project officer Melanie van Egdom; the review team of Katrina Warburton, Robyn Szabo and Michelle Parker; consultants Kristina Vermey, Dr Ron Mason and Jamie Roberts; and Anti-Discrimination Commissioner Sarah Bolt. I acknowledge them all for their work because a huge amount of work has gone into producing this report and it is important to acknowledge them and the effort that has been made to succinctly provide recommendations to us regarding how we can improve the culture of the MPS.

I would like to reference the concluding remarks of Anti-Discrimination Commissioner Bolt, particularly this paragraph:

I ardently encourage the implementation of all recommendations and strongly caution against a failure to do so. The recommendations have been designed to collectively and progressively contribute to building a respectful, supportive and safe workplace culture and should not be cherry picked.

I am very pleased that all those recommendations have been accepted and will be implemented. It will be the responsibility of the joint House committee that will be established by this motion to ensure it happens in a way that meets the time frames that have been set out in the report by the commissioner.

In reflecting on the findings of this report, you cannot help but draw the unfortunate conclusion that we have failed to provide a safe workplace that is free of discrimination, harassment and bullying. On behalf of the parliamentary Labor Party I offer our apology to all those who have been let down, both in this building and across the entirety of the MPS. We want to make sure we can offer a safe, supportive and respectful workplace where people can come to work and enjoy the work they do, contributing to the betterment of the Tasmanian community. I say sorry to those people who have been failed by us as leaders, to make sure that that can occur in a safe environment.

It was very concerning to see reported to the commissioner, unfortunately again repeatedly, stories of distress and a lack of support to raise complaints, let alone remedy them, with a lack of clarity about reporting lines and a lack of confidence that anything would change. For all of us that is something we need to be particularly mindful of, particularly those of us who will be on the joint House committee. There is a level of cynicism that, despite the findings of the report and the very clear recommendations, nothing will change.

We need to make sure that the structures and the culture of MPS are changed to not only reflect the findings of this report and recommendations, but to reflect contemporary work practices, to make sure we are offering a lawful workplace. Not only were some of the findings and stories shared in this report very distressing in that they demonstrated failures to provide a safe workplace, some of the behaviours reported were unlawful. That is of the greatest concern to us.

The biggest concern for all is that these behaviours, examples and stories occurred in the first place. I would much prefer not just for there to be clarity around the complaints handling process, but for there to be no reason for anyone to raise a complaint in the first place. The MPS should be a model employer that provides a safe and respectful workplace where instances of bullying, harassment, and discrimination do not occur. We should have a very clear complaints process that is easy to follow and where outcomes can be achieved for people who raise complaints. However, I would like to see us be a workplace that is free from those failures in the first place so that people do not have to raise complaints, because no-one should ever be subjected to harassment, discrimination or bullying, and certainly not in a workplace like this.

As I said, it was very distressing to read the accounts shared in the report of the types of unacceptable behaviours people had experienced and, in some instances, unlawful behaviours. They were the very worst examples provided in this report that illustrate the size of the cultural problem we must work to overcome.

I know there has already been communication through the Government to MPS employees about the EAS services that are available. I strongly encourage the Government to

continue to openly and actively communicate with MPS and, where necessary, to support people to raise matters with the police because, as I said, there were matters raised in this report that I found particularly distressing.

I also recognise how difficult it must have been for some people to contribute their experiences to this report. I note the commissioner, when she spoke publicly about the work that had been undertaken, recognised how personal so many of these stories are for people and how powerless certain people felt, not only in their own circumstances where they have experienced these types of behaviours, but where they have observed them occur to other people and did not know how to help or progress a complaint. I recognise how difficult it must have been for some people to share those experiences with the commission. I also note that the Premier has thanked them for their honesty and bravery because, without those stories, we would not have this report providing to us the findings and recommendations that are needed for us to improve the culture of MPS to effect the change that is obviously desperately needed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I take the opportunity to further reflect on some of the findings in the report and, in particular, the impacts of discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying, and how these behaviours affect the people who have been subjected to them. The most common impacts reported included feeling unsafe in the workplace, anxiety and depression, and the review participants reported experiencing and observing as a result of workplace discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying employees, that they had seen people crying in a nearby park, that they had observed or had themselves been curled up under the desk in a foetal position, that they had seen people staring at their shoes while being spoken to in fear of being yelled at, and that they themselves had experienced shaking and feeling as if they would vomit because of some of the behaviours they had experienced in the MPS workplace. Others reported feeling belittled and demeaned.

These negative effects of discrimination, sexual harassment and/or bullying impacting on people every day as they come to work trying to do their job are completely unacceptable.

A range of negative effects were reported to the commissioner, including anxiety and depression, panic attacks, stress and trauma, damage to self-confidence, sadness, frustration and disbelief, and wanting to leave.

The reports and accounts in this review are alarming and they require our urgent attention. I was pleased, on behalf of the Labor Party, to join with the Premier, the Leader of the Greens and Independent member for Nelson, Meg Webb, to collectively recognise that the report identifies failures across MPS, that we will share responsibility for improving, to provide the leadership necessary to see that happen.

I will reflect on the frustrations people had when they were trying to raise complaints and some of the barriers to reporting given as examples to the commissioner as to why people do not make a complaint. There are structural barriers that were overwhelmingly the experience of review participants, including:

- that there is no clear or uniform complaints policy or framework.
- that the complex employment arrangements in place in the MPS workplace and the fact that members of parliament are not employees at all means different rules apply to different people.

- that those working in the MPS workplace often do not know how to report a concern or do not have confidence in existing mechanisms for resolving those concerns.
- that there is an absence of human resource support across much of the MPS workplace.

Even if the complaints process was properly understood, cultural barriers to making complaints were identified, including:

- a lack of confidence in the systems and outcomes.
- power imbalances.
- negative experiences with the complaints process resulting in a perception that nothing will be done.
- fear of adverse consequences for the person making the complaint, including reprisal, negative career impacts and negative impacts on health and wellbeing.
- insecure employment and a worry that each individual issue seems trivial on its own.

There can be no doubt that the motion before the Chair requires our urgent attention. The establishment of the joint House committee has our support and we will participate in that to the best of our ability to give effect to the recommendations of this report.

I will share some of the data with the House. I am sure members have read all of this, but it is important to reference because people have contributed to this report in the hope that it will result in change: approximately one quarter of respondents to the survey stated that they had experienced discrimination in the MPS workplace; in relation to sexual harassment, 15 per cent of survey respondents experienced sexual harassment while 4 per cent preferred not to say; and in relation to bullying, 40 per cent of MPS workplace employees experienced bullying in the workplace, which is incredibly high.

The 14 recommendations in this report set out our obligations to make the improvements needed to improve the culture of MPS and to make sure it is a safe, respectful and supportive place to work for staff and MPs.

As I said when we did our joint press conference, there is big job ahead of us to change the MPS culture but we are committed to seeing that happen. We will work constructively in a joint House committee process to see the implementation of these recommendations and to change the structures and processes across the workplace to make sure that MPS is an enjoyable and safe place to work.

I will finish by thanking everybody who participated in the survey and contributed to the report into workplace culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services. Without the efforts of individual people who took the opportunity and the time, and had the courage to do that, we would not be standing here having this conversation about how we improve the workplace across the MPS. That must have been pretty damn tough on some people. I reiterate the call for the Government to maintain the communication about the support available to people because some people remain incredibly traumatized: this has been very triggering for some people. There is a lack of confidence that we are going to make the changes

that are needed and so we each need to express our desire to see that happen and to work collectively together to do that.

I support the motion.

[12.25 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, I thank the Premier for bringing on these motions, for the collaborative way to date that he has responded to the Bolt report, and also the Leader of the Opposition for being a very collaborative member of the working group established following the announcement of the review. Obviously, the Greens will be supporting both motions.

Every employee has the right to work in a safe, inclusive and respectful workplace. Every employer has the responsibility to provide this, to value and empower their staff, to listen to them and demonstrate respect.

This place - parliament and the broader Ministerial and Parliamentary Services - should be no different in many ways from any other workplace. However, we all know that it is very different. It is a place apparently trapped in time. That is what the Motion for Respect report tells us: as a workplace, Tasmania's parliament and MPS are trapped in the last century.

Commissioner Bolt's report describes a workplace that, for too many people, is toxic and unsafe. It describes a place where people have been abused, marginalised and in some cases groped, harassed. It describes a place people have left with post-traumatic stress disorder. There is a power imbalance in this place. I am not sure if every member has read Commissioner Bolt's report, Motion for Respect. I certainly hope so, because we all own this report, and we all own the responsibility to make sure that the MPS workplace joins the twenty-first century, that it is safe, inclusive and respectful.

We know that political staff, particularly, can feel great loyalty to the MP or minister they work to or the party they represent. From the Greens' point of view, Dr Woodruff and I are very thankful for the quality and commitment of the people we work with, and for their loyalty. This loyalty, as Commissioner Bolt's report makes clear, can be a double-edged sword. The loyalty, the politics of this place can, and has, prevented reporting. It can and has fostered silence. It has caused harm.

Commissioner Bolt's report lays bare in brutal detail what an unhealthy workplace this can be. I thank the Equal Opportunity Commissioner, Sarah Bolt, and her team for their diligence and rigour, and the way that they approached this review and report, and the way that they encouraged all of us to come forward into a safe place, to tell our stories of working in MPS.

Thank you to every person who participated, whether they fed into the survey or undertook an interview, every person who made one of 620 substantive comments to the review. People who work in this building as parliamentary staff, MPs' staff, ministerial staff, and people who work in departments to parliament and government, your experiences and input will be a catalyst for change, and this is change that is desperately needed.

I understand the cynicism about whether change is possible. I firmly believe it is.

On behalf of the Greens and as a member of this place, I am deeply and unreservedly sorry that too many MPS staff and a number of MPs and MLCs, mostly female, have experienced workplace discrimination, bullying, harassment, trauma and stress. It is completely unacceptable. As a Green, I commit wholeheartedly to doing all I can as a member of this committee to make this workplace safe, respectful and inclusive.

There are a couple of other acknowledgements I need to make before I go to the findings. We owe a debt of thanks to the Independent member for Nelson, Meg Webb, who wrote to the previous premier in the wake of frankly disgusting sexism and cultural toxicity in the federal parliament and work that was being undertaken on the Jenkins report. The previous premier, to his credit, had the courage to recognise there is a problem and the courage to establish this review and committee.

On the findings, this is something of which we need to be extremely mindful. People who fed into this review expressed a high level of collegial mistrust within the MPS workplace. They expressed a sense of helplessness and fear to complain or call out bad behaviour due to fear of retribution, lack of consistent policies and processes, and a perceived lack of job security. Staff and others who contributed to the review reported bullying behaviours, such as yelling, screaming, swearing, belittling and ostracising as common place. They were worried about a lack of accountability and the consequences for those who exercise or exhibit bullying discrimination or sexually harassing behaviours.

They talk about something which permeates this place. It is unseen but it is quite tangible: a prevailing attitude of self-entitlement, self-importance and bullying behaviours among those in positions of power or whose employment status is secure; a culture of removing those who complain and rewarding the bully. The findings tell us that with too many managers - and every MP in this place is a manager because we have the great privilege of being able to employ staff - it is clear there is no training on how to manage staff and too many managers have little or no expertise in people management. The findings point to disrespectful behaviours having a cascading effect through the MPS workplace, including permeating into the wider public service.

The commissioner has found that there is an overwhelming appetite for cultural change, accountability and consistent workplace practices. Through her 14 recommendations, Commissioner Bolt has laid out the path towards that necessary goal.

There are a couple of findings I will raise and question. One finding is that, despite the record number of women in parliament, it is perceived that their behaviour towards each other, particularly during debates, does little to attract a talented pool of women into politics. In some ways that finding could be interpreted as the behaviour in parliament partly being a woman problem. As one of the mouthier women in this Chamber, my observation is that the insults that fly are not gendered. Dr Woodruff and I have been called all sorts of things, demonised as Greens as we are by our colleagues, male and female. It is the general tone of the place that can put talented women off entering politics.

I note, however, that things have changed a bit. Until quite recently women had the numbers in this Chamber across political boundaries. There has been a slight setback. The introduction of cameras into this Chamber did lead to significant cultural change within this Chamber. Obviously, we have a long way to go, but I recommend to members going back and having a look at some of the *Hansard* before there were cameras in here. Have a look at the

kind of abuse women like Judy Jackson, Fran Bladel, Sue Napier, Christine Milne, Di Hollister and Peg Putt copped from the men in this Chamber when there were no cameras here to record their behaviours. Every woman elected to this place owes those female MPs who came before us an acknowledgement of what they went through, and a debt of gratitude.

It is a very imperfect workplace, but it has changed. I remember being a young journalist here 30-odd years ago, and being helped up the stairs by my buttock by a well-known MP at the time. Just giving me a little lift up the stairs. That was so commonplace.

The other finding that I want to challenge is the finding that the Estimates process is too often weaponised for political gain. As a member of a cross-bench party, I am not sure exactly where this has come from. Having sat through Estimates here for 14 years, I think the word 'weaponised' is not fair, because we come to the table with information and questions on behalf of stakeholders and constituents. When you are confronted with a minister who will not be honest, or dodges a truthful answer, should we just let that go? I do not think so. We all have a responsibility in here to stand up for our constituents and our values. That is why sometimes it becomes quite heated in here. Much of the time, of course, we are all getting on. We have had some excellent debates on bills, negotiations around amendments, outside the heat of question time.

It is a fact of the Westminster system that there will be volatility in this Chamber at the Estimates table. Our responsibility is to make sure that that does not infect the culture of the rest of this place. One of the things I have always sought to do, and always appreciated in others, is to try kindness as the default to your political colleagues outside this Chamber. It is really important that we do.

There are 14 recommendations here, all of which are common sense and achievable. They are recommendations that have come from the testimony of staff, MPs, and MLCs who work in this building. I understand the caution in the motion about committing specifically to any specific recommendation, but when you look at these recommendations, they are very thoughtfully stepped out and there are milestones along the way. Every one of these recommendations has significant practical value.

One of the most important things we can do is to establish safe processes for people to report to. It is a matter of fact that if a person, whether they be a member of the broader public or someone who works in MPS, has a complaint to make about the conduct of an MP, whether it be lawful or unlawful, they must go to you, Mr Speaker. For any other complaint against a public officer, the option is to go to the Integrity Commission or the Ombudsman. In the upper House, if you have a complaint about an MLC, you need to take it to the President. That again tells us that this place has effectively been designed as a closed shop, and that is how a culture of secrecy and poor behaviour is allowed to flourish.

We have legislation on the table, and without saying too much to pre-empt an order of the day, Dr Woodruff's bill, the Public Interest Disclosure (Members of Parliament) Bill 2021, seeks to fix that anomaly in our whistleblower legislation so that people who work in this Chamber as elected representatives and people who work in the upper House as elected representatives are subject to the same complaints reporting processes as other public officers. You cannot have a system that is partisan. We need to fix that and we need to create a structure so that if someone in this place who works in MPS experiences bullying, discrimination and harassment, they know exactly where to go, they know they will be supported and they know

it will be a safe space. That has been missing from this place since forever and it is part of the reason we end up with a report that is as shocking as Commissioner Bolt's.

As I said, we all own this report and we all have a responsibility collectively to work together in good faith and collaborate on delivering those recommendations and a safer workplace. This needs to happen across parties, including independents, and be across both Houses. We cannot allow this process to be delayed or to look like it is being stalled. We have to be mindful of the expectation of people who work in MPS that we have all committed to delivering real change. We stood together last Monday - highly unusual - in significant part to acknowledge that we all have a responsibility but also to send a clear and unequivocal signal to people who work in MPS that we are resolved to do better and we are resolved to get this right.

In so many ways, this is a wonderful place to work. It is interesting, it is mentally stimulating and no matter which part of MPS you work in, your work can deliver real outcomes for the people of Tasmania, but if we do not have the culture right, people will not be safe and it will take the joy out of working here in Tasmania's parliament.

My final thought for the Premier - and this goes back to the findings around weaponising Estimates or women behaving badly in here - is that if he wants to lower the temperature in this place, he needs to tell his ministers to be truthful. He needs to be really clear with his Cabinet members that avoiding an answer is unacceptable. I watch it every question time. You can see - and I am sure you note this too, Mr Speaker - that the interjections increase in intensity and volume when a minister is dodging a question. It cuts both ways. Yes, we can and must all take collective responsibility for improving the culture of this workplace and this Chamber, but Dr Woodruff and I are not going to sit in silence while ministers avoid scrutiny or seek to avoid scrutiny. We will have a lowering of the temperature in here - which I am sure, Mr Speaker, you would appreciate - if there is a substantive cultural shift in the way ministers respond to questions, whether they be in question time, during debate on a bill, in Estimates or GBE hearings. It would make such a difference.

I am looking forward to being part of the committee that we will move to establish today, to working collaboratively with my colleagues across politics, to continuing to listen to staff and the people we work with, to make sure that we have a culture of continuous improvement.

I believe the Greens have a happy, inclusive and respectful office, but I am sure there are improvements we can make in there too. Maybe we swear too much, I do not know, but I am very thankful to our staff, a number of whom made a contribution to Commissioner Bolt's report. We had a conversation with our team on the Monday of the report's release, before the release, because I very strongly feel that we cannot just whip this away from the people who are the foundation of this workplace. Involving MPS staff, who we are responsible to, in progress as we move forward is essential if those good people we work with are to have faith in the process and believe there will be an outcome.

I am very pleased to say Dr Woodruff and I are looking forward to being a constructive part of cultural change so that we can make the Parliament of Tasmania one of the safest, most respectful, interesting and healthy workplaces in the state.

[12.49 p.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Mr Speaker, I rise to support the motions brought forward by the Premier. Commissioner Bolt's report was indeed a very difficult read, as members today have outlined. It talked about a cultural workplace where sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying occurs.

I place on the record, in the time that I have, how deeply sorry I am to anyone and everyone who has experienced this kind of behaviour. It is unacceptable. We should be leaders in our community. We should be the hallmark of good workplace culture and we are not. I am deeply sorry about that. We must do so much better.

I do not want to go over the details of the report because other speakers have highlighted some very good points in it, but I want to put on the record an acknowledgement of the bravery of participants and acknowledge the high participation rate in the survey as well. I thank those participants for speaking out. I know that many of the people who participated in the survey, and I know they struggled with deciding whether to participate, whether they felt brave enough to put forward their experiences and tell their stories. I thank them for choosing to do this.

I also acknowledge those people who did not participate in the survey because they did not feel safe, despite the best efforts of the commissioner to make sure people felt encouraged and safe to come forward. There were still some people who did not feel that they were in a place to be able to tell their story. I say to those people, I see you and I hear you. I commit to doing all I can to making sure that there is a culture in the MPS in the future for hopefully one day, you do feel comfortable and safe to speak about your experiences, and where the harm that has occurred to you can be acknowledged and we can apologise for that.

The report is a very difficult read, and I thank the commissioner and her team, as others have, for the work that she has done and particularly the effort she went to, to try to provide that safe environment for people to speak out. That is not an easy task to do when we are dealing with some of the very difficult issues like sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying, that we are dealing with here.

I thank the working group that I was involved in, for their genuine commitment to this particular issue and the way in which they did not criticise the report or the process of developing a report. I thank that genuine collaboration.

I hope that what we will see is a very different culture in the MPS. I hope that people will feel safe, respected, valued and heard. I hope, as the Leader of the Opposition said, there is no need for a complaints process, but if there is, then we know exactly how that should be conducted and where people can go for help.

I know this debate over the motion has been difficult and may be triggering for some. I encourage them, and I am sure the Premier would, anyone listening to it or reading the debate, to reach out and seek support, in particularly the employer assistance program as well. I acknowledge those participants, but also want to acknowledge those who are yet to feel brave enough to speak out.

[12.52 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I support the motions put forward by the Premier today, before the parliament.

I begin my contribution on these motions with a quote from the *Motion for Respect* report:

I believe the Parliament and the behaviour that goes on within it, both publicly and privately, should be above repute and set a standard that we expect in other workplaces. A standard of behaviour where women are respected, gender equity and equality is the goal, power is not biased and all employees feel safe ...

I could not agree more with this quote.

The report into workplace culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services by Anti-Discrimination Commissioner Sarah Bolt, is thorough, shocking and demands our urgent attention. Every person working in the MPS, deserves to be safe at work, respected and supported to reach their full potential and, quite frankly, democracy in the state of Tasmania, depends upon this.

I thank all those who made submissions and contributed to the process of developing this report and name Commissioner, Sarah Bolt and her team.

I state from the outset, as I have said, that we will be supporting the work of the parliament and the Government to implement the recommendations to improve workplace culture across the MPS outlined in the report.

I, too, extend my sincere apologies to all those who have been impacted by the culture of this place and say sorry for the pain they have endured and the suffering over time, and thank them for being brave in coming forward and sharing their experiences. Without people doing that, nothing ever changes.

Labor supports the establishment of this joint parliamentary committee to oversee and be accountable for the implementation of the independent review. Labor welcomes the suggested appointment of an independent project officer to oversee the implementation of the 14 recommendations. That independent role, I believe, will be very important.

I have taken some time to read and review this report over the last little while, the abridged and the full version. I have read the comments throughout the report and I too have been genuinely shocked and distressed by them. I acknowledge the difficulty many people who made contributions would have experienced in coming forward. I particularly support the point in the motion that acknowledges what these Tasmanians have been through.

The motion does not include reference to ongoing mental health support or a mechanism for a complaints process to follow up the distressing experiences outlined by these employees and MPs, of which 81 per cent are still working for the MPS. I note that the Premier, in his contribution, said that there would be ongoing support for them. That is pleasing to note. Also, there will be due process for the issues and experiences that have been reported to be fully followed up. That is only right and fair as part of this process.

This report demands our urgent attention. It focuses specifically on the occurrence of discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying. There are those 14 recommendations before us to deal with those very issues.

The MPS workplace is a complex framework made up of multiple workplaces, individuals and methods of engagement but that should not be an excuse for a poor culture or behaviour across those workplaces. I want to read into *Hansard* another quote from the report:

Many reports have been produced into the parliamentary workplaces which reflect on the Parliament being a unique institution, not like any other. While this is true, parliaments are still workplaces and must perform in the modern world ...

That is a very important point. Parliament is unlike any other workplace I have worked in and being an MP is unlike any role I have done previously. As they say, you do not know what you do not know when you become an MP, or you begin your working career with the MPS.

These recommendations offer us an opportunity to make positive change across each of these settings and improve culture across the MPS. It demands the attention and action of elected representatives. Everyone deserves the right to be safe at work and we need to ensure this right is upheld across the MPS. It offers the opportunity to put in place structures and processes that ensure accountability and support mechanisms for employees and MPs to be protected and safe.

I concur with the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Ms Bolt, when she says:

However, as with any workplace, while most people do the right thing, a proportion of people do not. The positional and professional reputation of many can be too easily overshadowed and tarnished by the behaviours of a few. It is my hope, through the implementation of the recommendations set out in this Report, that this will be avoided in the future.

That is my hope too because this report casts scrutiny and diminishes public trust in the MPS and MPs. It has the potential to diminish morale across our workforce, of which we need to be very cognisant. We need to ensure that MPS employees and members of parliament are supported and nurtured as work progresses on these recommendations and report. It is imperative that the employees of the MPS and MPs are not afraid to come forward to share their lived experience in the future, as is reportedly the case now.

I thank and acknowledge all of those MPs and employees, past and present, for having the courage to speak up and advocate for change. The report shows that staff and MPs do fear reprisal or repercussion for coming forward. This must be addressed.

We have some very talented people working in the MPS. This talent and ability should be nurtured, not diminished. I put on the record again my thanks to all our staff across the MPS. We could not do our job without you and our democracy depends on this.

Decisive and timely leadership is required by the Government and all members of parliament to act on the recommendations of this report. Transparency will be key to rebuilding the public and MPS workforce's trust in the changes made through these 14 recommendations.

An important part of addressing and ensuring this culture will change will be through new training and professional development opportunities. I support this wholeheartedly. There

is a lack of a thorough induction process in the MPS. Even when you become an MP, ongoing information and education should be provided. In a previous life, I was a nurse and we had to complete continuous professional development activities. Being an MP should be no different. I understand that we can initiate this ourselves but there should be a more structured approach to professional development being made available for members of parliament and employees of the MPS.

The establishment of an HR unit is a very positive inclusion and a consistent approach to inductions that includes an overarching review would be useful.

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

MOTION

Motion for Respect: Report into Workplace Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services

Resumed from above.

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, in conclusion to my contribution, every person working for the MPS deserves to be safe at work, respected and supported to reach their full potential. I also make the point that this report is very sensitive and should not be politicised. I want to read from a summary of the report with just a couple of final comments.

The MPS workforce is deserving of contemporary workplace structures which build a culture where they are valued and recognised for the contribution they make to our communities. Their working environment should be supportive, inclusive, fair and safe.

Further, and at the heart of the matter, Tasmanians expect the working environments and cultures across MPS to be an exemplar of workplace culture, where employees can work to their full potential in a safe environment, in order to produce better outcomes for the community.

Mr Speaker, it is indeed a privilege to be part of the MPS and be an MP and to be able to create change right across Tasmania. Although there are times when we do not always agree, with those final comments I have read from this report, I think we can all agree on the need for change.

[2.31 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in support of this motion. I start by thanking Ms Sarah Bolt, the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, and her team for undertaking this extensive and very important review. As others have said, the review has very clearly highlighted the confronting and widespread issues in the broader MPS workplace. It has also highlighted that the current policies, procedures, supports and reporting mechanisms are inadequate. It is clear from the review that much needs to be done and that this need for change could not be more urgent.

I will echo the sentiments of others and thank all of those who participated in the review, including those who gave evidence about their experience in the broader MPS workplace. We acknowledge that giving evidence of this nature can often be an immensely difficult process and we thank them sincerely for that.

We all have a collective responsibility to ensure that the MPS is a safe and respectful workplace and one the community can look up to. Not only are all MPS staff incredibly dedicated, but they are also rightly proud of the work they do here. There is clearly much work to do but I believe that lasting change can be achieved with the collective and genuine commitment that we see before us today across this Chamber.

I support the motion. I thank the Premier for bringing it before the House, and thank the member for Nelson, Meg Webb, for triggering this debate.

[2.33 p.m.]

Mrs ALEXANDER (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I also add my voice to other members in the House who have spoken in support of this initiative and as a result of the work undertaken around our workplace culture.

For me, the timing of the report coming out has been quite interesting because I was reflecting on the six months I have been here in parliament and this building. It was interesting reading through the report, and also from my personal observations, things that I could actually relate to and things that I have spotted in my time here. Probably within three months of being in the House - I think it was my first adjournment speech - I spoke about attending a multicultural event and a couple of other things in Launceston. In the context of that, I spoke about how important it is to be inclusive and understanding, how we are communicating and interacting across society, the community and the workplace. Many of us come from different families and different cultures, and we are so diverse that in communicating with each other we need to consider not only our respect, but it is also how we impact mentally and emotionally on one another.

At that time I referred that we kept talking about Parliament House and the safety we need to ensure in Parliament House. There was a lot of discussion around COVID-19 and how we protect ourselves. I experienced that in the workplace myself when 2020 occurred, and then implementing COVID-19 worksafe practices and working very closely with workplace officers at that time, which was well and truly before entering politics. One of the main considerations was that whilst we were implementing the physical protection of workers, in that process we always had to be very careful around the mental and emotional safety of the people we were working with because of the various age groups and differences. We had to bring everyone along on that safety journey. I spoke about that in my third week on the adjournment.

We always have to be very careful about mental and emotional safety. It is not just physical safety, but mental and emotional safety is also extremely important. This is what generates the responses when people are feeling bullied and harassed in the workplace.

I have done a lot of training and have worked very hard wherever I have worked before to implement awareness in the workplace for people to understand how to talk to each other, how to respect each other's boundaries, et cetera. One of the interesting things I have found - and I have lost count of how many times I have found this in different workplaces - is that as

soon as you finish training, people who have sat around the table have said, 'Yes, great, this is exactly what we need to do, this is exactly what is happening, we recognise all those behaviours'. Sure enough, within a few weeks they go ahead and do exactly what they were trained not to do. Then you say, 'We just discussed that in training, so how come?', and they answer, 'Oh, I did not realise that'. This is why it is very important.

In looking at the recommendations that were put forward, training was mentioned as something to be implemented in the first 18 months. Training is a very important part of it because it is not only the fact that we act in a sense like managers, but also that we need to train each other in the way in which we communicate with people outside the Chamber but also inside the Chamber. We need to have robust debate because it is part of democracy, but there are ways in which that debate should take place, especially when it is witnessed by observers from outside such as schoolchildren and others who may attend from time to time.

On a personal note, and in relation to this report, yesterday my new electorate officer commenced. She is from a different cultural background. We explained to her that she would be attending the Premier's address to MPs' staff yesterday afternoon, and explained to her the context of that address. It is about being very aware that people will come to the Tasmanian parliament and observe us and may not necessarily understand how and why things occur the way they do, so we need to be very careful about how we express ourselves.

Another example from my personal experience is that I have witnessed the Equal Opportunity Commission accepting cases of people who have reported feeling ostracised because they have come across other people in the workplace who repeatedly do not acknowledge them in the hallway, or not responded to them saying hello or something like that. The Equal Opportunity Commission in Tasmania has accepted those cases as being a genuine representation of that person feeling ostracised or not being acknowledged.

These are examples of how easy it can be for us as a collective group in our interaction with each other and, outside this, with staff, to overstep that mark and behave in a way that is not appropriate. This is why it is very important for that training to occur, to involve everybody so that we can understand.

Equally, by explaining very clearly to staff what their position description is and what the expectations are, so that when discussions happen around work performance, it is not being seen as a bullying process. Again, everything has to be very clear and very transparent. Unless we have transparency in that process of on-boarding staff and working together as a team, these issues will come up again and again.

It is very important to set us on solid ground, a ground where once we embark on this process as a group, there should not be that little word 'but'. Basically, we say okay, we agree we are going to do all this, 'but in this instance, there are exemptions', or 'in that instance there will be that exception'. The minute we introduce these little 'buts' in the conversation and in the behaviour, we open the door for things to creep in again and we will end up with issues that will see us again talking about bullying and harassment in the workplace. It is a worry.

As I said, after six months I have been asked what I think about parliament and how it is perceived in the outside world. Sometimes it is not seen very favourably and people do not like the way we communicate with each other sometimes.

On a positive note, I have also witnessed and felt a lot of compassion in this room. I can only speak from my personal experience that recently, with the loss of my father, I have had not only my colleagues but a lot of members from across the aisle reach out to me and show a lot of compassion. I was very grateful for that.

Although we are here today talking about the culture in the workplace and how we communicate with each other, we also need to acknowledge the fact that compassion does happen and the way we interact with each other is a positive one most of the time.

The other thing will mostly revolve around training. I am a firm believer that training is paramount for us to move ahead and resolve some of these issues.

Mr Speaker, I am very grateful that I had the opportunity to talk on this matter.

[2.44 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I wish to make my apology as the member of Franklin to all the members of parliament, the staff in electorate offices and parliamentary offices, as well as to all Parliament House staff who have, over the decades and in recent times, contributed their experiences of being bullied, harassed and discriminated against in this workplace.

The report of Sarah Bolt, and the other people who worked with her compiling the surveys and having conversations with people, has detailed a culture of a systemic abuse of power in this workplace in some places.

It has changed over time. Ms O'Connor talked about the difference experienced just by having eyes on us in the Chamber, the experience of members of parliament, where abuse and harassment has decreased as a result of having cameras.

Eyes on behaviour is an important change but the most important change is the culture which we are all responsible for setting. The report describes the impact on people who have experienced these forms of abuse. The impact, I felt from reading the report, was that it is a very bodily feeling. That is what stands out most to me in the comments included by Ms Bolt in relation to, for example, the impact of discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying. She asked, 'What did we learn?'. We learnt that as a result of these actions people responded by crying in a nearby park, being curled up under their desk in a foetal position, staring at their shoes while being spoken to in fear of being yelled at, and shaking and feeling that they would vomit.

The impact for people who had those experiences included the response of the body, which was anxiety and depression, panic attacks, stress and trauma, damage to their self-confidence, sadness, frustration, disbelief and, sadly but not surprisingly, wanting to leave. For most of those people who have had some severe experiences, these impacts are still felt in their bodies. We carry experiences like discrimination, bullying and harassment in ourselves and we store it away as shame and guilt. It thwarts people's ability to be able to contribute to the important work we do here, representing the people of Tasmania, to their fullest ability.

This report tells me and the other members who have made a contribution today that we want to change the culture so that people can contribute fully and be included, they can flourish, nurture and do the work they are employed to do free of ridicule, threat and the other forms of

abuse people have experienced: the insults, the humiliation, the ridicule and also, appallingly, the unwelcome requests for sex, the constant obscene comments that some people reported, and unwelcome physical contact. These are all behaviours that some people experienced on a persistent basis.

Not only were the people who experienced this behaviour themselves harmed, it was also damaging for bystanders. It seems, from the report, that bystanders were of two types. They included members of parliament turning a blind eye, supporting the status quo, senior men in the parliament clearly unwilling to rock the boat or upset the boys. It also included other women, when women were bullied or discriminated against or harassed, who chose not to speak out. The price for speaking out was very severe and the reasons people did not intervene was because of the negative consequences for doing that. The impacts of speaking up meant 20 per cent of people had their career pathways damaged or inhibited; 17 per cent had physical and mental health impacted; 17 per cent had relationships at work badly affected; 14 per cent had self-esteem and confidence badly affected; 14 per cent left to work elsewhere; and 6 per cent took time off work. There was an overwhelming view from bystanders that they did not speak up because they did not think anything would be done and it would damage their career prospects.

We have a responsibility to make sure we can do everything so that every person in this place - every employee - is able to come to work and feel some joy at the prospect of doing what they can to contribute to the democracy of Tasmania. To make their part, small and great, on behalf of people who have voted for them to speak and be their representative here, all the people who work for them, all the parliamentary staff, all the staff in the ministerial offices who, in such a hardworking way, do everything they can to make the work that we do be fantastic and to make Tasmania a better place.

Most people in this building are here to make Tasmania a better place. That is why it has been so great that Sarah Bolt has done this work. Now it is up to us. The Premier has made a strong commitment. The Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Greens, and I make my small part in that commitment to providing ongoing support for people and to giving people every opportunity to nurture and flourish in the workplace. The 620 people who made substantive contributions all expect to see something different. It is up to us to make sure that we honour them.

Motion agreed to.

MESSAGE TO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Concurrence with Resolution

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That a message be transmitted to the Legislative Council requesting its concurrence with the resolution.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Joint Sessional Workplace Culture Oversight Committee - Appointment

[2.53 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That a Joint Sessional Workplace Culture Oversight Committee be appointed with the 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).

That the number of Members to be appointed to serve on the said Committee on that part of the House of Assembly be 4.

My substantive contribution was on the first motion, but I still want to reiterate that it is important we continue to work in partnership across this House on this very important subject.

Culture starts with leadership. As leaders we have a duty of care to oversee the recommendations by the relevant employer.

I thank everyone for their contribution to the previous motion. I thank the commissioner, Sarah Bolt, for the enormous amount of work, diligence and the way the survey was presented and supported through Ms Bolt and her office, so people could speak freely in a safe and respectful way and in confidence.

I thank the commissioner's office; Mel, who we met when we launched the report last week. I also thank the member of the Legislative Council, Meg Webb, and her proactiveness in bringing the initial steps to this point and the working group involved in working with the commissioner, Sarah Bolt, over the past 12 months. I appreciate that strong collaboration and commitment.

I thank also the collaborative nature and respectful environment in which we have supported the previous motion and, no doubt, this one as well. It is important that we act. It is important that people who come to work for our respective teams and their workplaces are working in an inclusive, respectful working environment where we all feel valued for making a contribution.

People bring to the respective offices such passion and enthusiasm for making a difference for the benefit of Tasmania and Tasmanians. Whether they be independent staffers, people who work for the opposition, the Greens, government, irrespective of the colour of the workplace, every workplace should be inviting, and every workplace should be encouraging people to make a contribution. People come with great commitment and passion to do good things. For that to be destroyed through a bullying culture, sexual harassment, harassment of any form, deeply saddens me and traumatises people potentially for the rest of their working lives.

For those who have experienced that, again I am deeply sorry. All of us in this place must recognise failures of the past. Today is a huge step forward. We are here with an enormous amount of work of the commissioner, Sarah Bolt, but also the many people who contributed to the *Motion of Respect* report. I thank them for their courage and their commitment. Positive change will come. We can all learn from past experiences, but we all must commit to continuous improvement.

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I indicate that the Labor Party will be supporting this motion. This is where the rubber hits the road and the work starts. I look forward to the first meeting of the committee.

[2.59 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, the Greens strongly support this motion to establish a joint sessional workplace culture oversight committee. This is the body that will drive the implementation of recommendations contained within the report. It will be an excellent opportunity for genuine collaboration for all the people we work with and for each other.

It is important that we do not allow this joint committee to have the appearance of being closed, not collaborative or inclusive of other members and people who work in Ministerial and Parliamentary Services. I do not know exactly how you might give effect to greater inclusiveness or more transparency, but it might be as straightforward as making sure there is notice of committee meetings, there is an invitation to members and MPS staff to raise any issues with the committee, that we are transparent about the minutes of our meeting and that we are very goal-focused, so we will meet, there will presumably be a discussion about the recommendations and time frames that have been set out by Commissioner Bolt and then we need to keep to those timelines.

I am not trying to be hectoring here, Mr Speaker, but there is a sense of urgency about responding to the commissioner's report now, so that is on the members of the committee that we are agreeing to establish today, but it does need to be as inclusive as possible. That is part of cracking the new culture, if you like, and breaking down some of those problems that have caused secrecy, hiddenness, silence, suffering and opportunistic abuse. Let us agree that this committee will be unlike any committee parliament has set up before. It will be a committee whose sole goal is to make this workplace terrific and safe and inclusive.

Mr Speaker, I believe we can do that.

Motion agreed to.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Health

[3.02 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter : health.

We think this Government has its priorities all wrong when it comes to the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians. Right now, this Government is not getting the basics right for Tasmanians and nowhere is that more evident than across our health system. You only have to look at the over 9000 Tasmanians who are waiting for elective surgery, which is necessary surgery, and the over 55 000 Tasmanians who are waiting to see a specialist in the state, some of whom have been waiting for years. You only have to look at the dire situation in our workforce across our health system, who really are at breaking point, and we are seeing that demonstrated through industrial action across the state.

We know that our healthcare workers do not take strike action lightly. They are dedicated to their work and they want to be able to provide safe and quality care for their patients. Strike action is the last resort they take when they are at their wits' end through a flawed negotiation process with a government that is simply not listening or recognising their calls for additional support, pay parity and incentives to get them to stay. Even in that process the Government is always on the back foot when it comes to negotiations.

If we look at other states across the country, other jurisdictions have offered incentives a lot earlier than this Government has and you have to ask the question why. If you cannot get access to see a specialist your health will continue to deteriorate. That puts added pressure on our health system. It means you might present to your general practitioner more often and we know that there are incredibly long wait times to see GPs and we have a shortage of GPs in Tasmania. It means that you might call an ambulance more often and we know that our ambulance service is under incredible pressure. The recent health data showed that response time has increased to 15 minutes, which is completely unacceptable and the highest it has ever been. Then it might mean that you present to our hospital system, and we know there are significant issues with bed block.

Access to specialist treatment, consultation and intervention are some things this Government has direct control over. I know there is work being committed to looking at aged care and NDIS packages as a way of alleviating pressure and bed block across our acute health system, but that is not enough and this Government needs to do more to support Tasmanians who are waiting for elective surgery.

I was bemused this morning when the Premier and part-time Health minister stood before the House and said it was great that data was being made available across the Tasmanian community to tell us how many Tasmanians are waiting to see a specialist or waiting for elective surgery. I do not understand why that is so important when the most important point is that those people are waiting and what they need is not transparency around data but access to care close to where they live.

I want to take a moment to speak about one of my constituents I have been working with now for over a year, who has been told that she will need to wait for four years to see a neurosurgeon. When she finally does get that appointment, it will be four hours or more from where she lives. This person lives in constant pain and discomfort. She presents regularly to her GP and is still waiting from this Government to have her neurosurgery appointment brought forward. She is at her wits' end with the system and really does require intervention and assessment now. She should not have to wait four years to get that care she needs. It is disgraceful.

If you look at the most recent health dashboard data, you only have to look at the south, and I mentioned it this morning during question time, around cardiology - 102 days if you need urgent assessment and appointment with a cardiologist in the south of the state. Ear, nose and throat for paediatric patients - we all know the developmental delays that occur when children do not get access to an ear, nose and throat specialist intervention related to hearing, difficulties with speech and eating. These are all things that need to be addressed and require early intervention and are critical to a child's growth and development and yet, in the south, you would be waiting 420 days for that assessment. It is no wonder our educational outcomes are in decline.

The other one that I want to mention was in the north-west, and I have recently spoken about this - gynecological appointments, 82 days; gastroenterology, 103 days; and the respiratory clinic, 69 days for an urgent case. If you have difficulty breathing, sleep apnoea, the impact that has on your life is very significant in your daily functioning and your ability to be at work and function as part of our community and our society, and 69 days is far too long. It goes on and on. Paediatric clinics, 71 days. In the north it is 324 days to see a cardiologist at the LGH. That is extraordinary for urgent care.

It is all very well that we have all this data made available, but it is not the data that Tasmanians want to see. It is access to health services. This Government is continuing to not get the basics right when it comes to accessing health services. We effectively have a part-time Health minister who is not able to have a dedicated focus on what is really required in the crisis across our healthcare system and making sure that people do get access to the services when and where they need them, that their conditions do not deteriorate and they are not putting that additional pressure on our health system. We want to see more action from this Government and fewer words.

[3.09 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Health) - Mr Speaker, I thank the member for bringing forward the matter of public importance.

We are demonstrating action when it comes to health service delivery. Our budget is \$11.2 billion over the next four years. Think of the reforms we are implementing across our health system, across our statewide mental health system. With care in the community, people will be able to access health services in the community, in their home; secondary triage; the PACER team; ComRRS (Community Rapid Response Service); all are innovative health care delivery, being delivered across this state.

With our investment and commitment to continuous and further improvement by investing almost \$500 million into upgrading our IT and digital infrastructure across our health system, we will lead the nation in digital and information technology across our health system. That is a huge investment.

When I first sat down with the Australian Medical Association, its number one ask was that we invest in upgrading digital and information technology in our health system. This Budget delivered \$475 million across the next decade, and \$150 million over the course of the next four years to commence that work.

We are continuing to increase capacity in our health system. We have opened about 105 new public beds and 41 new public-private partnership beds since May last year. We have

recruited more than 1500 additional full-time equivalent health staff since July 2020 with a majority of these positions in front line service delivery, including nurses, doctors, paramedics, and allied health professionals. We are continuing to recruit.

The investment of \$196 million on a four-year elective surgery plan is reducing the waiting lists. The last 12 months were reduced by 15 per cent, down to 9360 on our elective surgery waiting lists: continuous improvement but the right investment as well.

We are also incentivising GPs and pharmacies to provide after-hours services to local communities as part of the solution by providing \$9 million through our GP After Hours Support Initiative to help increase access. We are doing that because we want to support Tasmanians and boost our primary care services and access to GPs right across Tasmania.

This is an area that is not our responsibility; it is the federal government's responsibility. I do not care which colour of political party - whether Labor, Liberal, Coalition - I have been advocating for increased investment in health and better GP services. Now it happens to be a Labor federal government and I welcome the collaboration around the Health minister's table and from the Prime Minister regarding access to GP and primary care services.

They need to step up where we are stepping in and invest in this crucial area. Today, for example, I am very pleased to see that a GP service is to return to Southern and Central Highlands. While the federal government is responsible for funding GPs and primary care, the Tasmanian Government has been steadfast in its commitment to finding solutions for residents seeking to access a GP where there has been a gap to fill. There has been significant work done to secure GP services.

I am pleased to announce that from 10 October 2022, Dr Mary Lumsden from Bothwell Doctors will welcome additional GPs to her practice, ramping up the number of patients the clinic can see. This means patients in Southern and Central Highlands, including Ouse residents, who have been without a local doctor since April, will be able to access the service. While the service will be provided from the medical centre in Bothwell, I am advised that the intention is to offer a service to the Central Highlands Community Health Centre at Ouse subject to operational capacity from early next year.

I extend my thanks to Dr Mary Lumsden for her willingness to expand her service and work so cooperatively with the THS in achieving such a fantastic outcome for the Central Highlands community. I also thank HR+ for the assistance it has provided. For the information of our community, bookings for new patients will be accepted from Tuesday, 4 October 2022.

That is a pleasing announcement, through the good work and the goodwill of people collaborating, including the Tasmanian Health Service. We are willing to fill those gaps but we need more support from the federal government and acknowledgement that they need to invest more, support our GPs more and ensure that they pull their weight when it comes to their level of responsibility.

I will say it to the new Labor Government and I have said it to the previous government, if people can have timely access to GP services, primary health care services, that takes the pressure off our acute care services. If people can be supported with their health care in the community at that primary care level, they are less likely to eventually need to attend an

emergency department, call 000 and access acute care services because they were supported in their community initially with their health care.

Time expired.

[3.17 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, the Premier and Minister for Health seems to be talking about another Tasmania. It does not make any sense to me. Unfortunately this minister, the third Health minister that I can remember since the Liberals have been in Government, is continuing to mismanage the health and hospital system in Tasmania, which is increasing the burden on our hospital system.

We have an intolerable pressure now on all parts of the hospital system which, as the minister just correctly outlined, is for people who are in acute and dire need of medical intervention, emergency treatment or surgery. At the acute end, the wheels are so badly falling off that we have horrendous ramping, and people cannot get into the emergency department when they are at critical need.

The ambulance response times in Tasmania are now so far out of control and so much worse than they have ever been, that for the first time ever, just a few weeks ago, our median emergency response time for ambulances was 15 minutes. This is an appalling situation because it means that 50 per cent of people who turn up to hospital in an ambulance will not be seen in under 15 minutes. It will be 36 minutes or over for at least 10 per cent of people who end up in an ambulance.

The paramedic professionals and HACSU have made it very clear that Tasmania's ambulances in the past month have been ramped at hospitals for 140.6 hours a day on average. The real-life results of that are truly frightening and have led to deaths. A 13-year-old boy suffered an asthma attack and stopped breathing in a taxi because he was required to go via taxi to hospital without the support of paramedics. In this life-threatening situation, the child's mother was told that there were no ambulances available because they were ramping or at other jobs.

This was the real-life situation of a child and mother in July.

We have paramedics who are beyond breaking point. We detailed in this year's Estimates scrutiny the incredible number of empty shifts in ambulance station rosters around Tasmania, particularly in southern Tasmania, many in Franklin but also in other parts surrounding Hobart.

We have had night after night of Friday and Saturday nights where there have been no ambulances. If somebody needs it, they have to come from Hobart but only if they are available because they are ramped. We have paramedics walking off the job on time, as they ought to be able to do. HACSU had a great rally on 2 September and a previous one on 19 August where paramedics walked off the job on time to spend time with their family, to have the sort of relaxation they need with the incredible stress they are under.

It is deeply concerning that we have a government, a minister and a premier who are in complete denial about the avoidable burden they are putting on the hospital system because of COVID-19 mismanagement in Tasmania. We agree with the AMA, the organisations, epidemiologists and experts who are highly critical of the federal government, the Cabinet and

health ministers' decision to reduce isolation from seven days to five days for the majority of workers.

We are deeply sceptical that the Minister for Health understands the reality of allowing up to 25 per cent of people to move out into the community when they are identified as infectious, according to the AMA and other experts, to go back to work, to circulate with people in the community, to speak with customers, to work with clients who are vulnerable, to infect them and reinfect them so that we have not only the burden on the hospital the Government has identified, this is their pleading about why we are in this situation of deep hospital crisis. That is something the minister can do: the Premier has the capacity to keep the COVID-19 isolation period at one week and to introduce the mask mandate.

Instead, it is going to cost lives and it will increase the long-term burden on the health system because of long COVID-19 complications. We are seeing the evidence of how dramatic an impact that is having already in countries around the world.

I am appalled that the Premier is not doing the things he has at his disposal because we know, from the doctors and nurses, that we need more than fiddling around the edges. We need the statewide investment in more paramedics, ambulances, doctors and nurses. This is something that has been on the Government's agenda for years but time and again, they decide to spend money in the budget on other things which are, by comparison, frivolous.

We have the opportunity to do some real revenue-raising by taxing mining companies, for example, the same as other states do. It is on the table and the Premier could do that and put that money into ambulances.

Time expired.

[3.24 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I rise to speak on this matter of public importance to highlight the many concerns in our community regarding the health systems and delivery of health services to Tasmanians. I will highlight the intertwined nature of the challenges being faced by Tasmanians at the moment that add to the burden on the health system.

As our Deputy Leader and shadow for health has outlined, we know the statistics around health. Someone once told me that when you go into statistics, people switch off. When we talk about numbers, it can distract from the fact that we are actually talking about the experiences, the wellbeing and often the pain and trauma of people. This morning, in response to questions, people would stand on their feet and rattle off a whole lot of statistics as if that was an answer to the question, without actually really having a heart or an understanding of the impact that the challenges in our health system are having on Tasmanians.

We know how many people are waiting for critical services, how often ambulances are ramped, how impactful the bed block is. We know the issues with access to dental health, the impact that can have on people when they are growing up and the other health issues that might create in the community. We also know that, despite some activity and some announcements by the Government about their response, not enough is being done to ensure that the Tasmanian community can feel confident when they need support, whether it be with their physical wellbeing through the primary health system or with their mental health. We know that the more someone is in pain or traumatised, the more someone needs support and they cannot get

it, or they cannot get support for their family members or their children, it puts a burden on an already complex experience of living.

We know that the pressures of the cost of living across Tasmania at the moment are requiring people to make choices that have an impact on their health, which is then further burdening the health system. I know in Bass, members of our community are talking to me about the choices they are making about whether they have heating on in their homes. By not heating their homes, they are putting their health at risk by living in sub-standard accommodation that is presenting all sorts of health challenges. We have had episodes of black mould being presented to us. We know that people having to continue to live in those circumstances is contributing to their poor health, which is putting greater pressure on the health system.

This Government has so many challenges being left unaddressed right now or not being attended to in a way that makes a real difference, which is growing this massive burden on an already overstretched health system.

This morning we were attempting to interrogate the priorities of this Government and the way they are out of touch with the needs or the expectations of our community in terms of their expenditure and effort into infrastructure. For instance, the two stadiums, one in the north and one in the south, and this contemplation of an immediate investment in a third stadium when reports have said 'maybe in the next 10 years, maybe down the track we might need to invest in that' but right now, when Tasmanians are hurting, when they cannot get access to the healthcare they need when they need it where they need it, when they are struggling with the expanding costs of living and when they are not able to pay their bills or buy the medication. We are aware of people making daily choices about the medication they purchase because they cannot afford it all, about the services they engage with because they cannot afford it all.

Imagine you are a parent and you cannot provide either the medication or the access to the service required for your child. It was heartbreaking to hear another member this morning recount the story of a parent who had to go through the experience with their child of not being able to get an ambulance when it was needed. Other people waiting for delayed ambulance services have passed away before care can be provided. These are the traumas piling up upon people in our community where they are just nervous and cannot trust the health service in Tasmania.

We know that more needs to be done, that rattling off statistics and announcements does not equal action and it does not build a feeling of confidence in the Tasmanian people that this Government understands the issues and is in touch with what they need.

I talk about the way these issues interweave. There was a mention this morning about a response to the housing issue. When you are homeless and sleeping rough, and you have layer upon layer of physical or mental health issues and you do not have stable accommodation, the issues people are presenting with that should have been dealt with and supported long ago are adding to the burdens on the health system. When you are a young person and you cannot access education, this impacts your literacy levels, which impacts your health literacy levels and as you grow up, your ability to engage in and advocate for yourself in a failing health system is also a challenge. People in our community feel deflated that they are not able to advocate to the point where they can access the health system that they need.

I had a message yesterday from someone in our community who has been waiting for years to get support with mental health via GP referrals, not always having the funds to go to the GP, but when going to the GP, not being able to get the support for the mental health support they need. In a message to me just yesterday, they are saying that they are struggling, that this is really hard, and they are a small business operator. When you are personally struggling, that makes your business struggle and then you cannot provide for your employees and your team. These layers upon layers of concern are facing Tasmanians every day, whether it be with housing, health or education. It is building up people in our community who have much greater issues that are putting a much greater burden on our health system. What we need is a government that actually admits the challenges before them and addresses those challenges immediately for the people of Tasmania.

[3.31 p.m.]

Mr WOOD (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I rise this afternoon to make my contribution and thank the member for Braddon for raising this today with us. Our Government acknowledges that the greatest asset in our health care system is our workforce. We have worked hard since we were elected in 2014 to rebuild our health workforce and to keep building it by continuing to recruit.

Despite domestic and international workforce shortages in the health industry being widely reported, Tasmania is continuing to successfully recruit to our workforce. Between July 2020 and August 2022, we have funded an increase in over 1500 paid FTEs across the department, with the majority being frontline patient-facing staff, with almost 900 of those in the last financial year. That works out to around two additional people being recruited to our health system every day for more than two years.

Since the beginning of the pandemic we have added more than 860 full-time equivalents in additional nurses, doctors, allied health and ambulance workers, engaged to deliver quality health services to our community.

To ensure Tasmanians have access to high quality care when they need it, an appropriate multidisciplinary workforce is needed. Health workforce is a priority reform area of both federal, health and first ministers. Through the Premier's excellent work on the federal Health ministers meeting at the federal Jobs and Skills Summit, we have had the opportunity to provide input into important national work on health workforce reforms.

Our Government will continue to listen and work with our local health workforce and unions to address their concerns and deliver immediate changes that will reduce workload pressures. Behind the scenes, we are continuing to work with health unions to propose a range of measures, including a one-off pandemic payment; a return to work bonus payment; a statewide nursing transition to practice model providing a fast-track pathway to a job for all UTAS nursing graduates; a trial of clinical coaches on public hospital wards; and establishing a strategic nursing recruitment and retention working group to drive reform and recruitment incentives.

The proposal for a one-off payment is in recognition for the outstanding work that our frontline health professionals have performed and continue to perform during this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. The proposed payment would be made in support of our nurses, midwives, doctors, allied health professionals, paramedics, orderlies, ward clerks, food services, laboratory staff, cleaners and COVID clinic nurses, who have all worked so hard on

the front line to continue to provide essential health services during the pandemic. I certainly take my hat off to them and thank them very much.

I understand that unions are currently engaging with their members on a decision, and I know the Premier is looking forward to finalising the allowance soon.

Improving the workplace environment in our hospitals and across the broader health system is a major focus for the Tasmanian Government. We want to support positive patient-focused and solution-focused environments that meet contemporary and best-practice standards. We want to be a workplace of choice where everyone feels valued, staff are recognised and individuals feel empowered to make positive changes and are given the best opportunities for growth. Developing a positive, robust culture is likely to both improve health care delivery and attract people to work for the department.

The 2021-22 Tasmanian Budget included \$5 million to implement the One Health Cultural Improvement Program to support staff to collaborate, problem solve, empower and, importantly, respect each other. We also provide \$3 million per annum for our health and wellbeing program for all frontline emergency service workers. Investment in our existing and upcoming leaders will drive positive cultural change and lead the delivery of our strategic priorities.

The One Health Cultural Improvement Program will consist of a broad range of strategies aimed at developing a positive workplace culture. These include leadership development, developing management skills, improved strategic strategies to address unacceptable behaviours, implementing a specific diversity and inclusion framework, implementing a health and wellbeing program and critical incident stress management protocols.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, our Government is committed to working with and supporting our health workforce and to take the actions needed to improve the workplace for all employees.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

CLIMATE CHANGE (STATE ACTION) AMENDMENT BILL 2021 (No. 63)

In Committee

Resumed from 24 August 2022 (page 133).

Clause 6 -

Division 1 substituted

Ms WHITE - This amendment is to page 12. I move the following amendment -

Page 12, proposed new section 5C, subsection (1),

After 'representatives'

Insert ', scientific, environmental and community bodies, local government, relevant unions and the Tasmanian community'.

This is because the consultation that is required around the sector plans is quite narrow. It only requires consultation with the industry and business that the Government believes are relevant to that sector, where our view is that, like the Climate Action Plan, which has a much broader scope for consultation, development of the sector plans should also consult with those relevant stakeholders as I have just described in our amendment.

In moving this amendment we are trying to add consistency but also recognise that there is a broad number of interested parties, not just the industry, that should be consulted in the development of the sector plans. I am interested to understand why the Government has drafted such a narrow definition of who needs to be consulted.

Mr JAENSCH - The Government does not intend to support the amendment. We have had this discussion at a few other points in the committee so far. Our approach is to engage with the sector in question first, with the development of the emissions reduction and resilience plan, that is to deal with the industry. We take industry in the broadest sense, as discussed before. In some of those cases, unions and local government will be recognised within those sectors to develop those plans. We will be working directly with them under the existing definitions.

As I foreshadowed when we were here last, with regard to engagement with the community and anybody else who is interested in the content and has something to contribute, our intention is to adopt the proposed amendment from the Greens to make the draft emissions reduction and resilience plans open for public comment once they have been drafted with the relevant sector.

The hallmark of our approach is that we are not going out at the outset to ask everybody who is interested what they think sectors emissions reduction opportunities are. We are going to work with those sectors directly, with the researchers, with scientists, with advisers, with the business managers and the accountants, the consultants and the operators of businesses and industries who understand not only the technical matters involved in turning emissions off or making a transition from one form of technology to the other, but also what is involved with changing an entire business model for an industry or a business to adopt that change and to make it work. That is the expertise we need to have around us in these processes.

It is not something which is going to be in all those cases benefiting from general public consideration and input. What we would like to do is work with those sectors directly, develop the emissions reduction and resilience plans and then publish them and seek any further input and perspectives we can through a public process. That way we ensure we catch all interested parties in the process and everyone can have an informed input. On the strength of that, we do not support the amendment.

Dr WOODRUFF - As we have supported in previous amendments from Labor, we do support the Labor amendment to include those extra bodies for consultation.

Amendment negatived.

Dr WOODRUFF - I have an amendment to this clause. I move -

That clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5C, after subsection (2) -

Insert the following new subsection -

- (A) The Minister must prepare sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plans -
 - (a) In the case of transport, within 12 months of the day on which this Act receives the Royal Assent; and
 - (b) In all other cases, within 24 months of the day on which this Act receives the Royal Assent.
- (B) Before preparing a sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plan under subsection (1) or (A), the Minister must cause a draft sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plan to be published online and call for public comment.

Minister, I think you indicated earlier that you were open to supporting this amendment, or at least parts of this amendment. For Hansard and people who are watching, I will provide the reason. Section 5C requires that sector-based plans will be prepared. They must also support greenhouse emissions reduction, transitioning to a lower-emissions economy, and resilience to climate-related risks, but there is no time frame for when these plans must be prepared. Given the urgency of responding in every way we can to bringing down our emissions, we propose here that transport, which is a substantial contributor and a really important area to move quickly on, be developed within 12 months and the other sectors be developed within two years. This was a recommendation proposed by the UTAS Tasmanian Policy Exchange in its submission. It has also been mentioned by other organisations.

Mr JAENSCH - Mr Chair, as foreshadowed, we see merit in the amendment and we are prepared to adopt it. However, before so doing, we would like to amend the amendment, as we have with previous amendments worded in this way, to replace the words 'must' with 'is to' in a number of instances. I have the amendment drafted. I am giving that to the Clerk.

We accept the sense of the substantive amendment, in that while we need to produce the documents every five years at least, there is no requirement for when the first one is due. We accept that there is a time frame there; I mentioned it in my second reading speech. It is also relevant that transport is one of particular interest where there is both opportunity and need to be making inroads. We accept the priority of bringing it first. I foreshadowed that in my second reading speech.

In regard to the public comment period, once these plans are developed in draft they will be put out to public comment so that we can take into account any final and further value-add before finalising them for tabling.

Mr Chair, I have an amendment to this amendment. I move -

That the amendment to clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5C be amended -

Delete the word 'must'

Replace with the words 'is to' wherever occurring.

This is consistent with what we have been advised previously on convention from the Office of Parliamentary Counsel, that in this context, 'is to' is preferred direction for the minister rather than 'must'. We have discussed that previously. I will rely on our arguments as we have laid them out earlier in the debate.

Amendment to amendment agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Dr WOODRUFF - This amendment is to page 12, clause 6, proposed new division 1.

I move -

That proposed new section 5C, subsection (3) be amended by

Leave out the subsection

Insert instead the following subsection:

'(3) An emissions reduction and resilience plan must be updated at least every 3 years.'

This stands for itself. Our view is that a five-year period to produce an emissions reduction and resilience plan is far too long. There is extreme volatility and variability in the climate system. Indeed, the recent more concerning information is that even the extremes we are experiencing are becoming more volatile and unpredictable. We are rapidly moving into a period of overheating beyond which the systems we have had in all of human history are changing every single day. Every day that we delay in making changes is a day too long, which is why three years is a compromise position. In our view it is not quick enough, but I accept that from your point of view it is a big step forward. We hope you can support this amendment.

Mr JAENSCH - We will not be supporting the amendment. As we have discussed previously in the debate, we are setting up a range of instruments under this legislation that are built on a five-year cycle which aligns to cycles of the IPCC's work and the release of data that we can base our risk assessments on and our Climate Change Action Plan on; they sort of nest in with each other.

There are also a couple of other considerations. One is that there is a decoupling from parliamentary terms as well, with a five-year time frame. There is also the provision of the development of the ERPS being required at a minimum of five years. We can also, under the provisions, revise and update the emissions reduction and resilience plans at any time should the need arise, but sometimes we need to let them settle and stick to the plan, particularly when we have projects or initiatives with the relevant sectors and industries that might take several

years to develop and mature. For example, fuel switching in a major industrial setting could be something that takes a number of years to realise and we need to not keep shifting the goalposts as we go.

There is a range of reasons there. The five-year cycle is embedded in the Climate Change Action Plan. The risk assessment work is based on IPCC cycles and their data provision, and we have the flexibility to add to and update the plans within five years, so we do not support the amendment to bring it back to three years.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, minister. Unfortunately, none of the things you have said actually stack up as any rational argument in response to what we propose.

Mr Jaensch - To you.

Dr WOODRUFF - I will just lay out why they do not. First, the proposal we have does decouple it from the parliamentary term; that is your argument for making it five years. As you would know, a parliamentary term normally is four years. Your Government chose to change that, but that is not standard. The standard is four, which is neither five nor three, so that is another reason why three would be just as acceptable.

The comfortable nesting that you talked about within predictable cycles in relation to other international agreements is also based on nothing real. In fact, I read an article yesterday about a number of IPCC scientists who are grouping together and calling for the IPCC to be demolished as a process. Essentially, from their point of view, we are now in such a globally urgent situation that some of them are uncomfortable with the kind of business-as-usual attitude, the next COP meeting, the next IPCC report. They feel that they are not being listened to. They feel that the urgency of what they are providing is not being heard so some of them are calling for that process to be abandoned and for a process that is much more attentive to what is actually happening right here, right now to occur.

I am not sure where this is going to head, but when you say that it might take several years for companies or businesses to settle in and mature and that we should not push them, let me just say to you there is nothing comfortable about the future we have ahead of us. There is nothing predictable. All businesses and governments will be looking at increasingly volatile conditions. There will be no settling into a normality because the normal conditions that we have are not there. In fact what we need to do urgently is get out of the business-as-usual, predictable, comfortable, maturing approach to managing the extremes of climate change.

This proposal is not saying everything has to be thrown out within a three-year period. It is about planning. The point of this is to bring to your attention that what we need to do as a state is to be planning pretty much all the time, keeping our eyes open to the things that are changing. If a business is making changes and has a plan which three years previously was established and it is the three-year planning review and the approach still stands, there is no reason to throw anything out. There is no reason to not let it mature. There is no reason to change what is working. If that is the case, nothing would need to happen, but a three-year period means that business, industry and the community understand that things are changing rapidly and we have to be alert to shorter horizons, because we essentially cannot predict things comfortably into the future anymore as we used to.

I wish it were different. Do not shoot the messenger; I am just repeating what the scientists are telling us. We do not have the time or luxury to be able to talk about maturing, keeping things on a normal pathway and seeing how it goes. We know how it is going to go. It is going to be variable with really huge changes, so that is why bringing forward-planning periods is essential.

Mr CHAIR - The question is that the amendment be agreed to -

The Committee divided -

AYES 3

Ms Johnston (Teller)
Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff

NOES 21

Mrs Alexander
Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Ms Finlay
Ms Haddad
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Street
Ms White
Mr Winter
Mr Wood (Teller)
Mr Young

Amendment negatived.

Ms WHITE - Chair, the seventh amendment I circulated is no longer required so I will withdraw that one.

Mr CHAIR - Would you like to move amendments 45 and 46?

Ms WHITE - I move -

Page 12, proposed new section 5C, after subsection (3) -

Insert the following subsection -

(3A) In developing an emissions reduction and resilience plan, the objects of this Act must be taken into account.

This is to ensure that when decisions are made in developing those plans, that consideration is given to the broader principles and objects of the act.

When this amendment was drafted by us, it was hoping that our previous amendments would be accepted, which included reference to protecting the most vulnerable, to supporting the principles of fair and just transition. We were hoping that in decisions taken around how these plans would be consulted and given effect, the objects of the act would also be incorporated into consideration. With our amendments being unsuccessful, this probably does not have the same necessity as it would have. Nonetheless, it would be sensible for the bill to be clear about a framework within which decisions are made. That is the purpose of the amendment.

Mr JAENSCH - Chair, we accept the amendment. It is implicit in having the objects that they be taken into consideration in the development of subsequent instruments provided for by the legislation. We see no problem with being explicit about that, so we support the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Ms WHITE - I have a further amendment -

Same page, same proposed new section, after new subsection 3(A)

Insert the following subsection

(3B) Each emissions reduction and resilience plan must include a numerical estimate of the emissions reduction that the plan will bring about.

This amendment was suggested to us by Climate Tasmania. We have had this conversation in earlier iterations of this bill. You have given your reasons for why you do not think it is necessary. However, I committed to bring these amendments to the parliament and remain of the view that it would be helpful to include them. It would give us the ability, when those plans are tabled, to be able to understand how we are tracking in a really clear way for people to be able to interpret.

Mr JAENSCH - Mr Chair, as Ms White noted, we do not support this amendment but we do support the reasons for it, if you like. We are very keen to ensure that our emissions reduction and resilience plans, our sector-based plans, are very focused on reducing emissions as well as transition to lower-emissions operations, and resilience and adaptation for each sector.

What we do recognise, though, is that each plan will include a range of initiatives addressing those objectives. Some of them, specific initiatives, may be targeted at reducing a specific quantum of emissions; others will not be.

The examples I have used previously of initiatives that might be in an emissions reduction plan but which may be hard to provide a quantitative emissions reduction or commitment from include the development of feed supplements for livestock that reduce the methane emissions from their gut. That is in a process of research and commercialisation as a technology.

Supporting that to get to market and be adopted in industries is the sort of project I expect to see. We are already investing in it right now, thanks to a grant the minister, Ms Palmer, recently authorised. However, we are not going to necessarily have a numerical figure of the number of tonnes of emissions we expect that to displace. We will know from our emissions pathway reports the total emissions likely to arise from that agricultural activity over time but it would be difficult to put a total value of emissions likely to be avoided at the end of each of these emissions reduction plans.

What I can commit to, and what I committed to with Climate Tasmania when I met with them, was that we will explain in those plans why we are doing these things and how they are intended to affect the emissions profile and the transition to a lower emissions economy. There will be a clearer explanation of the intent. Where we are able to work with numerical values we will, but a totalling up of the numerical values in an emissions reduction plan will not represent the entire contribution of that plan to reducing emissions over time. That is my explanation.

We agree with the principle and we strongly agreed with Climate Tasmania that we needed to be very outcomes-focused around reducing emissions, but providing a numerical estimate of the emissions reduction from each emission reduction and resilience plan will technically be difficult to achieve and possibly meaningless, if it was relied on as a measure of what we are doing about emissions. We will therefore not be supporting this amendment.

Dr WOODRUFF - I want to make some comments about the minister's reasons. I do not accept them. It is difficult; that is fundamentally why we have pushed for sector-based targets, which would have required government to set a target for industries. It is hard, we accept that, but it is also possible. It is possible because at the moment our greenhouse gas accounts make estimates of the emissions that are produced by each industry each year. That is done, so there is a mechanism for estimating that and a mechanism is available for estimating the amount of reduction in emissions that would occur from particular strategies.

This goes to the concerns that we have with the Government's approach to this bill, that it is too soft, it is weak where it needs to be strong and it is a sort of 'suck it and see' approach, which frankly is not nearly strong enough given the real need to work fast in bringing down emissions. This underscores the point the UTAS submission made and that Climate Tasmania and the vast majority of submissions made, which is that unless we are focusing on sector-based targets, governments are not going to get real about the changes we need to incentivise and mandate for industries to bring about in their emissions profiles.

Amendment negatived.

Dr WOODRUFF - Our fifteenth amendment is to page 13, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5C, subsection (4). I move -

Leave out the subsection.

Insert instead the following subsection -

- (4) As soon as practicable after preparing a sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plan, the Minister must cause a copy of the

emissions reduction and resilience plan to be tabled in each House of Parliament.

This is a similar amendment to one we proposed previously when it comes to the tabling of reports. It puts in a reasonable requirement that the report must be tabled in parliament at a certain time frame which currently is not specified in the legislation. 'As soon as practicable' would in most people's view mean after it has been published at the next sitting of parliament or so that the government of the day would not sit on uncomfortable information as the federal government did on a number of difficult reports like the State of the Environment Report. Unfortunately, these things happen and there should be a requirement in this bill to make sure it is done as soon as practicable.

Mr JAENSCH - I will refer the reader to the previous discussion of the 'as soon as practicable' term. In our belief, and the advice I have in front of me is that it is not sufficiently prescriptive to belong in legislation like this so it does not have any hard meaning, it is about an intent. I know that is quite subjective and we will not agree on that. We will not support the amendment as it stands, but I note that we have agreed to publish the draft emissions reduction and resilience plans prior to tabling them, so in terms of the onus on the Government within time frames to produce these plans, to have done the work and to have made them available to people, those draft plans, with the bill as amended, get them out in front of people before they are finalised and tabled in their final form. Built into that, together with the requirements to produce the first round within 24 months, the transport one within 12, there is impetus there and a requirement for us to deliver a product to interested audiences in the public within those time frames.

We think that 'as soon as practicable' for the tabling does not add any rigour or specificity. It is a principle but I think we have already dealt with that principle in agreeing with the other two, time frame and publication of drafts, in the last couple of amendments, so we will not be supporting this amendment.

Dr WOODRUFF - Could the minister please step through, for the benefit of myself and the people watching, the process for a finished plan like that? As you say, the plans will go through a draft process and there will be an opportunity for input and at some point there needs to be a finished plan prepared and then communication with industries, other sector bodies, about what is in the plan. There will need to be a time where that starts and there will need to be a date, because if they are being prepared every five years, what is the date that those five years start? Is it the date that it is tabled in parliament, the date it is gazetted, the date that the Government puts out a media release, five years from the previous time that those things were done? It is just a bit woolly, which is why we want to tighten it up, and if you would like to move an amendment to say within seven days or fourteen days, we would be very happy to accept that.

Mr JAENSCH - In response to Dr Woodruff, when we have referred to time frames for development of the action plan, the risk assessment, the emissions reduction and resilience plans within 12 months, two years, every five years, et cetera, when we talk about the delivery within a period of time, our interpretation of that - and I am happy to confirm it for the record here - is that that is the tabling, so if we are producing something, say the first emissions reduction resilience plan within 12 months for transport, we will have consulted, drafted, published in draft form for comment, considered the comments and finalised it for tabling within that time.

Dr Woodruff - Okay, right, thanks.

Amendment negatived.

Dr WOODRUFF - I move the following further amendment -

Page 13, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5D, subsection (1)

Leave out 'is to'.

Insert instead 'must'.

The minister must prepare a greenhouse gas report every year. We understand. We have had this discussion before, minister. We disagree with your interpretation of what OPC has said. We do not think it is inappropriate in this instance to require the minister to direct without any - it is such a severe issue that the minister is reporting on. It must be done in that time. We all rely on that information. We are sticking to our amendment.

Mr JAENSCH - Mr Chair, as Dr Woodruff foreshadowed, we have had this discussion before. We will not support this amendment or the others that will follow along similar lines. We had had advice from the OPC on this matter and I have had advice from my agency. The intent of that is that generally a mandatory requirement for which there are penalties for non-compliance, or that a minister in this case not doing something does not cause a fatal flaw in terms of the functionality of the process. That 'must' is not required; 'is to' is preferred. Consistent with the convention we have adopted in this bill, based on OPC advice and advice from my department, we do not support the proposed amendment.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you for the clarification. I accept that there are not any penalties and it is probably not appropriate to have penalties in this instance. However, I consider that the second reason that OPC has listed is actually a reason for why, in this instance, it would be appropriate to use the term, 'must'. Basically, the whole system that we have requires the reporting of greenhouse gas reports every year at a certain time. It will become increasingly important to have them on time. People, companies, will be looking to that information with an eagle eye. I consider it makes the functioning of government impossible, the functioning of business and of industries impossible, if we do not have confidence, continuity and timeliness when those greenhouse gas reports are delivered every year.

Mr JAENSCH - Mr Chair, I have just taken some further advice. I am advised that the data that we are talking about, which is important for the reasons that you mentioned, is initially published by the Australian Government. It is publicly available. This bill says that the minister is to table it in this parliament as part of the suite of documents that we table here that go together - the action plan, the ERPS, the risk assessment and the Greenhouse Gas reports that enable there to be tracking of performance of those other instruments and the actions that they describe.

Dr Woodruff - Except this is not about the tabling. It is about the preparation of the report.

Mr JAENSCH - As I understand it, it is based on data published by the Australian Government and this is about creating a Tasmanian report on that data.

Dr Woodruff - We will have to agree to disagree.

Amendment negatived.

Dr WOODRUFF - Our seventeenth amendment is also in this clause, section 5D, subsection (3), and as the minister just talked about, it relates to the tabling of the greenhouse gas report in parliament. Our view is that it is not appropriate for that to be open-ended, the time frame for that.

I move the following further amendment -

Page 13, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5D, subsection (3) -

Leave out the subsection.

Insert instead the following subsection -

- (3) As soon as practicable after preparing a greenhouse gas report, the Minister must cause a copy of the greenhouse gas report to be tabled in each House of Parliament.

We have had this discussion. I doubt you will support the amendment, but we want to make the point that timeliness and holding governments to account in the timeliness of these things is very important.

Mr JAENSCH - I note the proposed amendment and Dr Woodruff's prescience that based on previous discussions we are unable to support the amendment.

Ms WHITE - I have a question for the minister. He may have answered it previously. In the previous answer to Dr Woodruff about the date for as soon as practicable, the minister mentioned that the reports would be tabled in the parliament prior to the 12 months and prior to the 24 months for those sector resilience plans. Could you provide some clarity about the greenhouse gas report, the intention and the commitment that you will give that you will table that within a period of time? Is it to be tabled each year in the parliament? Hopefully, we can get a commitment from you that it will be every 12 months or sooner, so that we can be clear about when to expect it.

Mr JAENSCH - In response to Ms White's question, I am advised that under the regulations under the act as it stands, that there is a requirement for the Government to gazette the Tasmanian greenhouse gas data within 60 days of the release by the Australian Government. This bill says that I am to table that as well.

We have tabled it this year. It is not a requirement, but it is our intent. It is embedded in the bill that is currently before us so, we thought we would get in the habit of tabling that information but the bill requires that tabling happens each year. The regulations set the time frame for it being created and gazetted. The tabling after that is inconsequential, really,

in terms of it being available to the public but it adds it to the suite of instruments that the bill creates.

Amendment negatived.

Dr WOODRUFF - This amendment is also similar to the ones we have moved before but, by the minister's previous arguments, he might be persuaded to accept our amendment in this instance.

I move the following further amendment -

Page 13, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5E, subsection (1).

Leave out 'is to'.

Insert instead 'must'.

This is in relation to the climate change activity statement. The minister must prepare a climate change activity statement every year. That statement has to include a description of Tasmania's adaptation measures, measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and other relevant analysis and reporting.

That is a very important report. It is a critical part of the functioning of government to have a statement each year about our adaptation measures and how we are tracking to reduce our greenhouse emissions. This parliament cannot allow the bill to go without it being required to be tabled as soon as it prepared.

One year, as we have discussed before, is a short period of time and we need to understand on a very short time-frame basis how we are tracking with the measures being put in place across Tasmania to adapt to what will be increasingly changeable conditions. Adaptation is key and we are looking at huge issues confronting us as a society. We are seeing that from other communities around the world.

When we have extreme events that are very disruptive. There is a whole manner of responses that different jurisdictions are being forced to look at, such as managed retreat for people in communities repeatedly exposed to extreme events and no longer able to live where they are living, a complete change to the growing circumstances which have sustained industries in an area that are no longer able to sustain it, and so on. Each of them is an enormous body of work to respond to and would fit in part of the adaptation measures that we would be expecting to see by government each year. That is a strong argument to mandate that the minister prepares it every single year.

Mr JAENSCH - I thank the member for the explanation. I understand how important this is. That is why we have proposed to include it in the bill and to make a requirement to prepare the activity statement each year so people can track Tasmania's action and response to the issues that have been raised in the action plan and in the emergency response plans (ERPs) so there is no argument that this is important. We are prepared to commit to it being produced every year. The way we express that in drafting, we will still be guided by the advice we have had from the Office of Parliamentary Counsel and our preference is to stay with 'is to' rather than 'must', so we will not be supporting the amendment.

Mr CHAIR - The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The Committee divided -

AYES 3

Ms Johnston (Teller)
Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff

NOES 21

Mrs Alexander
Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Ms Finlay
Ms Haddad
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Street
Ms White
Mr Winter
Mr Wood (Teller)
Mr Young

Amendment negatived.

Dr WOODRUFF - Mr Chair, I have a further amendment.

Page 14, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5E, subsection (2)

Leave out 'is to'.

Insert instead 'must'.

This is a conversation we have had before and I will not labour the point, but it needs to be made. Our view is that there is no opportunity not to do this, because the matter of providing that statement on climate change activity is so important that the minister cannot get out of it for any reason and cannot put it off. Therefore we move that the minister 'must' cause a copy of the climate change activity statement to be tabled in the House of parliament.

Mr JAENSCH - We agree with Dr Woodruff's characterisation of the importance of the statement. However, we continue to disagree on the drafting matter of the use of the terms 'is to' and 'must', so we do not support the amendment.

Amendment negatived.

Ms WHITE - Mr Chair, I move the following further amendment -

Page 14, proposed new section 5E, subsection (2), after paragraph (a) -

Insert the following paragraph -

'(ab) details of progress towards achieving the targets and objectives of the sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plans; and'

The arguments for the inclusion of this are similar to the arguments made throughout the debate on this bill. In the interests of not taking up too much more of the Committee's time, I will not elaborate but just point out that, in the interests of transparency, it would be helpful to have inclusion of an amendment like this because these sector-based resilience plans are going to be the way we assess whether or not we are going to meet our overall target and it is important that there be accountability.

Mr JAENSCH - The purpose of the activities statement is to provide information for this parliament and for Tasmanians in general to be able to gauge the level of activity and progress towards the overall statewide whole-of-economy emissions reduction target but also the objectives of the emissions reduction and resilience plans for each sector. Whilst we still will not support the introduction of sector emissions targets in any form, we recognise that within each emissions reduction and resilience plan there will be goals, objectives and targets set within that for activities taking targets in its broadest meaning, not specifically to be an emissions target by definition.

With that understanding of 'target' referring to the intention and objectives of the ERRPs, we are prepared to accept this amendment and the intent in which it has been put forward to ensure that this is a useful document for communicating progress towards what we are trying to achieve and to be able to explain the activity in that context.

Amendment agreed to.

Sitting Times

[4.45 p.m.]

Mr STREET (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Mr Chair, I move -

That for this day's sitting the House shall not stand adjourned at 6 o'clock and that the House continue to sit past 6 o'clock.

I have just put the message around to the four to let them know what the plan is. If the climate bill does not finish before 6 o'clock we will continue sitting until its completion. If it does finish before 6 o'clock we will bring on the next bill and adjourn as normal at 6 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

Dr WOODRUFF - Mr Chair, I have a further amendment. This is in relation to the tabling of an activity statement on climate change activity each year.

I move -

Page 14, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5E, subsection (3) -

Leave out the subsection.

Insert instead the following subsection -

- (3) As soon as practicable after preparing a climate change activity statement, the Minister must cause a copy of the climate change activity statement to be tabled in each House of Parliament.

We have made the case about this before. We believe there ought to be a time period and we are open to the minister providing some words to put a time period on this because these are annual statements. There could be quite a substantial slip of time where, if they are delayed for any reason, we could be talking about statements being nine months apart or 10 months apart. We are concerned about the important material that those statements will refer to around adaptation measures and measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The people of Tasmania need to be kept up to date with that information.

Ideally there ought to be a calendar day each year where they are required to be reported so that it is very clear that there is to be no slippage at all in this information being made available to people. If the minister could respond to our amendment, or propose another form of words, we would be open to that.

Mr JAENSCH - I am advised that the cycle for tabling the climate change activity statement would be consistent with the way that the report card on the action plan has previously been dealt with, and that it has in the past lined up with either the financial year or the calendar year end as a sort of business cycle and reporting season. I believe the clock would start on this depending on when the bill took effect and the climate change action plan was set in train. It would be on an annual cycle, aligned to either the financial year or the calendar year.

Dr WOODRUFF - For clarification, minister, are you saying that it sort of aligns in part with the greenhouse gas emissions report and the national greenhouse gas account information. There is obviously a relationship between the two, but my understanding is that the climate change activity statements are not reporting on our account. They are reporting on our measures. They ought to be a description of the effectiveness of our measures; the type of measures. They should alert us to the gaps in the measures that we have established to adapt to changing conditions and to increase our greenhouse gas emissions reductions when we are required to do so. I am not quite sure why they would automatically follow at those times of the year that you have mentioned because they are really generated by the state government and not by the federal government and the greenhouse gas accounts.

Mr JAENSCH - We do not support the amendment, on similar grounds as in the past, in terms of the reference to 'as soon as practicable'. However, for comfort and certainty that there will be a pattern to these things, in my second reading speech I committed that we would produce our first climate change action plan within six months of this bill having Royal Assent: six months to produce that action plan and then there would be reporting of activity against that on a 12-month cycle. Our aim would be to be presenting our action plan early next year, and

for there to be reporting on that on a 12-month cycle thereafter. We do not support the amendment.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 6 as amended agreed to.

Clause 7 agreed to.

Clause 8 -

Section 18 amended (Review of Act)

Dr WOODRUFF - Chair, I am glad we included clause 7. That is an important one as well.

Mr Jaensch - Always left out, clause 7.

Dr WOODRUFF - Mr Chair, I have an amendment to clause 8. I move -

Page 15, clause 8, paragraph (a), proposed new subsection (3)

Leave out the proposed new subsection.

Insert instead the following subsection -

- (3) The Minister must take reasonable steps to ensure that the review is carried out in consultation with relevant business, industry, scientific, environmental and community bodies, local government, Tasmanian Aboriginal people, children and young people, and the Tasmanian community more broadly.

Minister, we are concerned that you have left the Tasmanian Aboriginal people out of this list. We are also concerned that you have left children and young people out. My understanding from you earlier was that we have already amended another part of the bill to include children and young people. Is it the case that you have an amendment? I do not have it in my pack.

Mr Jaensch - Number 55.

Dr WOODRUFF - That is what you are doing. Our amendment here seeks to include children and young people and also Tasmanian Aboriginal people. It is really concerning on this matter in particular that we do not have a mandated consultation process with Tasmanian Aboriginal people. The palawa pakana community have so much to share and so much right, as custodians of this place, to have their views heard in this matter. We are concerned at the continued removal of Tasmanian Aboriginal people as a specific body when we have, in this instance, business, industry, scientific and environment community bodies. It is not appropriate to say that Tasmanian Aboriginal people are captured in the general Tasmanian community.

This is an amendment that was recommended by the UTAS Policy Exchange, the Commissioner for Children and Young People, particularly in relation to the addition of children and young people. We strongly commend this amendment.

Mr JAENSCH - I will foreshadow our intention in amendment 55 to insert 'children and young people' into this definition.

With regard to the amendment as it is proposed, we had this discussion at an earlier stage of the debate as well and we have provided our reasons for not specifically nominating Tasmanian Aboriginal people as a subset of the Tasmanian community in similar descriptions of who will be consulted. For consistency and consistent with those arguments, we consider Tasmanian Aboriginal people to be part of the Tasmanian community, to be business owners and to be community organisations and bodies and to have involvement in a wide range of fields.

The reason for identifying children and young people separately is that, as people who are not adults, who do not vote and exercise other of the opportunities for advocacy and representation participation in public debate, we were convinced of the need to identify children and young people separately in this list and have done so. We acknowledge there are other subsets of our community who we could name up; a wide range of them, including Aboriginal people. We needed to have a rationale for not trying to list every group but we accept Aboriginal people within the definitions of the Tasmanian community and through their organisations, community bodies and the other definitions that are there.

This is by no means intended to exclude, diminish or not recognise Aboriginal people but with the amendment I am foreshadowing regarding children and young people, picking up an anomaly whereby they might not otherwise have a pathway to participate in the things like the review of the legislation. We do not support the amendment but we do accept and uphold the need for Aboriginal people to be included in our consideration.

Ms WHITE - As we have in previous debates and this amendment, we will support the amendment from Dr Woodruff and flag that we have an amendment to include unions as a party to be consulted. I will not continue with the debates we have already had in this place about the necessity for the inclusion of these particular groups. They are on the record for people to view if they are interested but it is important to name up the specific groups. It is not an extensive list and it is important to realise that there are certain elements across the community who are going to be impacted in different ways. They should be at the table to have their voices heard: children and young people, unions and Aboriginal people should be included amongst those groups who are explicitly consulted as a part of this process.

Dr WOODRUFF - It is just not good enough to hide Aboriginal people. That is effectively what it is doing because what you said is that you are smearing Aboriginal voices within the context of all of those other groups. Of course it is true: Aboriginal people are business owners and they are members of industries and they are active in the environment and they are parts of community groups. Of course that is the case but that is not the point.

The point is that in this year in particular when we are seeking to have a new relationship with Aboriginal people, to be more inclusive in a year where the Government has committed to advancing treaty, to truth telling, to justice on so many levels, to not specify any longer the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as priority stakeholders for all manner of government decisions is not good enough. When it comes to this incredibly important Climate Change bill, the future

and the changes that will be wrought upon this place require especially the engagement and the consultation with palawa pakana people. They have so much wisdom to pass on to us. We need to make sure we are not missing out on their voices, their knowledge, their wisdom and guidance on a whole range of adaptation measures, emissions reduction measures and all the other changes that will be wrought on the landscape in the future.

Mr CHAIR - The question is that the amendment be agreed to -

The Committee divided -

AYES 12

Dr Broad (Teller)
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Ms Finlay
Ms Haddad
Ms Johnston
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms O'Connor
Ms White
Mr Winter
Dr Woodruff

NOES 12

Mrs Alexander
Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Mr Jaensch
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Street
Mr Wood (Teller)
Mr Young

Mr CHAIR - The result of the division is 12 Ayes and 12 Noes. In accordance with standing order 257 I cast my vote with the Noes.

Amendment negatived.

Mr JAENSCH - Mr Chair, I have an amendment.

Page 15, clause 8, proposed new subsection (3) after 'bodies'

Insert 'children and young people,'.

We have previously explained the rationale for this, I believe it has been accepted by other members and so we are happy to propose this amendment now.

Amendment agreed to.

Ms WHITE - Mr Chair, I move the following amendment -

Page 15, proposed new subsection (3), after 'government'

Insert ', relevant unions'.

I spoke to this in talking to the Greens amendment and when we have spoken about other clauses in the bill with respect to who is consulted. We remain firmly of the view that unions are not industry or business, which is how the Government appears to group them, and that

they should be identified separate to that. At the same time, it is good to know they will be consulted even though the Government has a funny way of defining them.

I continue to move this because it should be explicitly stated that unions are consulted.

I will not be moving the second amendment to clause 8 as drafted because the minister's amendment dealt with that one.

Mr JAENSCH - As per our previous debate on this matter, we consider the unions to be part of the industry, the sectors we will be consulting with and part of the community, and represented also perhaps under the banner of those business and community organisations as well. We note that we did not receive any advocacy or submissions on the bill from unions directly. We have had advocacy on behalf of the unions from the Labor Party, and I respect them being faithful to the interests of unions in this context. We certainly do not want to exclude unions. We believe that the pathway for them to participate in these processes is clear and wide open, both in our work in sector planning but also through their ability to participate in the review process, which comes around at four-yearly intervals.

This is one of the measures we have introduced to ensure that the act remains relevant and that the Tasmanian community, through all of its parts and representative bodies, can have their interests heard and represented in the legislation. We will not be supporting the amendment.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 8 as amended agreed to.

New clause -

Dr WOODRUFF - This is a proposed new clause. It speaks to an amendment that we proposed - a new clause after clause 5, which was to insert guiding principles that must be furthered by the action. We believe very strongly, we support the views of UTAS, Tasmanian Policy Exchange, Climate Tasmania and many other submissions that also spoke to the need to have guiding principles for the act, and the poverty of the current act in that regard. These guiding principles; our amendment referred to the schedule. This is the schedule we believe should be inserted into the act.

I move -

Page 15, after clause 8.

Insert the following new clause -

C. Schedule 3 inserted

The following Schedule is inserted after Schedule 2 to the Principal Act.

SCHEDULE 3 - GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO INFORM CLIMATE ACTION

Column 1 Item	Column 2 Principle	Column 3 Description
1.	No Harm	Where possible, new policies should not increase emissions or exposure to climate impacts and at the same time should promote innovation and economic competitiveness.
2.	Equity	The promotion of intra- and inter-generational and distributive equity should be paramount, with all care taken to minimise financial burdens associated with emissions reduction on low-income households and communities.
3.	Leadership and collaboration	Tasmania should lead on climate policy and action both through providing a climate-positive example and by contributing to technical and policy innovation that showcases how to reduce emissions across Australia and beyond.
4.	Accountability	The outcomes of decisions and actions should be measurable and reported. All significant emissions should be recorded in the correct category of the State and Territory Greenhouse Gas Inventories.
5.	Integrity in carbon accounting	Offsets and credits to reduce the balance of greenhouse gas emissions should only be used if they are removing greenhouse gas emissions that would not otherwise have been removed, and they should sequester those greenhouse gas emissions permanently.

Chair, we understand the Government is not going to support this but it is important that we make the point that such an important bill ought to have principles in it. We applaud all the people who have been working to put in very strong evidence-based submissions to this bill. I take this opportunity to thank those groups and individuals who have spent time on a number of occasions responding to the exposure draft and to the earliest process in building the bill that we have before us today.

We think it is a very impoverished bill that does not reflect the urgency of the climate emergency we are living in. We do not believe it is going to set Tasmania up as well as we could do for the challenges that are ahead of us. Having a set of agreed principles is a core part of a good, strong piece of legislation that Australians must be able to sign up to. Fundamentally, this will shape our future lives and the lives of children who are not yet born.

On this matter, we believe that principles are really important. This is not a technocratic exercise, this is not adminstrivia; this is not just about numbers on a piece of paper. This is about the principles of engaging with, speaking to the lives of Tasmanians, and the manner in which we will do that together to help us chart our course through the challenges ahead of us. It is for governments in the future to do their very best to be as strong and as powerful in the adaptation that they bring in, the measures that they mandate and also the emissions that they

work with industries and businesses and individuals to reduce. We strongly support the move to have principles enshrined in the act and articulated as they are here.

Mr JAENSCH - We have previously outlined the Government's approach to adopting guiding principles for climate change action in the context of this bill. Our approach is to adopt a series of principles that emerged from the independent review of our act in a whole-of-government policy framework. It will guide decision-makers to consistently consider climate change in government decision-making, in plans, policies and strategies, to ensure that they are guided by climate change considerations.

To recap, our set of principles to guide us through that framework are: (1) sustainable development and social equity; (2) transparency in reporting; (3) a science-based approach; (4) integrated decision-making; (5) risk management; (6) community engagement; and (7) complementarity. I do note that there is a high degree of overlap between those seven and the five guiding principles that are proposed in this amendment. I commend the University of Tasmania's Tasmanian Policy Exchange for their work on proposing those principles that have been presented in this amendment. I thank them for the other contributions that they have made throughout the process as well.

In terms of which list of principles we adopt, we are going to stick with those that arose from the review - the independent review of our act - and which have been subject to consultation since then. A broader audience of people is familiar with them and have had an opportunity to provide feedback on them. We will not support this amendment, though I note that the intent of it, and the intent of the guiding principles, I believe, is captured in our proposed guiding principles for our whole-of-government framework approach.

In a broader assessment, our bill is very clearly about reducing emissions, and building resilience and supporting adaptation to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. It is similar in many ways to the focus that the federal Labor government's climate change bill has had; it is very much focused on urgency about reducing emissions.

That is why, through this debate, we have resisted the calls to add lots of layers of governance, reporting and accounting to bodies other than this parliament, which do not in themselves, assist us to reduce emissions and meet our nation-leading 2030 net zero emissions target.

We want to be lean about this and we want to take a different approach which is focused on not talking about emissions and those who produce them but talking to those companies and those businesses, working with them on plans that we can help to support and drive with them to reduce Tasmania's emissions profile and maintain our enviable negative emissions profile.

Again, we focus very much on 2030, not because it is a lazy, easy target because it is so far away - eight years is not a long time. If we do not take action in the immediate time frame, we are on a trajectory to losing our net zero or net negative emissions at around 2030. That is why it is a critical time. It is not arbitrary; it is real. What happens in 2030 is going to be determined by what we invest in over the coming months and years, not even just starting now. We have already started and are on track to be investing more but we have to turn around a projected growth in our emissions in a business as usual model.

That is why we have chosen 2030. We believe it is the right target. We have taken an approach to this bill to provide a set of instruments and tools for delivering that which are directly accountable to this parliament. They give us structure about how we are going to engage with each of those sectors of our economy that produce emissions, to work with them to reduce emissions and to report on what we are doing to the Tasmanian people through their parliament and directly through the provision of many layers of plans, evidence, risk assessment, activity reporting for the state as a whole and for our individual sectors.

We have laid out a lean, focused and deliberate plan for how we are going to prosecute our target as a state and reach it. We will reach into every sector that can contribute to our success in doing that and work with them to the fullest extent.

We have listened as we have gone along and we have made many amendments to this bill as we have proceeded through. We have listened to people in this room as well as those who have spoken to us through their advocacy and through their submissions to the process, particularly regarding time frames and assurances for people that the Government will not take its obligations under this legislation for granted and fail to act. For example, we have committed to the first action plan being delivered within 12 months of Royal Assent; for the first emissions reduction and resilience plans to be delivered within 24 months; for transport for their plan to be delivered within 12 months; and for the first risk assessment to be delivered within 24 months of Royal Assent. We have supported an amendment to ensure that the greenhouse gases defined in the bill are in line with those in the Commonwealth regulations. We moved and agreed to an amendment for children and young people as a specific group to be consulted within the objects of the act, in the development of the Climate Change Action Plan and the review of the act as well.

We have also moved and agreed an amendment for the objects of the act and the risk assessment to consider the impacts of climate change on the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians. We have supported the amendment requiring a draft climate change action plan to be published and a draft emissions reduction and resilience plan to be published as well. This will provide stakeholders and the public with further opportunities to review the Government's approach and provide comment during the policy development, not just after tabling of the final documents.

We have also supported an amendment for the emissions reduction and resilience plans to consider the objects of the bill and for the climate change activity statement to report on progress of the emissions reduction and resilience plans. While not in the bill itself, I have clearly put on the record my support for updating the important climate futures work as part of the risk assessment piece and the need to include numerical estimates of emissions reduction projects or policies, where possible, to ensure that we work with purpose.

I believe, Mr Chair, whilst we still have one amendment to consider, we have clearly listened and consulted in good faith. We have not been too proud or afraid to change our bill to ensure that people can have confidence that we will do the things that we said we would do. We have remained very focused on the need to reduce emissions and to work directly with those who control them, not to build another round of discussions with people who know in exquisite detail what the problem is or what happens if we do not take action. We value those people. We will continue to listen to them and engage with them through our reference group and in other fora but our absolute priority must be reducing emissions and making a contribution to remaining net negative at 2030 and beyond, and making Tasmania's

disproportionate contribution that is possible towards reducing global greenhouse gas emissions - because we can. That is our aim and our focus, and as much resource as we can will be directed to delivering emissions reduction and adaptation for Tasmanians and to do it in an accountable way, reporting directly to the whole of this parliament on a range of different cycles so that everyone can see what we need to do, what we plan to do, what we have done and what comes next.

I am proud of this approach. It has had many authors over its gestation and it has been consulted very widely. It is a very balanced act and it is a very purposeful bill that we are concluding our debate on. I have a couple more things to say which I will save for the debate on the last amendment, but in terms of amendment No 58, we will not be supporting it.

Dr WOODRUFF - That is disappointing. I will go back to your comment about the principles. You said there is a set of principles to guide climate action that has been articulated in the Jacobs Review that was released last June, and that is what the Government is adopting. You also said that there have been opportunities for people to respond to that. That is technically correct but what has actually happened is that you have taken no heed of anything that people have said.

People have made the very good point that these principles articulated by the Jacobs Review - and I want to thank Hugh Sheehan, Craig Clifton and Rebecca Micallef for their work in the Jacobs Review - but to make the point, without inference about their abilities, that they are three people. What has happened since their report is that this bill and that independent review have been thoroughly investigated by people whose lives have been devoted to climate change science, to climate adaptation research and to doing everything that they can on a daily basis, working like people in Climate Tasmania to prepare Tasmania for the inevitable changes that are happening and to do everything we can to reduce emissions. That was the initial work of the Jacobs Review. That is not the end point. That was a starting point.

Instead, what has happened is that the comments that the Government has not liked from stakeholders who have responded to that report have been dismissed and this is a good example. The Jacobs Review did provide a notional set of climate change principles but they are a list of dot points, without any context, and because there is no context they can be interpreted to mean anything or nothing. Therefore, they can provide the great get-out clause for any government when pushed on their failures of responding to what their climate change responsibilities are as ministers in whatever portfolio. Instead of having to make decisions about policies that fit a set of well-articulated principles which have been proposed by the UTAS Policy Exchange, there is a list of dot-points which can mean anything. You can call anything a science based approach, you can call anything risk management and you can call anything community engagement.

Minister, you talk about that Jacobs Review as though it was something that people had an opportunity to respond to. They did, and they found it extremely wanting. They pointed out all the reasons why it was inadequate, why it was not good enough not to have sector based targets and why these are principles that were proposed are woefully inadequate. Instead, you did nothing. You did not adopt their really important proposed changes. You did not use the Jacobs Review as a starting point for the consultation process, as you pretend to us that you did. You took it as the end point, and you have not done anything substantial in this bill to move us beyond what was comfortable to your Government back then. I have no doubt that the scope and the content of the findings of that review were very constrained by what was

going to be possible, because there is no doubt that the principles - if you adopted them in our amendment - would mean, for example, that Tasmania should lead on climate policy and action.

We are not a leader anymore. This climate bill is signing Tasmania up to not being a leader. We are no longer a place, like other jurisdictions, that is mandating that sector based targets must be produced. On behalf of the Government, you just signed Tasmania up to having a target in 2030 which we have already had for seven years. You have no ambition. We are far behind other jurisdictions now, in our ambition for separate industry sectors. It is very convenient for you to say that you will not adopt this set of principles in this amendment because they would tie you to something, they would mandate particular sorts of actions. For example, on equity - yes, there is a mention of the word equity in the Jacobs Principles - it says sustainable development and social equity. What does that mean? Nothing.

They are words that mean nothing unless there is a context. They can mean the world, or they can mean an inch of nothing, because that is what they are. What it needs to say is something that will hold the Government to account about what equity is. For example, as this amendment proposes, the promotion of intra and inter-generational and distributive equity should be paramount, with all care taken to minimise financial burdens associated with emissions reduction on low income households and communities. It actually directs governments to address the inequity that will occur unless there are progressive emissions reduction policies and there is support for people on low incomes. It directs governments to do certain behaviours.

We are not surprised, unfortunately, that you are not supporting this amendment because it would make the actions of this Government and future governments much more clearly focused, and that is what we need to do now - we need to be very clear that we are losing our role as a global leader in climate change responses. We are in danger of increasing the inequity in Tasmania over the coming decades if we do not have a commitment to making sure the people on the lowest incomes and the most disadvantaged groups are supported because they will be the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Please do not try to pretend to people that the responses they have made to the Jacobs review were listened to. You have not made any changes in this matter at all. That is exactly what people spent their time writing submissions around and you have not listened to them. I want to put on the record that this is a bad thing for Tasmania. It says something about the way you approach this as an issue. It is also fundamentally a bad thing for us in the future. We will continue to support the people who have made those submissions and to speak for them about why we need to have really strong action on the climate emergency.

Ms WHITE - Chair, I would like to ask the member for Franklin, Dr Woodruff, a question if I may. The guiding principles you have are drawn from the University of Tasmania and the submission they made, which are different from the guiding principles included in the Jacobs independent review of the Climate Change Act. I agree that there needs to be a provision within the bill to protect the most vulnerable from bearing disproportionate impacts. We tried to move those amendments along with the just transition and fairness and equity principles ourselves.

I want to understand why you agreed to include this particular schedule with items drawn from the University of Tasmania's submission and not the Jacobs review guiding principles,

which are: sustainable development and social equity, transparency in reporting, science-based approach, integrated decision-making, risk management, community engagement, and complementarity.

Dr WOODRUFF - Fundamentally, Ms White, it was what I just said to the minister. There is nothing implicitly wrong with the Jacobs principles except that they do not tie anyone to anything. There is no detail. None of those words has intrinsic meaning, particularly words like 'sustainable development' and 'social equity'. They are enormously flabby terms. 'Transparency in reporting' - what does 'reporting' mean? By when?

We need to go back up the line and look at the principles that would guide the way the reporting is done, the way action is taken. That is the thinking behind why UTAS came up with this more articulated set of principles. It is not that there is anything wrong with those words from the Jacobs review. It is just that it does not provide a principle. A principle is a statement of a view of the world.

If you would like to make an amendment to those principles, if you have a problem with the wording, we would be more than happy to take an amendment but we think that this summarises the direction the majority of people who made serious, thoughtful submissions believe we should be heading in Tasmania: no harm, equity, leadership and collaboration, accountability, integrity in carbon accounting. Those dot points themselves are not enough without the articulation which is provided under the description for each of them. Perhaps if the Jacobs review had provided a description to each of them -

Mr Jaensch - It did. I have read them in already, earlier in the debate.

Ms WHITE - They are there.

Mr Jaensch - There is a paragraph for each, which is no less than what you have provided with the UTAS ones, but there is a lot of overlap between the two, so I think it is fairly semantic.

Dr Woodruff - You have not read them in as principles for this bill?

Mr Jaensch - I have.

Dr Woodruff - We do not have anything in this bill. You have not amended the bill?

Mr Jaensch - I put them on the record as part of our debate.

Dr Woodruff - Yes, but they are not in the bill?

Mr Jaensch - No.

Dr Woodruff - Well, we think they should be in the bill. There should be a set of principles in the bill. If you want to move the Jacobs review, then we could have had that conversation. We would be happy to consider that but there needs to be a set of principles in the bill.

Ms WHITE - There are paragraphs next to each of the different headings in the Jacobs review. Any or all of those could have been included, potentially. This is one of the reasons

that we felt very strongly that an independent body should have been tasked with developing the rigour around how this bill is implemented in practice.

Dr Woodruff - That is right, a commission or -

Ms WHITE - I do not think it is easy for us to have this conversation in this forum, unfortunately. It is where the joint House committee we proposed could have looked at this type of schedule to accompany the act. We are not going to have the ability to do that because the Government does not support that. It is incredibly difficult for us in this forum, even though we are in committee stage, to back and forth to get the right decision and outcome here. It would be much better in a committee process of a joint House committee, to be able to call witnesses, to get the evidence, to agree on what a schedule like this attached to the bill should include, what measure, how it would be accountable to the community on the progress that we take to mitigate climate change.

I support the amendment proposed by Dr Woodruff in principle but I feel uncomfortable supporting it precisely as written because I am not sure if it is the right schedule to accompany the bill, given the Jacobs review suggested different guiding principles to be included.

I am interested to hear from the minister how you intend to resolve this because just ignoring the requirement to have a set of principles is problematic. This could be how a joint House committee works constructively to support the work you have before you.

Mr JAENSCH - I want to reiterate that the principles we intend to adopt as part of our whole-of-government policy framework have more to them than a one-line dot point. They are in the Jacobs review document for everyone to see. They are quite substantial. They are at least as well fleshed-out as the five provided by UTAS and there are more of them. I think you will find that they are reflected in the design of this bill.

For example, the first principle around sustainable development and social equity, the paragraph that comes with that is: 'Climate action, and any government action that has a direct impact on climate change mitigation or adaptation efforts should provide benefit to both current and future generations of Tasmanians. In particular, vulnerable communities and First Nations practices should occur.

You will see the intent of that reflected in our objects and the reflection of future generations, the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians over generations.

Dr Woodruff - You do not have First Nations peoples, so you have not listened to that.

Mr JAENSCH - In terms of transparency and reporting, the reporting schedules to this parliament are at every stage ensuring that there is public information, public access to the drafts of reports, public access to the data of reports against action plans embedded in what we are doing. Risk management - that climate action adequately reflects assessed risks and risks of action and inaction are addressed. We are proposing a risk assessment tool, a report to this parliament, on the basis of which we will develop actions and responses in each sector and for Tasmania as a whole. Community engagement and complementarity, the seventh and last one, which talks about climate action should reflect an appropriate level of cohesion with relevant state, national and international climate change development. I have explained here again how we want to have the data that we use and the reporting cycles that we adopt align with the latest,

best available data emerging from national scientific fora and the instruments that we are building in this act should refer to each other and other cycles of reporting and planning that the Government and Tasmanians are used to.

We have embedded many of the principles of these that came forward through the independent review of the act into the bill as it stands -

Dr Woodruff - They are not written down in the bill.

Mr JAENSCH - and we have committed to adopting those principles within our whole-of-government policy framework for that ongoing decision-making.

You do not think there is anything wrong with these principles, Dr Woodruff, and you do agree that we have put them out for public consideration.

Dr Woodruff - No.

Mr JAENSCH - You do. You said so before.

Dr Woodruff - Other than that the whole Jacobs review was part of the consultation process.

Mr JAENSCH - The public has been exposed to these. They have seen them, they have had the opportunity to give us feedback on them, which you said they have done. You said there is nothing wrong with them. We are choosing to adopt them as part of whole-of-government policy framework -

Dr Woodruff - They are not in the bill.

Mr JAENSCH - and they are reflected in many aspects of the bill's design as I have laid out. On that basis we will not be supporting amendment No 58.

Dr Woodruff - We will end up with a bill without any principles articulated. That is a shame.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - The question is that the new clause A to follow clause 8 be agreed to.

The Committee divided -

AYES 3

Ms Johnston (Teller)
Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff

NOES 21

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Ms Finlay

Ms Haddad
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Street
Mr Tucker
Ms White
Mr Winter
Mr Wood (Teller)
Mr Young

New clause A negatived.

Clauses 9 and 10 agreed to.

Clause 11 -

Regulations 4, 5 and 6 substituted

Dr WOODRUFF - Madam Chair, I have an amendment to this cause. I move -

Page 17, clause 11, proposed new regulation 5, subregulation (2)

Leave out 'is to'.

Insert instead 'must'.

We have made the point, and I will say it again, we do not believe the words 'is to' are sufficient here, and 'must' should be used. I know the minister will not agree with that.

In relation to the principles we were just talking about, there are certain things that the Government has chosen to pick up from the successive reviews that have been conducted on this act. The one done in 2016 was undertaken by STGGI. It recommended five amendments to the act. One of those, recommendation 4 of the 2016 review, was to include a set of principles to give greater effect to the intent of the act and provide a set of expectations for government decision making.

The Jacobs Review in 2021 also recommended the set of principles to guide climate action, and they were not adopted. It is very important that the parliament makes it really clear that there is a set of expectations for governments and ministers about how things will be done in relation to this important bill. The Government can, and has, ignored the importance of including principles in the bill to guide decision-making. This is why we make these small amendments in relation to the reporting that is required and the timing of reporting that is required, so that there can be no confusion in this minister or future ministers that the community - the Tasmanian public - expects these things must be done. It is critical for us to understand the state of our climate change response, our adaptation capability and the effectiveness, or not, of the Government in working on our behalf to make Tasmania a safer place for us all to live.

Mr JAENSCH - Madam Deputy Chair, for the reasons outlined before regarding the use of the language - 'must' to replace, 'is to' - we do not support this amendment. However, in terms of the publication of Tasmania's greenhouse gas emissions, I point to our track record of doing so in meeting the current requirements of the act as they are, but also tabling them in here - which is not currently required. It will be, when this bill goes through and takes effect. We retain that commitment.

We understand the importance of that gazetting and tabling of emissions data to inform what we do as Government, but also what the public can see and how it affects their decision-making and their life and their ability to scrutinise the performance of the Government against the target that we are setting for Tasmania as a whole and our obligations under this legislation through the parliament and directly. We do not support the amendment on that technical ground.

I thank my department for their advice on that matter and on all matters to do with the development of this bill, which has had a long gestation over a period of a couple of years, and a lot of consultation. I also thank Premier Rockliff and my Liberal Party colleagues who have had discussions on these matters and who have supported the approach that we have taken and supported me in bringing this bill, and everything that comes with it, to this place and committing them as well to work with me and the sectors that they have responsibilities for in developing emissions reduction and resilience plans.

Every portfolio minister has a role in doing that and I look forward to continuing to work closely with them, because that is what we do, to ensure that we are getting the best results for Tasmania and that we can be proud of what we achieve and maintain our brand and our leader status in the area of emissions renewables and in action on climate change.

I thank all members who have made contributions to this debate inside and outside the Chamber. I thank the members who are present here for their thoughtful contributions and the discussions we have had on a wide range of matters of principle on which we generally agree. I hope that the *Hansard* and the record of this debate reflects that, for those who care and think deeply about these matters.

We have had to do a bit of argy-bargy about the protocols and the choice of techniques and style of writing of legislation, but I trust that the debate will show that our intent is largely aligned across party lines. That should give Tasmanians confidence that their parliament is committed and will work together to deliver the climate change action that we need and reach our targets.

I thank the parliamentary staff who have been through this journey with us over the course of five days and 59 amendments. I appreciate their counsel and assistance as we have worked through the machinery of the debate.

I thank our team at Recfit and those who started this journey as the Climate Change Office who have been on this journey for a good long time: Sarah Russell, Mike Simmons, Anton Voss and the others who you work with and who support you, thank you for your contributions. To my office, my adviser Perry Jackson, Anthony Reid and Lauryn Smith who have supported and assisted me through the development and the refinement of the bill and through the debate itself.

My thanks particularly to the Tasmanians and the Tasmanian organisations that have given us the benefit of their knowledge, information and networks to contribute into the consultation, the discussions that we have had directly on the intent of the bill, the way we are going about it and the changed approach that we want to take to be more aggressively focused on finding and controlling emissions.

My thanks to Climate Tasmania, Tasmania's Independent Science Council, University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Policy Exchange, TCCI, TMEC, the Commissioner for Children and Young People, the AMA, the TFGA, the Premier's Youth Advisory Council and over 200 Tasmanians, stakeholder groups and businesses, who have contributed to the independent review and commented on the draft bill and who have participated throughout the consultation processes to build on, amend and improve our climate change legislation. We trust we have been faithful to their intent. We have listened to them and I hope they see the thrust of their contributions and ambitions for Tasmania reflected in the legislation and in the work that will flow from it.

I am proud to have had the opportunity, not only by accident to have tabled this bill in November when the Premier had to be home with COVID-19 for a week but to have had the opportunity to be here through the debate and the discussion of important points that it contains. I look forward to doing the same through the further passage of the bill through the Legislative Council with my team supporting the Leader in the upper House and briefing and discussing matters of principle with members of the Legislative Council in preparation for that debate as well.

I look forward to that stage and the eventual passage of this bill into legislation and the development of the various plans and particularly, the emissions reduction and resilience plans for each sector of our economy, working with industry, working with my colleague ministers and the Tasmanian people, to ensure we are getting those right. I look forward to making sure they are aggressive and that they stretch us but are realistic at the same time and identify where we are going to get the low-hanging fruit with regard to emissions. They must also identify where there are important emissions to capture and control that are beyond our current means but that we might need to invest in to be able to address them within the time frame of our target 2030.

Thank you everyone who has assisted us to get to this point so far and I look forward to the next stages of this bill passing through the upper House.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 11 agreed to.

Clause 12 agreed to and bill taken through the remaining stages.

Bill read the third time.

ADJOURNMENT

[6.07 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Environment and Climate Change) - Mr Speaker,
I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

The House adjourned at 6.07 p.m.