

**PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA**  
**DEBATES OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**DAILY HANSARD**

**Tuesday 11 August 2026**

**Preliminary Transcript**

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**Tuesday 11 August 2026**

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

**QUESTION ON NOTICE - ANSWERS**

**No. 40 - Government Response to Report on Finfish Farming in Tasmania**

**Mr GAFFNEY question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY**

[11.15 a.m.]

With reference to the 2022 Tasmanian government's response to the Legislative Council government administration sub-committee A, *Report on Finfish Farming in Tasmania*, and the report of the Environment Protection Authority's study, *An Environmental Risk Assessment of Florfenicol Use in Marine Salmonid Aquaculture in SE Tasmania 2025 - 2026*:

- (1) Have all the recommendations shown within the government's response to the 2022 *Report on Finfish Farming in Tasmania*, that it supports or supports in principle, been fully implemented as per the 2022 response and achieved the intended outcomes, and in particular:
  - (a) Recommendation 25 - 'As a matter of priority, develop, publish and apply state-wide Water Quality Objectives as per the state policy on Water Quality Management 1997 and as required under the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994*';
  - (b) Recommendation 43 - 'Conduct a comprehensive audit of freshwater requirements for the finfish farming industry to inform the development of a policy/strategy on the allocation and management of these resources';
  - (c) Recommendation 44 - 'Conduct an independent review of the impacts of current finfish operations on inland waterways, including drinking water supplies and remediation costs borne by TasWater/state government';
  - (d) Recommendation 45 - 'Require all new freshwater finfish hatcheries/smolt production facilities to utilise Recirculating Aquaculture Systems';
  - (e) Recommendation 46 - 'Publicly release monitoring data relating to the operation of freshwater finfish operations';
  - (f) Recommendation 47 - 'Through the data portal, provide improved public reporting of the environmental management of finfish farming activities, including:
    - (i) the baseline environmental data underpinning Marine Farming Development Plans and amendments;

- (ii) finfish farming licences, leases and associated management plans;
- (iii) individual lease monitoring data in regard to impact on benthic flora and fauna, water quality, marine life and threatened species; and
- (iv) details of compliance and enforcement activities';
- (g) Recommendation 48 - 'Review the penalties and scope of liability in regulation of finfish farming to reflect the serious environmental consequences that can arise from breaching regulations and to strengthen their deterrent effect'; and
- (h) Recommendation 49 - 'The EPA to develop and publish an enforcement policy relating to finfish farming, including clear guidelines which set scientifically based performance indicators and a scale of actions.'
- (2) The report of the Environment Protection Authority's (EPA) *An Environmental Risk Assessment of Florfenicol Use in Marine Salmonid Aquaculture in SE Tasmania 2025 - 2026* observed: 'While this environmental risk assessment provides significant advances in our understanding of florfenicol within the environment and its toxicity to aquatic organisms, it has not addressed the effects on the bacterial community, including the development of antimicrobial resistance':
  - (a) Whilst the study examined the effect of florfenicol within the environment and on aquatic organisms, and recognising the EPA's independent statutory powers, does the government have an understanding of what, at the time, prevented the environmental risk assessment from considering the effect on the bacteria community and the potential for antimicrobial resistance?
  - (b) Whilst the further study on these two issues is currently being undertaken by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies - under its own initiative and using the same samples from the initial EPA environmental risk assessment - does the government have an understanding of when the study will be completed and the results published? And:
  - (c) Does the government have a understanding, in light of the report's observation, of the scope and potential value in expanding the parameters of future environmental risk assessments to include the effects of florfenicol and florfenicol amine on the bacteria community and the potential for antimicrobial resistance?

**ANSWER**

With the consent of the honourable member, Mr Gaffney, I would seek leave to table the answer to question No. 40 as it appears on the Notice Paper, and have it incorporated into *Hansard*.

**Leave granted; document tabled and incorporated.**

**No. 42 - Proclaimed Tasmanian Acts**

**Ms ARMITAGE question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY**

[11.16 a.m.]

- (1) How many Tasmanian acts have been passed and received Royal Assent are, wholly or partially, yet to be proclaimed, aside from those that are under the purview of the Department of Justice; and
  - (a) Can a list of these acts be provided; and
  - (b) For any acts that are partially proclaimed, can the sections which are yet to be proclaimed also be provided?

**ANSWER**

- (1) There are 17 acts that have been passed and received Royal Assent, that are wholly or partially yet to be proclaimed, excluding those under the purview of the Department of Justice.
- (2) Yes, and there's a list of attachments. Again, I seek leave to have the table, as it appears on the notice paper incorporated into *Hansard*.

**Leave granted; document tabled and incorporated.**

**No. 44 Lake Meadowbank Irrigation System**

[11.17 a.m.]

Answer to question No. 44 on the Notice Paper from the honourable member for Elwick, is regarding the Greater South-East Irrigation Scheme (GSEIS).

**Ms THOMAS question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY**

In regard to the proposed large irrigation scheme which would draw 37.2 gigalitres from Lake Meadowbank, the last Hydro Lake in the Derwent River Catchment:

- (1) Why has the government chosen to disregard the 2002 report, *Environmental Flows for the Lower Derwent River*, commissioned by the Tasmanian government, which advised against any additional summer water extraction from the lower Derwent River?
- (2) Is the minister aware that Lake Meadowbank already has a history of algal blooms caused by inadequate water flow during the drier months?

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

- (3) How does the minister propose to ensure there will be sufficient water flow in the river during these months, or other periods of low flow, to maintain the health of the river?
- (4) How will the minister ensure that there will be no damage to seagrass beds, leading to adverse effects on fish, birds etc, caused by inadequate water flow?
- (5) What plans does the minister have for monitoring water quality at Lake Meadowbank, and in the Derwent below Meadowbank Dam?
- (6) Would monitoring of the water quality be done by suitably qualified scientists?
- (7) Are there any contingency plans to release water from Hydro lakes on the Derwent upstream from Lake Meadowbank?
- (8) Given it is likely that the Derwent, and its Hydro lakes, will have reduced water flow during the recently declared El Niño period that is approaching, will the minister consider postponing the proposed irrigation scheme?

### ANSWER

- (1) The GSEIS is in the pre-construction phase, as it stands for developments of this nature. The GSEIS will undergo rigorous assessment, at both state, and Australian government levels, including referral under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act of 1999, and it is anticipated that these evaluations will consider matters of the nature raised in the questions. Regarding the scheme, the GSEIS is being designed to improve reliability and provide additional high assured irrigation water to both existing and new irrigators, and it will integrate the existing South-East stages one, two, and three schemes, servicing demand around Gretna, Jordan River Valley, Brighton, Richmond, Dolcott, Cambridge, Colebrook, Campania, Tea Tree, Orielton, Paulina, Penna, Sorrell, Fawcett, Elderslie, and Broadmarsh, and the GSEIS will transition irrigators off TasWater's drinking water supply, freeing that network capacity to supply greater Hobart's growing population.
- (2) The government is advised that Lake Meadowbank does not have a record of algal blooms. The GSEIS will be supplied from Lake Meadowbank and Tasmanian irrigation has an in-principal agreement to purchase water to supply GSEIS from Hydro Tasmania.
- (3) The Government is advised that Hydro Tasmania has confirmed that the GSEIS, once commissioned, would not affect its ability to meet its existing downstream summer and winter flow commitments in the Derwent River. This includes Hydro Tasmania maintaining flows downstream of Meadowbank Dam to prevent the salt wedge from extending upstream to the Norske Scog intake from the Boyer Mill and the Bryn Eston water treatment plant intake opposite.
- (4) The government is also advised that this provides a flow regime at all times to protect freshwater quality, and river health, in the lower Derwent. The annual volume for GSEIS irrigation at full capacity is approximately 1.3 per cent of the

historic average total annual outflows from Meadowbank Dam. The maximum volume of water the GSEIS is 1.1 per cent of total Meadowbank Dam outflows during the winter irrigation season and 1.6 per cent in the summer irrigation season. The government is advised that assessment under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* is expected to consider any potential impacts of the GSEIS on matters of national environmental significance and Tasmanian Irrigation has advised it expects that there will be a full consultation process as part of this assessment process.

In addition to the assessment under Commonwealth and state environmental legislation, the government understands that the GSEIS will be subject to planning approvals under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*, as well as requirements relating to biodiversity, cultural heritage and land management. This includes controls such as threatened species, permitting, reserve management processes, where applicable, and strict biodiversity and weed hygiene measures during construction and operation.

The government is advised that any specific environmental monitoring and management arrangements would be identified through the assessment and approvals processes. Once the GSEIS is commissioned, further environmental protection will be achieved through farm water access plans, which guide the sustainable application of irrigation water on farming properties. These are property-specific management plans that must be in place before an irrigator can receive water from Tasmanian Irrigation.

#### **No. 47 - Hydro Tasmania Dividend**

[11.21 a.m.]

The following answer to a question on notice was given.

#### **Ms FORREST question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr DUIGAN**

In relation to the 2026-27 Budget and Budget and Forward Estimates for dividends to be paid by Hydro Tasmania to the Government (detailed in Table 6.9 of 2026-27 Budget Paper 1) and the Budget and Forward Estimates for the Renewable Energy Dividend grant (detailed in table 4.5 of 2026-27 Budget Paper 2 Vol 1, I ask the Treasurer:

- (1) In calculating the Hydro dividend estimates included in Table 6.9, what assumptions were made in relation to the size of the Hydro dividend payout ratio applied to projected Hydro profits (for each Budget and Forward Estimate year)?
- (2) When were the Hydro projected profit estimates, on which the Hydro dividend estimates in Table 6.9 were based, received by Treasury and when were the Hydro dividend estimates finalised as part of the Budget development process?
- (3) On Page 80 of Budget Paper 2 Vol 1 it is stated that: 'The decrease in the Renewable Energy Dividend from 2026-27 reflects forecast Hydro Tasmania dividends being insufficient to trigger the threshold'. In this regard, it is noted that Hydro dividend estimates exceed the base criteria level of \$90 million in two Forward Estimate years. In the Treasurer's Estimates Hearings on 1 June 2026, it was suggested by Treasury representatives that this reflected a review of the Renewable Energy

Dividend policy to be undertaken by 30 June 2028. Is the statement made on Page 80 of Budget Paper 2 Vol 1, therefore, incorrect?

- (4) Based on the Hydro dividend estimate for 2029-30 of \$173.8 million and applying the currently established criteria for the calculation of the Renewable Energy Dividend to that Hydro dividend amount, what would be the estimated Renewable Energy Dividend payment amount?
- (5) Given the payment of a Renewable Energy Dividend is current Government Policy, why was the change in this policy to assume no payment over the 2026-27 Budget and Forward Estimates not reflected in the Policy and Parameter Statement detailed in Table 5.5 of Budget Paper 1?
- (6) Given the 2026-27 Budget decision to reflect the cessation of the Renewable Energy Dividend prior to the flagged review being undertaken, why was the potential for the payment of a RED to continue post the review not included as a specific expenditure risk in Chapter 4 Risk, Sensitivities and Presentation of Budget Paper 1?
- (7) Was the 2026-27 Budget decision to reflect the cessation of the Renewable Energy Dividend across the 2026-27 Budget Forward Estimates endorsed by Cabinet?
- (8) Does the Treasurer agree with the Secretary of Treasury's comment made during his Estimates Hearing on 1 June 2026 that the policy context for the payment of the Renewable Energy Dividend has changed since it was established by the Government?
- (9) Noting that the Renewable Energy Dividend was first announced by the Government in August 2023 (which included a reference to a review after four years of operation) and the first payment was made in the 2023-24 Budget year, will the flagged review be finalised in time for any resulting decision to be reflected in the 2028-29 Budget?
- (10) What are the Terms of Reference for the review of the Renewable Energy Dividend, and will the review include consultation with the community?

**ANSWER**

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - May I continue, Mr President? Answer to question 47 on the notice paper from the Member for Murchison.

- (1) Hydro Tasmania's dividend estimates are based on the application of the government's general dividend policy for government businesses of 90 per cent of the after-tax profits.
- (2) Hydro Tasmania's projected profit estimates, including associated dividend estimates were provided to Treasury on 20 February 2026 through the budget process for returns to government and were subsequently considered and endorsed

by Treasury State Forecasting Committee on 26 February 2026 for inclusion in the 2026-27 Budget.

- (3) The statement on page 80 of the Budget Paper No.2 volume is not incorrect. Under the government's renewable energy dividend policy, the dividend threshold is indexed annually in line with Hobart CPI from a base of \$90 million in 2023-24. As a result, while Hydro Tasmania's forecast dividend exceeds the original base threshold in 2027-28, it does not exceed the estimated indexed threshold for that period.

In addition, the renewable energy dividend framework was established with a requirement for review prior to 30 June 2028. Consistent with this design continuation of the project beyond that date is not automatic and remains subject to government consideration following the review.

- (4) The notional RED can be calculated based on the 2029-30 Hydro Tasmania dividend estimate; however, this is subject to a range of assumptions, including the government continuing the programme under the same settings, Treasury CPI forecast which determine the index threshold and the number of eligible customer connections. On this basis and assuming no growth in eligible customer connections of around 256,000, the notional renewable energy dividend for 2029-30 is estimated to be approximately \$131 per household. The treatment of the RED in the 2026-27 Budget and forward estimates does not represent a change in government policy and accordingly is not reflected as a policy decision in the policy and parameter statement, the PPS.
- (5) This approach was also applied in the previous budget. While Hydro Tasmania's forecast dividends exceeded the estimated index threshold in the final forward estimate year, at that time, no corresponding RED payment was included due to the proximity of the review date and the absence of a government decision regarding continuation of the program. The PPS captures only changes in policy relatively to the previous budget; the continued application of this established budgeting treatment does not constitute a new policy decision or a change in existing policy settings. Accordingly, there is no impact to report in Table 5.5 of Budget Paper No. 1.
- (6) There has been no decision to cease the RED, and as indicated in the budget, does not pre-empt the outcome of the new scheduled review. The RED remains current government policy and is subject to review prior to 30 June 2028, at which point the government will consider whether and how the program should continue. Chapter four of Budget Paper No. 1 captures risk as an aggregate level, importantly I will refer you to returns from government businesses risk, Budget Paper No. 1, page 82, which explicitly recognises that both the level of dividends and the allocation of dividend revenues are subject to a range of influences, including market conditions, major capital investment requirements and government policy decisions. This includes mechanisms such as the RED.

Accordingly, the potential for RED payments to continue beyond the review date is inherently encompassed within the broader risk disclosure, rather than being identified as a separate specific expenditure risk.

- (7) There has been no decision to cease the RED and as indicated, the budget does not pre-empt the outcome of the scheduled review.
- (8) The question incorrectly characterises the Secretary's evidence provided at the estimates hearings on 1 June 2026. During the hearing, evidence was provided that the RED has been treated as zero in the forward estimates in the absence of certainty as to whether the policy will continue and in what form, ahead of the scheduled review. The Secretary's comments regarding the policy context referred to broader market and economic conditions, including changes in wholesale electricity prices, rather than any change to the policy itself.
- (9) It is the expectation that the outcome of the review arrangements for the RED will be able to be considered in the development of the 2028-2029 budget.
- (10) Detailed terms of reference for the review of the RED framework have not yet been finalised. The terms of reference will be developed closer to the review period to ensure they are appropriately informed by the policy's operation to date, as well as prevailing energy market, fiscal and economic conditions alongside the Tasmanian community needs. It would be the expectation that as part of a review of this nature, strong consideration be given to appropriate stakeholder engagement as part of that process.

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**Recognition of Visitors**

[11.28 a.m.]

**Mr PRESIDENT** - While you're grabbing a glass of water, I'd like to welcome to the chamber the year 6 students from Mount Carmel College who are visiting us today. We're currently going through answers to questions, because we've had a break over the winter period from the sitting of the Parliament, there have been quite a few answers that appear sourced in that time. Once we do that, we'll be going on to our normal chamber business, including debating time limits, which will be interesting because there are no time limits on the answers to questions. We have a fairly full day to get through. Special day for the member for Huon, because the member for Huon will make her inaugural speech today, probably a little bit later on I would imagine. We will go through that business, but I know all members of the Council will make you feel welcome in the Parliament today and thank you for taking an interest in our democratic processes.

**Ms Webb** - To be clear the school is from the electorate of Nelson.

**Mr PRESIDENT** - From the electorate of Nelson.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

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**No. 50 - Payment in Lieu of Rates Scheme Hydro Tasmania**

[11.30 a.m.]

The following answer to a question on notice was given.

**Ms FORREST question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY**

With regard to the payment in lieu of rates (PiLoR) scheme for renewable energy generation, consistent with Victoria and other states, can the Treasurer respond to the following questions:

- (1) Would applying the Victorian-style PiLoR formula (\$67,270 base plus \$1,515 per MW) to Hydro's generating fleet yield an amount broadly equivalent to what Hydro currently pays as its rate equivalent?
- (2) Has Treasury considered the PiLoR formula against Hydro's installed generating capacity and comparing it to the actual rate equivalent currently paid?
  - (a) If so, will the Treasurer table that comparison; and
  - (b) If Treasury has not undertaken this comparison, will the Treasurer commit to doing so and reporting the result, given it goes directly to whether the current rate-equivalent methodology reflects a fair, market-consistent value?
- (3) Does the Treasurer accept that the existence of a rate-equivalent mechanism for Hydro Tasmania, designed specifically to replicate the rates a private, taxable generator would pay, establishes the in-principle case that privately-owned renewable generators should be rated on a comparable, transparent, formula-based basis (i.e. PiLoR), rather than through the bespoke land-valuation approach currently applied only to windfarms?
- (4) What, if any, fiscal modelling has Treasury undertaken on the budget and local government revenue implications of formally adopting PiLoR for privately-owned renewable generation in Tasmania, including any consequential effect on how Hydro Tasmania's own rate-equivalent obligation would be calculated under a consistent methodology?
  - (1) (a) How often is the rate equivalent paid by Hydro Tasmania calculated and reviewed, and does the Treasurer believe that bespoke, non-formula valuation approach risks producing inconsistent or declining returns over time, in contrast to a price-indexed, per-MW PiLoR rate; and
  - (b) if not, why not?

**ANSWER**

- (1) On an indicative basis, applying the Victorian government's 2025-26 index payment in lieu of rates (PiLoR) methodology to Hydro Tasmania's generation fleet would result in a payment that is broadly equivalent to the amount payable under the current hydro rates-equivalent framework. Hydro Tasmania's 2025 annual report indicates total generating capacity of around 2670 megawatts across its 31 hydro and thermal power stations.

Notionally applying the Victorian methodology, comprising a fixed amount of \$67,270 per power station, plus \$1515 per MW of generating capacity, would produce an indicative payment of approximately \$6.1 million per annum. This compares with Hydro's actual 2025-26 rates equivalent payment of \$6.1 million. This comparison is indicative only, and has been prepared solely for the purpose of comparing the Victorian PiLoR methodology with the state's existing rates-equivalent arrangements for Hydro.

- (2) Treasury has not undertaken that comparison.
  - (a) The only comparison undertaken is the illustrative calculation provided in response to question (1).
  - (b) No, Treasury does not consider a comparison between Hydro Tasmania's rates-equivalent arrangement and Victoria's PiLoR framework to be an appropriate basis for assessing the state's current rates-equivalent framework for Hydro, as the two arrangements were established for different purposes and operate in different legislative ownership and policy contexts.
- (3) The premise that Hydro Tasmania's rates-equivalent arrangement establishes an in-principle case for a PiLoR-style framework for privately-owned renewable generators is not accepted. Hydro Tasmania's rates equivalent arrangement reflects its unique position as a government-owned entity, with land exempt from rates under legislation, and is designed to maintain competitive neutrality. Privately-owned generators do not raise this issue and are governed by the existing rating framework. Policy responsibility sits with the Local Government and Energy portfolios and not the Treasurer.
- (4) Treasury has not undertaken fiscal modelling of the budget of all local government revenue implications of formally adopting a PiLoR-style framework for privately-owned renewable generation in Tasmania. As PiLoR payments are generally intended to provide a revenue stream to local government rather than the state budget, any fiscal impacts would depend on the design of any such framework and have not been assessed.

Treasury has also not modelled any consequential changes to Hydro Tasmania's rates-equivalent obligation under the hypothetical PiLoR-based methodology. As outlined in question (1), an illustrative application of the Victorian formula produces a broadly equivalent amount to the state's current rates-equivalent framework. Treasury has not undertaken further modelling beyond the illustrative comparison.

- (5)
  - (a) Hydro Tasmania's rates-equivalent payment is calculated annually and paid by 31 December each year, with the amount determined by applying an indexation rate to the previous year's payment, and further, the current methodology is not a bespoke valuation of Hydro Tasmania's assets each year; it is an indexed, formula-based approach reflecting the average increase of relevant council rates revenue. The broader methodology was last reviewed in June 2022 when Treasury considered a range of alternative approaches.

The preferred approach was to retain the existing methodology on the basis that it best reflects the intent of the rates-equivalent arrangement and continue to provide a simple, transparent and reasonably justifiable basis, consistent with broader taxation principles; and on that basis, the characterisation that the current arrangement is a bespoke, non-formula valuation approach is not accepted.

- (b) The premise of the question again is not accepted. Hydro Tasmania rates-equivalent payment is calculated using a formula-based indexation methodology, rather than a bespoke valuation approach. The use of indexation linked to growth in council rates revenue provides a stable and predictable basis for the payment over time. Further, as outlined in response to question (1), an indicative application of the Victorian PiLoR methodology produces a payment that is broadly equivalent to the amount payable under the current Tasmanian framework, and accordingly, there is no evidence that the current arrangement is producing materially different outcomes, or that it risked producing inconsistent or declining returns relative to a PiLoR-style methodology.

#### **No. 51 - Funding for Creative Industries**

[11.36 a.m.]

The following answer to a question on notice was given.

#### **Ms FORREST question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY**

- (1) With regard to the 2026/27 state Budget:
- (a) is the new funding of \$10 million for creative industries in addition to the figures in the lines for arts industry development and screen industry development; and
  - (b) can the government provide a complete breakdown for how the 2026/27 Arts budget development line will be allocated, including the amounts allocated to:
    - (i) competitive grants;
    - (ii) four-year funded organisations;
    - (iii) the Premier's arts prize;
    - (iv) the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery;
    - (v) the Tasmanian Strategic Touring fund;
    - (vi) Arts Tasmania administrative expenses; and

- (vii) all other arts projects or initiatives that will be included in this budget line broken down by project or initiative?
- (2) During budget Estimates scrutiny, the deputy secretary, Creative Industries, Sport and Visitor Economy, said that he was hopeful there will be an increase in the amount of money that will go to arts organisations. Can the government advise:
- (a) will this increase be applied in the 2026-27 budget year; and
  - (b) given the apparent \$450,000 reduction in the overall Arts budget for 2026-27, where will this increase come from?
- (3) During budget Estimates scrutiny, the deputy secretary, Creative Industries, Sport and Visitor Economy, stated there would be operational efficiencies made within the Arts portfolio. Can the government provide a breakdown of:
- (a) how these efficiencies will be achieved; and
  - (b) the total savings that will be made through the efficiency measures?
- (4) During budget Estimates scrutiny, the deputy secretary, Creative Industries, Sport and Visitor Economy, mentioned that a new creative industry strategy is currently in development. Additionally, the Tasmanian live performance exchange sector report is due shortly. Can the government advise:
- (a) if any money has been allocated to addressing the recommendations in the Tasmanian live performance sector report; and
  - (b) whether there has been any money allocated towards future initiatives from the new creative industries strategy; and if so
    - (i) what amounts have been allocated, and in what budget year; and
    - (ii) will these amounts be additional to the existing programs, or will further savings need to be made to fund these outcomes?
- (5) During budget Estimates scrutiny, the director, Creative Tasmania, stated the following: that the extra \$10m for creative industries announced in the State Growth budget would be allocated \$5m to Arts and \$5m to screen. The director also provided the following breakdown:
- (a) 2026-27: \$1 million screen/\$0 Arts;
  - (b) 2027-28: \$1 million screen/\$1 million Arts;
  - (c) 2028-29: \$1.5 million screen/\$1.5 million Arts; and
  - (d) 2029-30: \$1.5 million screen/\$2 million Arts.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

The director noted that the most significant increase would be applied at the beginning of the next multi-year cycle (2027-28), and that there is a plan to move more arts organisations to multi-year agreements. Can the government advise:

- (a) How does the Government intend to support arts organisations in 2026-2027 to ensure there are no further closures before the additional funding becomes available in 2027-28?
- (b)
  - (i) Is the additional \$1m for Arts in 2027-2028 allocated only to multi-year agreements; and
  - (ii) if not, please provide a breakdown of how this will be applied?
- (c) Given that the next round of multi-year funding agreements is expected to commence in 2027–28, how does the government intend to allocate the additional funding provided in 2028–29 and 2029–30, once multi-year funding commitments have already been established?
- (d)
  - (i) Will organisations receiving multi-year funding agreements from 2027–28 receive annual CPI indexation during the life of those agreements; and
  - (ii) if so, will the cost of indexation be funded from the additional Arts investment announced in the Budget, or from existing Arts Tasmania funding allocations?
- (6) The budget papers indicate a reduction in overall Arts Tasmania funding over the forward Estimates, while the government has also indicated an intention to expand the number of organisations receiving multi-year funding. In this context:
  - (a) How does the Government intend to sustain both existing and additional multi-year funding commitments beyond the four-year period covered by the announced \$5 million investment; and
  - (b) if the additional arts funding is largely committed to multi-year funding agreements from 2027–28 onwards, what measures will the government take to ensure that opportunities remain available for new and emerging organisations to access Arts Tasmania funding in future funding rounds?

### ANSWER

- (1) The 2026-27 state Budget:
  - (a) the new funding of \$10 million is incorporated into the figures in the lines for arts, industry development and screen industry development; and
  - (b) the breakdown of how the 2026-27 Arts budget development line will be allocated, including the amounts allocated to:

- (i) competitive grants, arts and cultural heritage investment will remain at \$4.465 million in 2026-27;
  - (ii) four-year-funded organisations in 2026-27: \$2,175,072 will be provided to multi-year arts organisations through existing agreements;
  - (iii) the Premier's Art Prize: the Tasmanian Literary Awards will continue to receive \$130,000 biennially in 2026-27 and 2028-29;
  - (iv) the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG) will continue to receive funding, however, the exact amount is not known due to its indexation against Hobart CPI, as required by the head deed of 1999. It will be no less than \$1,850,000;
  - (v) the Tasmanian Strategic Touring Fund has received \$525,000 since 2022 and the department will consider any future funding request;
  - (vi) Arts Tasmania administrative expenses: this figure is not known as Building Tasmania's targeted and negotiated voluntary redundancy (TNVR) processes are not finalised;
  - (vii) the allocation is not known yet. This will be subject to ministerial direction and budget saving measures and will respond to sector developments.
- (2) (a) In 2026-27 the increase of \$1 million will be applied to the Screen Tasmania budget, not the Arts Tasmania budget. There is a reference to that in Question (5) as well.
- (b) The reduction in the allocation to the Arts budget is due to the conclusion of election commitments and other savings, and amounts available to arts organisations will remain stable in 2026-27 and increase from 2027-28.
- (3) Operational efficiencies in the Arts portfolio: efficiencies will be achieved through natural attrition, ongoing business improvement practices and through the TNVR program. This program is ongoing. The total savings that will be made through the efficiency measures are not possible to quantify at this time. As I've said, the TNVR process is ongoing.
- (4) Tasmanian Live Performance Exchange Sector report and Cultural Creative Industry Strategy:
- (a) At the time of writing, the Tasmanian Live Performance Exchange Sector Report has not been received by government, so our position on any recommendations is not yet possible to determine and;
  - (b) As the cultural and creative arts industry strategy is only in the early stages of development, no money has been allocated towards any future initiatives.

- (5) Application of the \$10 million creative industries key initiative of the Arts portfolio.
- (a) There will be no increase to funding to the Arts portfolio in 2026-2027. Applications have been submitted for arts organisations annual programs, which will be assessed by expert's peers against the criteria published on Arts Tasmania website. In accordance with the requirements of the *Cultural and Creative Industries Act of 2017*, the process is open and competitive.
  - (b) The position on allocations for 2027-2028 has not yet been determined.
  - (c) A position for the allocation of additional funding for 2027-2028 to 2029-2030 has not yet been determined. Applications for arts organisations multi-year funding for 2027-2028 onwards will open in early 2027, and;
  - (d) No, indexation will not apply to organisations receiving multi-year funding agreements. Answer to 1 is no and to 2 is not applicable.
- (7) Arts Tasmania funding over the forward estimates.
- (a) Reductions in the allocation to Arts Tasmania are the result of efficiencies applied to the business unit, not a decrease in the amount of financial support provided to the sector. It's government's understanding that the 2029-2030 figure in the budget papers becomes the new baseline for ongoing appropriation.
  - (b) Programs will remain to support new emerging and existing arts organisations with project funding.

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**Recognition of Visitors**

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Well, while you have a glass of water and I thought I'd take this opportunity to welcome the second group from Mount Carmel College Year 6 to the Chamber today. We're currently going through answers to the questions where members of the Council have asked the government questions about a number of things. Today's session is an extra bit longer because we've had a bit of a break and it's given the government an opportunity to chase up some detailed answers.

**Ms Forrest** - Or not.

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Or not, but that will be judged by the responses that the members get. The members in this chamber come from all over Tasmania and represent different divisions. Your schools in the division of Nelson so the member for Nelson should be looking after you with any needs and wishes you have. We are moving on to other business probably sometime in the near future after we finish the the question session. I know all members here will make you feel welcome to the Parliament and thank you for attending the Tasmanian Parliament today

**Members** - Hear, hear.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - Thank you and appreciate the opportunity to have a little breather, this answer to question 52 on the notice paper, and again placed on the notice paper by the Member for Elwick on behalf of the Member for Murchison:

**No. 52 - King Island Racing Season**

[11.44 a.m.]

The following answer to a question on notice was given.

**Ms FORREST question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY**

With regard to the upcoming racing season on King Island:

- (1) Have the race dates and trial dates been formally approved by TasRacing?
- (2) (a) Has TasRacing approved funding for the 2026-27 King Island racing season; and;  
(b) if so, what level of financial support has been allocated?
- (3) Has the King Island program been incorporated into TasRacing's approved 2026-27 racing calendar and budget?
- (4) Has prize money been determined for the four race meetings?
- (5) Will trainer participation subsidies, transport assistance or other support measures be available to encourage mainland participation?
- (6) Has TasRacing entered into a formal funding, operational or race-program agreement with the King Island Racing Club for the 2026-27 season?
- (7) Following the cancellation of the 2025-26 season due to insufficient horse and trainer numbers, what measures have been implemented to improve the viability of the 2026-27 season?
- (8) Has TasRacing received indications of support from trainers and owners sufficient to give confidence that the announced program can proceed as scheduled?
- (9) What is TasRacing's longer-term commitment to maintaining racing on King Island?

**ANSWER**

- (1) No, TasRacing has provided clarity to the King Island Racing Club in relation to requirements needing to be met in order to confirm trial and race dates.
- (2) (a)(b) Yes, the TasRacing financial year 2027 budget contains funding for the KIRC racing season. The total funding allocated is in excess of \$400,000 and it

should be noted the cost detail below are hard OpEx and exclusive of tax racing's input and carrying costs. That is, stewards, track curator, racing operations and other resources already employed but redirected to King Island are not included but should be noted as operating costs incurred. In that context, the total cost of the season exceeds \$400,000.

Mr President, part of the answer has a table and I seek leave to table the table of 2026-27 total costs associated with King Island racing season and have it incorporated into *Hansard*.

**Leave granted; document tabled and incorporated.**

**See Appendix XX (page xx).**

**Ms RATTRAY -**

- (3) Refer to (1) and (2) above.
- (4) Prize money is determined by the class of racing and if a season proceeds can be expected to be in line with recent seasons. Agreement on the number of race meetings is yet to be determined.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) Tasracing has budgeted \$3,000 from club marketing support and \$10,000 from the Ladbrokes partnership to the KIRC. This is in line with previous season payments in terms of amounts and should the coming season precede, these funds will be made available to the KIRC.
- (7) Tasracing continues to work with the KIRC on options to support viability of the racing season. Continued reduction in horse and participant numbers on King Island remain the the primary challenge to viability and it should be noted the King Island season generates a notional wagering income unlike most Tasmanian race meetings and commercial and budget considerations must be reasonably considered, i.e. funding is not unlimited.
- (8) It is understood that the King Island Racing Club is exploring options with owners and trainers to deliver a recommencement of racing for the 2026-27 season and the club will continue to update Tasracing as to the progress of these discussions and indications of support.
- (9) Tasracing provides no guidance in this regard. Each season will be considered on its viability.

**Ms Forrest** - I thought the minister being from there might have known that there will be no season this year because we haven't been able to attract the horses, but there you go, that was announced in the local media not long ago.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I did note that on Facebook yesterday, honourable member, and I did mention it, but this answer was provided prior to that. So that was what was provided. Thank you for that update.

**No. 53 - Bluegum Digital Transformation Project**

[11.48 a.m.]

The following answer to a question on notice was given.

**Ms THOMAS question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY**

A search of the Government Tenders website for contracts awarded in relation to the Department of Health's Bluegum Digital Health Transformation Project returns more than 130 contract-award results. Many appear to be valued between \$90,000 and \$100,000 - just below the threshold requiring a tender process - with multiple contracts awarded to the same contractors. 756 During Budget Estimates hearings, the Secretary suggested this reflects a 'problem with the Treasurer's Instructions' requiring the Department to procure services in this way. In relation to the Bluegum Digital Health Transformation Project:

- (1) How many Bluegum-related contracts valued between \$50,000 and \$99,999 have been awarded to date, and what is their total value?
- (2) How many Bluegum-related contracts valued under \$50,000 have been awarded to date, and what is their total value?
- (3) Of the \$36.5 million spent on labour hire:
  - (a) how much was spent on contracts valued under \$50,000;
  - (b) how much was spent on contracts valued between \$50,000 and \$100,000;
  - (c) how much was spent on contracts valued above \$100,000; and
  - (d) for each contract above \$100,000, whether an open tender process was conducted?
- (4) How many individual entities have been awarded Bluegum-related contracts? For each entity, please provide:
  - (a) the number of contracts awarded;
  - (b) the total value of contracts awarded; and
  - (c) whether those contracts were awarded through open tender, limited tender, direct engagement, or another procurement method?
- (5) How is the government satisfied it is achieving best value for taxpayer money where contracts are awarded without an open tender process?
- (6) How are contract values determined, particularly where multiple contracts appear to fall just below the \$100,000 tender threshold?

- (7) The Department has indicated it will seek to directly employ a fixed-term workforce to deliver Horizon 2. Why was this approach not adopted for Horizon 1?
- (8) How is the work of multiple labour-hire contractors coordinated and overseen, and by whom?
- (9) How do the contractors engaged on the Bluegum project operate as an integrated project team?
- (10) (a) Is the government aware of comparable digital transformation projects, in Tasmania or elsewhere, successfully delivered through this labour-hire procurement model; and  
(b) if so, please provide examples.

**ANSWER**

In answer to question 53 on the notice paper from the honourable member for Elwick.

The Tasmanian Government remains committed to delivering the Digital Health Transformation Programme, which is vitally important for Tasmania and represents one of the most significant investments ever in the modernisation of the health system. Its successful delivery is critical to improving the quality, safety and efficiency of healthcare services, strengthening digital capabilities across the sector and ensuring that patients and clinicians are supported by contemporary, reliable and integrated systems.

It says that the government are now moving forward with the latest and most complex of the projects and the replacement of the digital health record with an electronic medical record. The Department of Health has advised it is being assessed at each stage through readiness assessments, also described as gateway processes consistent with the recommendation from a recent Auditor-General report and consistent with the process in place for built infrastructure across government. Following engagement with the Department of Treasury and Finance, the department has implemented revised procurement arrangements for ICT labour hire that provide a pathway for the ongoing engagement of specialist ICT resources. The new arrangements include Procurement Review Committee oversight, structured quotation, processes for procurement under \$250,000 and an open-tender RFT process for procurements of \$250,000 or more, and the threshold for a tender process in the Treasurer's instructions is \$250,000.

Treasury has endorsed these arrangements, including the use of open tendering for ICT labour hire, whereas previous advice was that this is not available to the department. While ICT contract labour hire is utilised across government and industry to supplement specialist capability, the Bluegum Digital Health Transformation Program represents a uniquely large and complex undertaking within the Tasmanian context. The scale, specialist skill requirements and pace of delivery associated with implementing a statewide digital health transformation necessitates access to highly specialised ICT resources that are not readily available through the local labour market.

As a result, the department's reliance on specialist ICT contract labour for this program is significantly greater than that typically required for standard agency ICT projects. It is also important to note that the Bluegum Digital Health Transformation Program is not one single project. It has many projects over a 10-year period, some running concurrently and others in sequence.

The projects range in size, cost and complexity, and vary in nature from physical infrastructure such as the installation of Wi-Fi, to software upgrades and software replacements. The government notes the significant investment to date for this project, which will grow further as it delivers the Electronic Medical Record in coming years, given its importance to Tasmania and recognising the scale and complexity of the program, it is clear that additional ministerial oversight is needed to ensure the program remains on track and on budget.

Following ongoing discussions, the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing has written to the Treasurer to initiate monthly reporting on the progress and financial performance of the program. This will include monthly meetings chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Health with the minister, the Treasurer and appropriate senior officials and project leaders in attendance. This will provide an additional level of ministerial oversight and scrutiny over the project, providing monthly opportunities to review project milestones, monitor expenditure against budget, consider emerging risks and issues and ensure timely escalation of all matters of concern. It will also provide greater assurance that project delivery remains on track, governance arrangements are operating effectively, and public funds are being managed responsibly and transparently.

Further, in relation to the answer provided on to Budget Estimates questions on notice of 12 June 2026, the department wishes to clarify that labour-hire expenditure from 1 July 2022 to date, when including both Horizon 1 and Horizon 2 total expenditure was identified as \$50.6 million, superseding the previously reported figure of \$36.5 million.

The original quoted figure related only to expenditure incurred in Horizon 1 of the program only. However, for absolute clarity and transparency in relation to these further questions, the revised figure provided in the answers below reflects the full labour-hire expenditure associated with delivering the Bluegum Health Transformation Program and related Bluegum-funded activities for the period 1 July 2022 to date across both Horizon 1 and Horizon 2.

Finally, as the minister offered during Estimates, the Department of Health does remain available to brief members, either individually or collectively on the program, should this be something that the members would like to take up.

Further answers:

- (1) Six-hundred-and-ninety-two Bluegum-related contracts valued at between \$50,000 and \$999,000 have been awarded to date with a combined value of \$59.8 million.

There's also a note saying contract values do not necessarily reflect actual expenditure against purchase orders and actual spend may be lower than the value of contracts awarded.

- (2) Fifty Bluegum-related contracts valued at under \$50,000 have been awarded to date with a combined value of \$1.5 million.
- (3) Of the \$50.6 million total expenditure, \$1.04 million was spent on contracts valued at under \$50,000 and \$49.5 million was spent on contracts valued between \$50,000 and \$100,000.

While the awarded contracts total approximately \$61 million, the reported figure of \$50.6 million reflects expected actual expenditure.

Contract values represent the maximum approved value and do not necessarily translate into full expenditure, meaning actual spend may be lower than the total value of contracts awarded.

The Department of Health has advised they did not identify any individual labour-hire contracts with a value exceeding \$100,000. Accordingly, no open-tender process was conducted for contracts above that value.

- (4) Again, this is a table. I seek leave to table the Bluegum-related contracts and have it recorded into the *Hansard*.

**Leave granted; document tabled and incorporated.**

**See Appendix xxx (page xx)**

**Ms RATTRAY** - There are still quite a number of pages left to work my way through.

- (4) The contracts procured through the department's approved ICT labour-hire procurement arrangements - and this was a request for quotation process. These arrangements incorporated competitive market testing processes appropriate to the procurement category and provided access to specialist ICT resources through approved labour-hire supplies. This included the use of a request for contractor resource, an RFR process, through which resource requirements were released to registered labour-hire suppliers' agencies, and more than 40 approved agencies were eligible to participate in relevant sourcing activities and submit candidate nominations.

Candidates were assessed against the requirements of the role, including relevant skills, experience, capability, availability, and proposed rates, and the department selected candidates who best met its operational requirements and represented the best overall value for the engagement.

Following evaluation and selection, participating agencies were notified of the outcome and contracts were executed with the successful suppliers.

Once the department became aware of the requirement to publish contract award information under the approved ICT labour-hire procurement arrangements in place at the time, details of awarded contracts were published on Tenders Tasmania as part of the department's ongoing procurement reporting processes.

- (5) For ICT contract labour hire, the procurement arrangements applicable at the time, as described above, relied on labour hire and market testing processes, with competitive quotations used rather than open-tender processes for individual engagements.

Value-for-money was supported through access to a broad market of labour hire suppliers, enabling the department to compare candidates and rates across multiple providers for new resource requirements. Proposed rates were tested against prevailing market conditions through each RFR process, while assessment considered capability, experience, availability and price to identify the best overall value.

The use of labour hire arrangements also enabled the department to engage specialist resources only for the period required, avoiding the ongoing costs associated with recruiting and maintaining permanent positions where needs were temporary, project based or time limited. For the Bluegum Health Transformation project programs specifically, the use of labour hire arrangements enabled the department to access specialised digital health clinical informatics, technical and project delivery capability that was not readily available through normal recruitment processes, these resources were engaged to address defined capability gaps and support the delivery of a large scale time-limited health transformation program.

Access to specialist expertise supported program delivery, reduced the risk of delays to critical transformation initiatives and enabled the department to scale resources in line with changing program requirements. This approach also avoided the ongoing costs associated with retaining skilled specialists beyond the life of the program, where those capabilities may not have been required on a permanent basis, and value for money was further supported through regular review of contractor requirements and engagement outcomes. Contractor engagements were maintained only where there was an ongoing business need and the resource continued to provide value in addressing capability or delivery requirements. Engagements were concluded or not renewed where the requirements ceased, the work was completed or the engagement no longer represented the most appropriate use of public funds.

Based on these factors, the department has advised they are satisfied that value for money was achieved.

- (6) Executed contract values were determined at the time of engagement based on the specific resource requirement, anticipated duration, operational need and prevailing market rates applicable at the time. All new contractor arrangements were established through a consistent procurement and assessment process under the department's approved ICT labour hire arrangements in place at the time. Contract values were an outcome of that process and reflected the scope, duration and requirements of the engagement, together with the parameters of the approved procurement arrangements.
- (7) This was the preferred approach during Horizon 1 and the program was included directly, employed staff since its commencement in October 2024. Additional

recruitment activity was undertaken as part of the program's workforce strategy to increase fixed-term employment and reduce reliance on labour hire where appropriate. The plan targeted the conversion of more than 40 contractor positions to salaried employment as part of a long-term sustainable workforce model. Following the approval of the strategy, the department undertook a substantial recruitment campaign to field specialist, digital, technical and project delivery roles. However, the response from the market was limited, reflecting well documented shortages of experienced digital health and ICT professionals. While some appointments were successfully made, the number of suitable candidates was significantly below the department's requirements. As a result, contractor resources continued to be required to ensure the program could maintain delivery momentum and access critical specialist capability.

Consistent with the workforce strategy, opportunities to increase fixed-term employment and reduce reliance on labour hire will continue to be prioritised where appropriate and where suitably qualified candidates can be sourced, while recognising that some specialist contractor capability may still be required when skills cannot be sourced through the employment market.

- (8) Labour hire contractors are assigned to specific projects and work streams within the Bluegum program and are overseen by departmental officers who are accountable for delivery outcomes and performance of those projects and work streams. Contractors provide specialist capability across technical, digital transformation and project delivery functions and work within established program governance priorities and delivery schedules. Their activities are coordinated and monitored through established planning, reporting and governance arrangements which provide oversight of progress management of dependencies and assurance that work remains aligned with the program objectives, delivery milestones and expected outcomes.
- (9) Contractors engaged on the Bluegum program work alongside department staff as part of the multidisciplinary teams responsible for delivering program outcomes. The Bluegum program brings together clinical, technical, digital transformation and project delivery expertise.

Contractors provide specialised skills and experience that complement departmental capability in areas critical to program delivery and operate under the direction of departmental officers responsible for those functions and work streams.

Contractors work within shared delivery plans, priorities and milestones, enabling clinical, technical and operational resources to work together towards common program objectives. This integrated delivery model ensures specialised capabilities applied, where required, to support successful delivery of the program.

- (10) The government is aware that contractor and labour hire resources are commonly utilised across governments and industry to supplement specialist capability during the delivery of large and complex digital transformation programs. These include electronic medical record implementations, broader digital health transformation programs and undertaken across Australian jurisdictions and other major

government digital transformation initiatives that have been utilised, specialist contractor and labour high resources as part of their workforce model.

Mr President, there are a number of specific examples. I am not sure whether the member might be of a mind to allow me to table those examples rather than read them out today.

**Ms Thomas** - I'm happy for that and I would have been happy for the whole answer to be tabled, if asked. For future reference, I'm happy for long answers to be tabled.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Okay, I will keep that in mind next time.

**Ms O'Connor** - You needed an interpreter for the answer; it was so blah blah. It's not on you, honourable Leader.

**Ms Forrest** - There are some good gems hidden amongst them; you have to be listening. I hope you were listening.

**Ms O'Connor** - Yes, I know.

**Ms Webb** - The rest could be tabled.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Mr President, I seek leave to have part of the answer tabled and incorporated into *Hansard*, for the record.

**Leave granted; document tabled and incorporated.**

**See Appendix x (page xx)**

**Ms RATTRAY** - Thank you, Mr President. I will see if there's anything I need to add on the end. This is just the specific examples.

I will just finish off the answer, Mr President, with the last part.

The department continues to monitor and consider lessons from comparable programs to inform delivery approaches, governance and continuous improvement activities within the Bluegum program.

### **No. 55 - Review Trade Waste Framework**

The following answer to a question on notice was given.

#### **Mr EDMUNDS question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY**

On 26 June 2025, the Premier issued a media statement titled: 'Reforming trade waste framework to future-proof major employers', which criticised TasWater for 'unrealistic timeframes to comply with trade waste requirements'. The media statement went on to say direct consultation will be conducted with 'TasWater, major trade waste producers, the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and AiGroup.'

- (1) Can the Government provide details on what engagement has occurred with each of these named bodies, which 'major trade waste producers' it has engaged with and how, and when this engagement has occurred; and
- (2) is there a timeline on when the Parliament and Tasmanians can expect any policy detail on this announcement?

**ANSWER**

Mr President, believe it or not, I've reached the final answer to question number 55 on the Notice Paper belonging to the honourable member for Pembroke.

The government has engaged RM Consulting Group (RMCG) to conduct an independent review of the economic and environmental regulatory framework governing trade waste services in Tasmania. The review is intended to examine the extent to which the current framework provides businesses, TasWater and regulators with a workable pathway to achieving environmental outcomes in a way that is economically sustainable and supportive of industry development.

The review commenced in April 2026 and includes a staged stakeholder engagement process.

Initial consultation has been undertaken by RMCG with relevant government agency regulators and TasWater through meetings and discussions to inform the review, and the design of the broader stakeholder engagement program. RMCG has also consulted with the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, to assist in identifying trade waste customers that may be appropriate for detailed consultation.

The Australian industry group, AI Group, have not been directly engaged as part of the review to date. No major trade waste producers have been directly consulted as part of the review at this stage. RMCG is currently identifying participants for the next phase of consultation, which will occur between July and August 2026, and will include stakeholder surveys, targeted interviews and follow up discussions with trade waste customers across all categories, peak industry bodies, TasWater, Local Government Association of Tasmania, and councils.

Targeted interviews will include selected category 3, and category 4, trade waste producers, and RMCG is required to provide its final report to the government by the end of September 2026, and the government will consider the findings and recommendations of the review before determining any future policy, or legislative changes, any decisions regarding future reforms will be announced following the consideration of the reviews, outcomes.

I thank the members, and those that are listening here, for their indulgence.

**No. 54 - Heritage Council Legal Fees**

[12.11 p.m.]

The following answer to a question on notice was given.

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

In relation to an answer to a question on notice taken during the House of Assembly Budget Estimates hearing, the former Minister for Heritage confirmed that current or former members of the Heritage Council have had publicly funded legal fees since 1 July 2022, and that it had not been possible to determine whether the legal matters were ongoing.

Can the Minister please advise:

- (1) Which members have had legal fees covered by Tasmanian taxpayers and how much they have each accrued?
- (2) What is the basis of the legal matter/s for which they have received legal assistance?
- (3) Why it cannot be determined whether the legal matters are ongoing or not?
- (4) Who approved the legal fees for each member of the council?

## **ANSWER**

- (1) Former chair of the Heritage Council has been indemnified for legal costs capped at \$108,000. As of 9 July 2026, a total of \$80,625, excluding GST, has been paid.
- (2) The policy and guidelines for the grant of indemnities and legal assistance to public officers of the state of Tasmania, outlines the type of matters for which legal assistance could be granted. However, the policy and guidelines state that nothing in them prevents Cabinet from agreeing to indemnify, or provide legal assistance, to any public officer. Legal assistance was provided for the purpose of taking action in the Supreme Court.
- (3) The matter is ongoing, awaiting a decision.
- (4) Cabinet approved the legal fees for the former Chair of the Council on the 5 May 2025.

## **No. 56 - School Psychologists**

[12.13 p.m.]

The following answers to questions on notice were given.

## **Mr EDMUNDS questions to the MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER**

With regard to school psychologists:

- (1) How many students are on waiting lists for an assessment by a school psychologist?
- (2) What is the maximum wait time for an assessment?
- (3) What is the average waiting time for an assessment?

- (4) How much direct intervention and follow-up following initial assessment is also delivered by a school psychologist, as opposed to by a social worker?
- (5) (a) What is the current (2026) establishment number of school psychologists for DECYP; and
  - (b) how does this compare to 2025, 2024 and 2023?
- (6) (a) How is the establishment number determined; and
  - (b) if by formula, what is the formula?
- (7) How many of the total positions are school-based (student facing)?
- (8) What is the breakdown of the type of school psychology positions in terms of:
  - (a) Full time;
  - (b) Part time;
  - (c) Permanent; and
  - (d) Short term/contract
- (9) How many school psychology positions, and FTE, are vacant (broken down into regions)?
- (10) What is the current (2026) school psychologist centrally funded FTE allocation for each school/college in the state?
- (11) In 2025 how many school psychology positions were advertised, by region?
- (12) For each round of recruitment for each position, how many total applications were received; how many applicants were short-listed; how many were interviewed; and how many were deemed suitable for recruitment (broken down by region)?

**ANSWER**

Mr President, in discussion with the honourable member for Pembroke, I seek leave to table the answers and have them incorporated into *Hansard*.

**Leave granted; document tabled and incorporated.**

**See Appendix xx (page x)**

**No. 57 - School Social Workers**

The following answers to questions on notice were given.

**Mr EDMUNDS questions to the MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER**

With regard to school social workers:

- (1) How many students are on waiting lists to see a Social Worker?
- (2) What is the maximum wait time to see a Social Worker?
- (3) What is the average waiting time to see a Social Worker?

**ANSWER**

Mr President, in discussion with the honourable member for Pembroke, I seek leave to table the answers and have them incorporated into *Hansard*.

**Leave granted; document tabled and incorporated.**

**See Appendix xx (page x)**

**No. 58 - School Speech Pathologists**

The following answers to questions on notice were given.

**Mr EDMUNDS questions to the MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER**

With regard to school speech pathologists:

- (1) How many students are on waiting lists to see a speech pathologist?
- (2) What is the maximum wait time to see a speech pathologist?
- (3) What is the average waiting time to see a speech pathologist?

**ANSWER**

Mr President, in discussion with the honourable member for Pembroke, I seek leave to table the answers and have them incorporated into *Hansard*.

**Leave granted; document tabled and incorporated.**

**See Appendix xx (page x)**

**No 39 - Year 11 and 12 Extension Schools Program**

[12.14 p.m.]

The following answers to questions on notice were given.

**Mr GAFFNEY question to the MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER**

With reference to the Year 11 and 12 Extension Schools program -

- (1) The tabled papers in response to questions asked in Estimates Committee B on 3 June 2026 gave an indication of the latest Extension School enrolment headcounts of Year 11 and 12 students in schools within 30km of a college:
  - (a) What are the separate enrolment numbers of Year 11 and Year 12 students in each of these schools;
  - (b) How many students in Year 11 and Year 12 from each of these schools would have a dual enrolment with a college;
  - (c) For each Extension School that may have students with a dual-enrolment - what are the dual enrolment numbers relating to each college;
  - (d) What are the separate enrolment numbers of Year 11 and Year 12 students in Extension Schools more than 30km from a college: and
  - (e) How many of these students enrolled at Extension Schools more than 30km from a College would have dual enrolment with a college and/or eSCHOOL?
- (2) In Estimates Committee B on 3 June 2026 when asked about the possibility of a review of the Years 11 and 12 Extension Schools program you stated, and I quote directly from the *Hansard* transcript: 'So this policy is not under review, and at the moment I have no intention of having a formal review around this':
  - (a) What is preventing the government from conducting a reasonable internal cost benefit analysis and comparison of delivering Years 11 and 12 in every high and district school, when compared to its delivery in the college system, in what is now an established 12-year-old policy position;
  - (b) What is preventing the government from conducting a fully independent review or inquiry in the efficacy of having Y11 and 12 in every high and district school in what is now an established 12-year-old policy position;
  - (c) Has the government studied the specialist senior secondary Year 11 and 12 government colleges in the ACT, NSW and VIC to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the functionality of those systems, and how they operate in an integrated public education system;

- (d) What other government policy areas and programs involving the expenditure of at least \$200m over 10 years have not been subject to a review or revision; and
  - (e) Given the \$228m in Operational Efficiencies expected from DECYP, what level of operational efficiencies in Extension Schools within a 10km, 20km and 30km radius of the local college would be gained from reallocating the Year 11 and 12 staff teams to other DECYP teaching vacancies, and transferring Year 11 and 12 enrolments to the local college?
- (3) Regarding the transfer of non-government school student's enrolments into Years 11 and 12 in government schools:
- (a) Over the last three years, what are the number of non-government school students that have transferred their enrolment into Year 11 or Year 12 in government colleges;
  - (b) Over the last three years, what are the number of non-government school students that have transferred their enrolment into Year 11 or Year 12 in Extension Schools; and
  - (c) What is the distribution of all those enrolments from non-government school students into Years 11 and 12 in government schools in terms of the north west, northern and southern regions?

## ANSWER

I also have an answer for question No. 39, for the honourable member for Mersey. This is quite a long answer, however a number of the answers are tables. I have spoken to the member for Mersey, and I will read part into *Hansard* on the Floor, but then at the end of the answer I will seek leave for the data tables to be incorporated. Thank you.

- (1) (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) are data tables that I will table at the end of this question.
- (2) (a) The Department for Education, Children and Young People regularly evaluates evidence, data and stakeholder feedback to inform policy development. What current evidence shows is extension schools are servicing a different cohort from colleges. Whilst colleges provide a broader range of subjects, specialist facilities and diverse learning opportunities, extension schools help maintain local access and support flexible pathways that help students remain engaged in education.

The government's focus is not on where students are enrolled, it is on ensuring students are participating, progressing and successfully transitioning into further education, training or employment. While a formal review of Year 11 and 12 in high schools is not currently being considered, the Tasmanian government continues to monitor participation, attainment and learner outcomes across the education system.

This work occurs alongside broader strategic reform activity, including implementation of the Independent Education Review recommendations and the development of the Tasmanian definition of educational success which will shape our future approach to certification, how we recognise different pathways and how we measure progress. These activities provide opportunities to consider how the education system supports learners across all phases of education, including senior secondary school.

- (b) The government has no current plans to commission an independent review specifically focused on years 11 and 12 extension school programs. The policy has been implemented to improve access, equity and participation in senior secondary education by providing students with greater choice about where and how they complete years 11 and 12.

Available evidence continues to demonstrate demand for local senior secondary options, including in communities located within 30 kilometres of a college. The department will continue to consider available evidence, stakeholder feedback, and emerging priorities in determining future policy and service delivery directions.

- (c) The Tasmanian government routinely monitors developments across Australian jurisdictions and considers national and international evidence when developing policies. This includes consideration of a range of approaches to senior secondary education delivery incorporating, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Approaches to curriculum design and delivery;
- Assessment senior secondary certification;
- Schools and college models;
- Rural and regional provision;
- Responses to low enrolments or workforce pressures;
- Partnerships with universities, registered training organisations and industry; and,
- Strategies used to support student participation, retention, attainment and transition to further education, training or employment.

- (d) Government programs are subject to a range of governance, budget performance reporting, audit, evaluation and assurance processes, with the nature and frequency of reviews varying according to the scale of the initiative. The Department for Education, Children and Young People continues to monitor participation, attainment, workforce, and learner outcome data as part of routine business activities.

- (e) What the available evidence shows is many extension schools within 30 kilometres of a college continue to attract year 11 and 12 enrolments with the majority of these students choosing to study at their local school and

not a dual enrolment with a college. These choices reflect the value students and families place on local senior secondary options, including familiar teachers, established support networks, smaller learning environments, connection to their local community, and an educational setting that best meets their individual learning and well-being needs.

It cannot be assumed that all students would simply transfer to a college if local provision was removed. Some may choose different pathways and some may disengage from education altogether. As a result, it is not possible to reliably estimate enrolment movements, workforce impacts or efficiencies arriving from hypothetical change of this nature. The government remains focused on supporting participation, engagement and educational outcomes by maintaining meaningful pathways that keep students connected to learning.

- (3) (a) This is actually part of the answer to question (3)(b) as well, which is in another table, so I'll have that in the tabling as well.
- (c) Again, I have another data table with regards to the question around the regions that you asked.

Having had that conversation with the honourable member for Mersey, I seek leave to table the data tables and have it incorporated into the *Hansard*.

**Leave granted; document tabled and incorporated.**

**See Appendix x (page xx).**

## **TABLED PAPERS**

### **Register of Members' Interests**

[12.21 p.m.]

**CLERK** - As required by law, I lay upon the table papers numbered 1 to 9 as appear on the Members List of Tabling Papers. Also, in accordance with sections 19 and 20 of the *Parliamentary Disclosure of Interest Act 1996*, I lay upon the table of the Council from the Register of Members interests' the primary return for the member for Huon which, having been lodged with the President, and this day, tabled and placed on the public record, is now deemed to have been published.

### **Biometric Health Data**

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - I seek to leave to table an outstanding answer from Budget Estimates, the response on biometric health data.

**Leave granted; document tabled.**

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

**Mr VINCENT** (Prosser - Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) - I seek leave to table a document. I'll table the most recent correspondence from TT-Line regarding that fuel surcharge as previously committed.

**Leave granted; document tabled.**

### MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

#### Assent to Bills

**Mr PRESIDENT** - I have some messages from Government House advising assent to the following bills:

- Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2026 (No. 18)
- Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2026 (No. 19)
- First Home Owner Grant Amendment Bill 2026 (No. 20)
- Public Health Amendment (Prohibited Tobacco and Other Products) Bill 2026 (No. 8)

having been presented to the Governor for the Royal Assent, she has in the name of His Majesty the King, assented to the said Bills on 10 July 2026.

### RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Honourable members, it's been a long time coming, but it is now time for special interest matters. I'd like to welcome to the Chamber and thank them very much for their patience, and assure them that this is normally about an hour earlier than it is, but we thank you for staying guests of the Member for Nelson, Paul Chatterton, who is the President of the Kingston Men's Shed, Craig Coventry, Treasurer of the Kingston's Men's Shed, Peter Harrison, Secretary, and Pam Harrison, who's a supporter, and they are the subject of the first special interest matter. It's my pleasure to call the Honourable Member for Nelson.

### SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS

#### Kingston Men's Shed

[12.25 p.m.]

**Ms WEBB** (Nelson) - Thank you, Mr President. I rise today with great pride to celebrate the Kingston Men's Shed, a wonderful community organisation in the electorate of Nelson. In particular to recognise the Men's Shed and its members for their contributions and impact in supporting men's mental health in the community. Here I will add my welcome to the Chamber, to Paul, Craig and Peter and to Pam who was here - has had to step out for a moment - hopefully will be back and hear some of it in person.

Madam Deputy President. The Kingston Men's Shed located in Gormley Drive, in Kingston. From its beginnings in 2006, the Kingston Men's Shed has grown over time into an active and much loved and valued part of the Kingston community.

Today, there are around 50 members ranging in age from 40 to 95 years, many of whom meet regularly at the shed to create, repair, learn new skills and work on projects for the community.

Members have constructed everything from chook houses to chess sets to furniture and regularly undertake projects for groups within the community such as Wildlife Safe Tasmania and for local schools. The Kingston Men Shed also provides an ongoing schools mentoring programme, with students regularly spending time at the shed each week and they host local aged care residents on three Tuesdays of each month.

Madam Deputy President, the shed is filled to the brim with all the tools and machines you could possibly need, but if you were to ask the members what makes the Kingston Men's Shed special, I suspect they would tell you the most important piece of equipment isn't a power tool at all. Members might say the most valuable resource offered at the Men's Shed is the tea, coffee and biscuit bar and the kettle. This little bar sits adjacent to a large table with half a dozen plastic garden chairs where any member is welcome to take a seat and just watch what's happening. Provided, of course, he doesn't eat all the biscuits.

It is said that all the world's problems are frequently solved at this table with conversations, exchanging knowledge, lived experience, a joke or two, a bit of ribbing here and there. Morning tea is about much more than a break from the workbench. It provides an opportunity for members to check in with each other. Through conversations had at morning tea, friends can see who might be struggling in silence and offer their support.

We know how important these connections are for men's mental health, and it's partly because of their shared love of morning tea the Men's Shed's commitment to mateship and supporting men's mental health that the Kingston Men's Shed began hosting a very significant morning tea each year.

Members here will be familiar with the Cancer Council's Australia's Biggest Morning Tea initiative. very successful initiative. However, members may not be familiar with Australia's Biggest Morning Tea with a difference. You may be wondering what the difference is. Well, in 2023 Kingston Men Shed decided to put their own spin on the Cancer Council's initiative. Their catch cry at the shed was don't bring a plate, bring a mate.

The idea was very simple. Members were encouraged to donate to the Cancer Council what they might otherwise have spent on making a slice or a cake, and the shed would provide the tea, coffee and cakes. The important part was to bring a mate, a friend who might be interested in joining the shed, or someone who might simply benefit from knowing the shed exists. And of course, almost everyone who turned up in that first year generously did bring along a plate to share anyway, as well as a mate to show around.

Since their inaugural year in 2023 at the shed they have raised over \$3,000 for the Cancer Council, gained several new members and it is a morning members love and look forward to each year. The Kingston Men's Shed Biggest Morning Tea with a Difference gives members

an opportunity to introduce their mates to the shed, to help spread the word about men's mental health and brings the wider community together in support of an important cause.

I attended this year on 11 June for the Biggest Morning Tea With a Difference and it was delightful. The place was packed to the rafters, but what struck me was how little fuss there was about it all. The invitation was simply to come along and have a cuppa, a bite to eat and spend some time with the guys.

I took a mate, my dad, along with me and we met with members, their partners, their friends and community members and got a real sense of what the Kingston Men's Shed was about. It was relaxed and welcoming and showed enormous value in sitting around a table with other people and simply having a conversation, enjoying the company, sharing stories and laughter. That's what true community is all about, and why I'm so pleased to acknowledge the Kingston Men's Shed in this place today.

I thank all members of the Kingston Men's Shed for what they do, the generosity that they show to the community, and especially for the way they continue to look out for one another.

I for one, will certainly be looking forward to the Biggest Morning Tea With a Difference next year at the Kingston Men's Shed.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

### **Burnie Musical Society- Wizard of Oz Youth Edition**

[12.31 p.m.]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) - I rise today to bring to the attention of the Council a story from our north-west coast that deserves to place firmly on the parliamentary record the story of this year's Burnie Musical Society's Wizard of Oz - Youth Edition, and I have here the copy of the program if anyone wants to have a flick through it.

The Musical Society has been bringing stories to life on the north-west coast for more than 70 years. They are proudly community-driven, volunteer-powered and an organisation dedicated to creating unforgettable musical theatre experiences, performers, creatives and audiences alike.

Mr President, they've certainly on this occasion met their mission again. This youth theatre production was in so many ways could be like many other school musicals, but when we scratch the surface, what you find is one of the most genuinely inclusive community programs operating anywhere in our state.

This year, 140 young people aged between 9 and 18 took part, drawn from 20 different schools, government, Catholic and independent and home-schooled students standing and singing and performing side by side. They travelled from Devonport and from Circular Head to be part of it. They came from different socioeconomic backgrounds, students with disability, young people navigating complex family situations and new arrivals to our region. Whatever may or seeks to divide our community elsewhere, this stage erased it.

The commitment asked of these young people was significant. An information session in December last year, a weekend of cast orientation in late January, then rehearsals every Thursday and Sunday, six hours a week, including three full days of musical camp during the school holidays.

None of this happens without the extraordinary volunteer production team, current teachers, retired teachers, mums, dads, grandparents and carers, some with no children or grandchildren even in the show and busy working people all giving their time freely.

The result speaks for itself. The show opened on Friday, 29 May at Burnie Arts and ran until Saturday, 6 June. Five school shows were performed; a fifth was added because the first four sold out so quickly, drawing roughly 1500 students, some travelling from as far as Saint Joseph's Catholic School in Rosebury. Then there were eight public shows followed over two weekends, selling 2650 tickets with all but two performances completely sold out.

I was so lucky to see this heartwarming and truly amazing performance of an old favourite on closing night with an absolutely packed theatre. My program was held for me because they could have sold it at least 20 or 30 times, they said before I got there. Mr President, the numbers are not really the point here, it is the stories behind them, and I want to put some of those on the record.

There was a family from Spain who, before their children found this program, doubted they could ever truly call Tasmania home. English as a second language and financial barriers notwithstanding, the mother wrote recently to thank the team for the wonder and miracles they made for her children year after year. Two productions in, that family say they could never move away now.

There is a young man from Wynyard, once known to his primary school teachers as the boy who would run away when things became overwhelming. This year he was cast in the lead role. His mother cried when she got the call. He is now, by all accounts, an inspirational leader on the stage, admired by his peers. His compassion for fellow cast members is something the production team describes as genuinely special to witness; and there is Zane, a young autistic person who joined the production, and in his mother's words had the light fully back and his spark back in everything that he does. She wrote that the cast and crew had given the world a chance to see the boy she sees at home: confident, joyful, dancing and singing in front of a full audience. He came back this year, took on a lead role, and his mother joined the production team herself.

These are not isolated stories; they run through the survey feedback again and again. Parents describing children who arrive shy and clinging at drop off are left bouncing in with, 'Okay, bye mum, you can go now,' young people themselves naming overwhelmingly the friendships made and the feeling of belonging as the best part of the experience, ahead of even being on the stage. The joy of these children and young people coming out into the foyer at the end of the show, leaping into their loved ones' arms, so full of pride and joy on both sides, it was just beautiful and a sight to behold; the cast members hugging each other and congratulating each other, lifelong friendships and connections in the making.

This is what genuine, community-built, volunteer-driven youth arts programming achieves. It is not funded by large grants or run by paid professionals; it exists because ordinary people on our north-west coast choose year after year to give their evenings and weekends to

young people, many of whom have struggled to find their place elsewhere, giving them somewhere to belong. I want to thank the BMS committee, the production team, and every volunteer who made this season possible. This is what makes a community, and the efforts of many, many volunteers who gave their time expertise from set design, costumes, choreography, voice, lighting and everything in between. I thank them all, and I thank them particularly for filling my heart as I sat in the crowd and was mesmerised by the talents and commitments of these young people.

The opportunity this and previous shows have provided across all areas of production are truly life changing, and I wish to thank and name some of those whose names are in the program, whose names should be on the public record, but they're people who make these things happen. I will just commend all of the Burnie Musical Society, and those involved in it, as a model of what regional community arts can achieve when it's built on trust, patience and the genuine commitment to inclusion, and they've got another show coming up soon, Sister Act, which is not the junior version, but it might be worth a trip to Burnie.

### **Tribute to Christina Holmdahl**

[12.37 p.m.]

**Ms PALMER** (Rosevears - Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence) - Thank you very much, Mr President, and can I just acknowledge that beautiful contribution? So often we hear people talking down our young people, and my gosh, I wish that was on the front page of every newspaper, those stories are fantastic, and can I add my congratulations to the cast and crew, but also to those volunteers who are making a difference in young people's lives.

I rise today to acknowledge the remarkable service of West Tamar Mayor Christina Holmdahl, who has just announced that she will not be seeking re-election at the October local government elections, bringing to a close 16 years of dedicated service to the West Tamar community. Christina's story is one of resilience, determination and an unwavering commitment to public service. Hers is also a story of a pint-sized pocket rocket. Known for her glamour, style and immaculate presentation, it was not uncommon to find her standing on a little platform behind any lectern to ensure we could actually see her and that she could reach the microphone; but you would be a fool to ever underestimate this woman, for although small in stature, she has been a mighty advocate for her community, her passions and for local government.

I can't put a number on how many West Tamar citizenship ceremonies I have attended as a local member. We're all probably a bit the same, but at each of those beautiful events, Christina has always begun by sharing her own story to ensure that she had a special connection with those about to be sworn in. Born to Polish parents on 8 February 1946 in a refugee camp in Germany following World War II, Christina immigrated to Australia with her family in 1949. After spending time in migrant camps in Victoria and Tasmania, her family eventually settled in North Hobart. Her professional career was in television and film and journalism at TVT-6 in Hobart, before moving to the Tasmanian government film unit where she produced content highlighting issues affecting Tasmania.

She later joined CTC-7 in Canberra, spending 14 years producing political reports, documentaries and international assignments, and it was on one of her overseas assignments

that she met her husband Ollie. It was during this time that she developed a deep understanding of government and public policy following senior public affairs work with the Australian National Railways Commission in Adelaide. Christina and Ollie fell in love with the most scenic part of the West Tamar, Clarence Point, in the year 2000. The plan was to enjoy a quieter life in retirement together, but after a few months, Christina has openly shared with delight, her husband told her to go back to work, go back and get a job. She was never the type that could sit still, so she quickly became a passionate advocate for her new community.

Concerned about the condition of the West Tamar Highway, Christina joined the Northern Ratepayers Association and successfully lobbied the then-state government for a \$3 million investment to improve the Supply River section of the road. The achievement reflected a quality that would become the hallmark of her public life, identifying community needs and working tirelessly to deliver practical outcomes. In 2009, she was elected to the West Tamar Council and she later served as deputy mayor before becoming the municipality's first female mayor in 2014. During her time in local government, she also served as president of the Local Government Association of Tasmania and as vice president of the Australian Local Government Association, helping to ensure the voices of Tasmanian communities were heard at both state and national levels.

Christina's contribution extends well beyond council chambers; she's been a passionate volunteer and advocate across the arts, small business and our community sector. Her involvement has included the Tamar Valley Writers Festival; Rotary; the West Tamar Arts Group; West Tamar Chamber of Commerce; the Tamar Valley Film Society; Tamar Valley U3A; local fire and emergency services; and the Australian Independent Retirees Association. She also played a role in establishing the National Rose Garden at Woolmers Estate.

In 2023, Christina was inducted into the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women for her service across arts and media, community advocacy, government, literature, education and volunteering, and I was most honoured to play a part in that presentation. Throughout her career, Christina has demonstrated that leadership is about service to others. Her optimism, determination and belief in the power of community have helped shape the West Tamar into the thriving region it is today. As she concludes this chapter of public life, we thank her for her years of dedicated service and acknowledge the lasting impact she has had on her community, and indeed, Tasmania; but believe me: there will be another chapter, and no doubt another dynamic chapter, to this brilliant woman's contribution to Tasmania and its people.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

### **Hillwood Football Club Celebrates 100 Years**

[12.43 p.m.]

**Mr DUIGAN** (Windermere - Minister for Sport) - Thank you very much, Mr President, and it is my great pleasure to rise today to take you on a journey, to take you down the East Tamar - many people will be familiar with it, others maybe not so much - to the hamlet of Hillwood and the community of around 400 people, a single road, and if you keep driving to the end of the road you're greeted by the magnificent Tamar River and Shark Park, home to the Hillwood footy club, which this year is celebrating 100 years of existence. As you would expect, the Sharks entered the comp back in 1926 and of course have been part of that very small community, its beating heart, if you like, ever since.

The club has provided generations of locals with the opportunity to play footy, to volunteer, to connect with their community and to build those lifelong friendships, and it's my great privilege to be the patron of the club, and I attended the club's Centenary Gala dinner at the Mowbray Turf Club not on the weekend, but the weekend before, and it was a great celebration of a century of football, of community, and of local pride. As you would expect in an event like that, it brought together past and present players, life members, volunteers, supporters and families who shared stories that tell the history of the club and its fabric better than any record book can.

One thing became very clear through the course of the night; the club's centenary theme. A hundred years of legacy, community and excellence was ever evident and while football may have been the reason people first came to the Sharks footy club, it's the enduring friendships and community spirit that has kept them there. We heard stories on the night of some of the old-timers, and you would expect there to be some of those, about meeting their future wives and forming decades-long friendships, to stories about how - it's a significant orcharding area - the blokes would use their work boots as footy boots by tapping acorns into the soles on a Friday night, then pull them out to go to work for the week and then do it again the next week. We heard stories of three generations of a family playing in one team and actually winning a flag. Three generations in a flag-winning team.

I sat with a bloke called Craig 'Jerker' Jenkins and have had the privilege of playing against him at times, but he's racked up 464 games in the maroon and light-blue and that is the most by a single player for the club. His love of the Hillwood footy club was really evident in what was a pretty emotional night for many. Jerker was also named captain of the reserves team of the century and that was roundly applauded by all those in attendance.

A great privilege also to hear from George Town's own Brad Green, who many people will remember as a great player for the Melbourne footy club. He recalled his early days with his dad, who was a Hillwood stalwart, going around the ground and standing in awe as a kid watching the seniors come out onto Shark Park to play - and that, I think, captures what you know country football is all about.

A century is a significant achievement for any organisational. For a country footy club from a very small community, it's especially impressive. Clubs like Hillwood, and everyone has them in their divisions, are built almost entirely on the efforts of volunteers. The people who mark the lines and run the canteen, coach the junior players, sit on the committees, organise fundraising events, maintain the grounds and support the team week in, week out, winning or losing. They are the backbone, indeed, of every successful sporting club.

Hillwood has, of course, over the journey had its share of highlights and perhaps some low-lights and challenges. A golden era between '55 and '68 when the Sharks won eight senior premierships in 13 seasons. Two years later, due to a lack of players and committee shortages, the club ended a recess and, for a lot of clubs, that's the end, particularly in those small communities. But not for Hillwood. In 1980, a group of local people gathered together and reformed the club and brought it back to its standing and it remains so.

In 2010, the club rooms burned down. Again, a substantial challenge, but once again the community responded and players and volunteers and members and local tradies got together and got it up and going. That resilience now forms part of the Shark's story. Today, it fields

senior men's, senior women's and reserve men's teams in division 1 of the Northern Tasmanian Football Association.

Of course, in my role as Sports minister, you get the opportunity to travel around the state and see a lot of these clubs and I think it's worthy to note the sense of community wellbeing that they bring, sporting outcomes and fitness outcomes, but the wellbeing and the bringing of people together. I would take this opportunity to acknowledge current president, Craig Fox, vice president, Darren Perry, secretary, Jane Donnelly, the committee, players, volunteers, life members, and supporters who continue to carry the club forward. I also acknowledge those who have held those roles over the past 100 years, and I congratulate the Hillwood Football Club on reaching its centenary and wish it all the best for years to come.

### **Bloom Coffee Van**

[12.50 p.m.]

**Ms ARMITAGE** (Launceston) - I'm very pleased to rise today to speak about a fabulous business in Launceston, run with enthusiasm and heart. I'm talking about the Bloom Coffee Van run by young entrepreneur Olivia Pedder. After finishing year 12 in November last year, Olivia purchased the Bloom Coffee Van and got to work. Taking the experience she gained working at other local Launceston businesses, Bluestone and Josef Chromy, where she still works part-time, Olivia saw an opportunity to start her own business, develop her cafe and hospitality skills and provide much-needed caffeine to Launceston locals.

Right now, Olivia takes every opportunity she can to serve up great coffee and build the profile of her business. In addition to operating at events in the region, Olivia also serves up coffee to the parents, families and visitors to Saturday morning junior soccer at Churchill Park in Invermay. Anyone that has been to junior soccer knows how cold it can be of a morning and I'm sure to see the coffee van there, and I'm quite sure that Olivia is very busy on a Saturday, particularly at Churchill Park.

After operating Bloom for eight months, if there's one thing that Olivia knows, it's that where there are early mornings, there will be coffee customers. At this time, Olivia has also made an arrangement to set up Bloom Cafe at Wizards Bar at the Boag's site in William St and will continue to do so until November. So impressed was Boag's brewery manager, Mike Stylianou, with Olivia's coffee van at a local event, he offered her the space to serve both the general public and Boag's workers and help them bond over a morning cuppa.

Of course, we will shortly and very sadly see the closure of the Boag's site in Launceston, which makes this enterprise even more special. Not only is Olivia helping Boag's workers to connect, bond and unwind, it's now a space that's also very special to the brewery and the region. Olivia's coffee has breathed new life into a unique part of the brewery, transforming the former Boag's Social Club into a vibrant community space. This space contains bits of nostalgia, including vintage advertising boards, a Boag's-themed arcade machine and a huge mural painted by a former Boag's operator. The mural depicts a dragon and St George, the wizard behind the name of the venue: Wizard Smith. For anyone who's not seen the mural, I highly encourage you to take a look, as it's absolutely fantastic.

This highlights the spirit that hospitality venues draw to our local spaces. When we activate these spaces for people to gather and connect, we enliven our communities. Places that aren't work, aren't school or home, but a place where people can go and just be, and Olivia is

helping to do that, brewing and serving her fantastic coffee and developing her business skills as she does so.

So what's next for Olivia? Well, come summertime, Olivia wants to expand her offerings into matcha, a powdered tea made from green tea leaves, and very versatile and apparently popular, and which I have no doubt will prove very lucrative for Olivia at Launceston's Harvest Market and other events. Additionally, Scotch Oakburn College, Olivia's former school, has asked her to return and speak with the senior students as a young entrepreneur about her business and life's journey so far. The future is certainly looking very bright for Olivia. It's always really good to see young people getting in and having a go. I extend my warmest and sincerest congratulations to Olivia on her achievements thus far, look forward to seeing what's next and encourage everyone to try her fabulous coffee.

### MOTION

#### Time Limits Sessional Order

[12.54 p.m.]

**Ms ARMITAGE** (Launceston) - Mr President, I'll just give a little background to do from where this has come from. When I first came to this Chamber in 2011, I must admit I was really quite surprised that there were no time limits, having come from local government where we had five minutes and then, if you're really lucky, you got an extension of three minutes - so eight minutes in which to put forward your view, often on very complex planning matters. So you knew that you had to be succinct. You had to put it forward very plainly what you're wanting to say to try and get other members' support. I was surprised when I did arrive here and gosh, you talked for as long as you like.

In 2014, I decided I'd move a motion re time limits. From memory, I think I lost by two votes and was told by some members at the time it was a very brave move in this House to try to move time limits. I decided I must be consistent because I felt it was important.

In March 2023, I moved a motion, which this time was successful, to send the suggestion of time limits to our Standing Orders Committee regarding the feasibility of time limits and suggested time limits, and to allow that committee, because I thought it was very appropriate, that the Standing Orders Committee look at it and they determine whether it's appropriate to have time limits and what they should be. It certainly wasn't up to me.

The latest motion, that I have before us today, will provide a trial and therefore evidence whether the time limits work or whether they don't work. It also provides evidence for the Standing Orders Committee to actually be able to look at it and see how a trial has gone. This Sessional Order is about ensuring that this Council can continue to perform its role as a house of review effectively and efficiently throughout the 52nd Parliament.

It's important at the outset to be clear about what this motion does and what it does not do. It does not amend our Standing Orders, it does not diminish the rights of any member, it does not prevent anyone from placing relevant matters on the record and it certainly does not diminish the Council's capacity to scrutinise legislation or hold governments to account.

What it does do is establish a clear and predictable framework for the conduct of debate during this parliament, while preserving the ability of the Council to extend time whenever circumstances require. The order applies to key stages of our proceedings, including second reading debates on bills, committee stage consideration of bills, committee stage consideration of amendments, third reading debates, government motions and private members motions.

This proposal seeks to balance two important objectives. The first is ensuring every member has a meaningful opportunity to participate and debate and scrutinise legislation. The second is ensuring the Council can conduct its business efficiently, transparently and in a way that's understandable to the public. These objectives are not in conflict. Indeed, they reinforce one another. We are and always will be a house of review, that's our constitutional role and that's our responsibility to the Tasmanian people.

But review is not measured simply by the number of hours we spend speaking. Review is measured by the quality of our scrutiny. It's measured by whether we identify flaws in legislation, test the government's arguments, expose risks, improve proposals and ensure that the consequences of decisions are properly understood.

This Sessional Order supports that purpose by establishing a structure that encourages focused, relevant and accessible debate while retaining appropriate flexibility when additional time is genuinely required. Good scrutiny is not the absence of structure. This sessional order recognises that reality. The speaking times proposed are, I believe, reasonably generous.

For second reading debates, the member moving the bill may speak for up to 60 minutes and retains a right of reply for a further 60 minutes. Every other member may also speak for up to 60 minutes. For government and private members motions, both the mover and every other member may speak for up to 60 minutes. These are substantial speaking times by any parliamentary standard. No one could reasonably suggest that an hour is insufficient time to articulate a position, examine legislation, or place concerns on the record.

The committee stage arrangements are equally important. Committee is where much of the detailed scrutiny occurs. It's where legislation is examined clause by clause. It's where members seek explanations, test propositions and explore the practical operation of laws. That's why this motion preserves a member's ability to speak up to three times on the same question during committee consideration, with each contribution lasting up to 15 minutes.

When amendments are before the Council, the member moving the amendment may speak for up to 15 minutes and members may again speak three times to the amendment with contributions of up to 10 minutes each. Those provisions recognise -

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

### RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

[2.30 p.m.]

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Members, before I call on questions today, just based on this morning's experience, we could be going all afternoon. I would like to welcome to the Chamber, Hamish Fontana and William Lansdale. Hamish and William are year 10 students from Rose Bay High School and they're completing work experience this week. The visit is a

collaboration between the Engagement and Visitor Services Unit, the Legislative Council and their local Legislative Council member, the Member for Pembroke, Luke Edmonds. I'm informed that Hamish and William are keen to deepen their understanding of the work of members of the Legislative Council and the different roles of the parliamentary staff in supporting the work of parliamentary democracy. I'm sure I speak on behalf of all members when I say we hope that Hamish and William find their time with us a rich and learning experience.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

### QUESTIONS

#### Children Held in Adult Watch Houses

**Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, CHILDREN and YOUTH, Ms PALMER**

[2.32 p.m.]

Minister, during this year's budget estimates in the other place, you were not able to say how many children had been held in adult watch houses since the custodial inspectors June 2025 reporting to the practice. It took a right to information to find out that, shockingly, children were held in adult prison watch houses on 306 occasions in 2025-26.

Administrative arrangements mean children held under the *Youth Justice Act* fall outside your jurisdiction, but they are still children as you would know, making a particular troubling that you didn't know this information, more especially since we know how unsafe adult watch houses are for children and young people. Minister, have you now informed yourself on the number of children held in adult watch houses and what processes have you put in place to stay up to date on this critical matter. What steps have you taken to develop a plan with timelines to stop the use of adult watch houses for children?

What alternatives have you considered since the Custodial Inspector recommended ceasing the detention of children in adult prisons or adult watch houses?

### ANSWER

I will just seek some advice, thank you.

Thank you very much, Mr President, and I thank the member for the question. I will start off by reiterating, as the Member for Hobart has said, that young offenders in reception prisons are not part of the children and youth portfolio, which falls under the responsibility of another minister.

Whilst I very much appreciate the question, and I can assure you that Mr Barnett and I often often engage around this matter because it obviously is of a concern to me. However, to be frank, my focus is on keeping children away from watch houses. I don't want them in watch houses; I don't want them in detention facilities. Everything that we are doing in this space, everything that is my focus, where my attention needs to be, is what can we do before they even enter into a situation where there is a need for them to be in a watch house. That's where

I've been really passionate. That's certainly where I have been putting my energy, as has my team. The Youth Justice System Reform under the Youth Justice Blueprint is focused on that diversion and that support of young people so that they are less likely to engage in offending behaviours. As I say, the responsibility does fall to the Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation. Yes, I certainly engage with him regularly, and have concerns regarding that, as does he, as does our government. But my focus is clearly, and where I am putting my energy, is on doing what I can to ensure that we are focused on diversion, and we are focused on the support for young people, and their families, to be in a position where we don't want to see them engaging in offending behaviours that will actually see them in remand prisons.

### **Children Held in Adult Watch Houses**

**Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, CHILDREN and YOUTH, Ms PALMER**

[2.36 p.m.]

Minister, look, frankly, it's not good enough. Can you confirm that the reason that administrative leave, the responsibility falls to the Attorney-General or minister for Corrections, is because children are ending up in adult watch houses. The children who are your portfolio and policy responsibility, are ending up in the Corrections minister's areas of portfolio and responsibility. It's not because they're not children; it's because they're ending up in adult prison cells. I note what you said about engaging on a regular basis with the Corrections minister about this matter. The question related to what strategies, plans, processes, are being developed to stop at-risk children, and young people, from being incarcerated with adult offenders, some of whom will be highly stressed, some of whom will be violent, and while you say your priority is to keep children away from watch houses, on at least 306 occasions in the year 2025-26, that ambition failed. So, what are you doing as minister to protect vulnerable children and young people, who are your portfolio responsibility.

**ANSWER**

I will just seek some advice.

I thank the member for the question. I am going to keep reiterating that you are asking me questions on an issue that falls outside of my portfolio, and I am here to answer questions with regard to my portfolio, which is children and youth -

**Ms O'Connor** - I just explained to you how it does it completely.

**Ms PALMER** - And what I can do is I can share with you information from the Department of Justice, from the relevant minister, regarding some of the key initiatives that have been implemented by the Department of Justice within Tasmania's reception prisons, that do support young people to date. Things like the implementation of the use of body-worn cameras for staff who are engaging with young people. The procurement of the Childhood Foundation, to develop and deliver training for correctional officers and managers on trauma-informed engagement with children and young people in custodial settings.

The relevant minister and I absolutely do converse about this to ensure that I had a really good understanding of this situation so that I can support the relevant minister in the work that

he has to do. I've been to visit, in particular, the Launceston Remand Centre. I have met with some of the custodial workers there, engaged with them so that I can understand the process of a young person coming into there. But my focus is on doing what I can to look at where we are able to actually keep children out of any sort of detention facility, and what can we be doing in that diversion space, how can we be supporting them to keep them engaged in school? How can we be supporting them to get them engaged in programs, in community environments? How can we keep them connected to their families? That is where my work needs to be, which is the work of this portfolio. But I am always engaging with the relevant minister to ensure that I can support him in the work that he needs to do under his portfolio.

### **Gun Law Reform - Plans for Consultation**

#### **Ms WEBB question to MINISTER for WOMEN and the PREVENTION of FAMILY VIOLENCE, Ms PALMER**

[2.40 p.m.]

**Ms WEBB** - Minister, congratulations on your new and additional portfolio and thank you for your correspondence dated 7 August providing an update on developments within that portfolio. As your letter stated, the implementation of Tasmania's third *Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan: Survivors at the Centre 2022 - 2027* has progressed with a system-wide evaluation currently underway to inform the next strategy.

My questions go to the need for a coherent policy approach when placing survivors at the centre. Are you aware that in response to questions I asked during the recent Budget Estimates hearings, Tasmania Police revealed that since 2021-22, family violence incidents involving firearms had more than doubled from 69 events to 140 events in 2024-2025: a shocking increase of 103 per cent, I'm sure you'll agree, in that use of firearms in family violence in over that four-year period. In July it was reported that a community advisory committee set up to advise the Tasmanian government on gun laws, and which included Engender Equality, the Alana & Madeline Foundation, and Medics for Gun Control has been disbanded by the Police Minister after just two meetings.

My further questions are the these: Firstly, do you agree that while the government pursues a system-wide evaluation to inform the next family and sexual violence action plan at the same time it is also considering gun law reform, it is imperative to consult with those with lived experience of gun violence to assist in informing new gun laws and policy amendments?

Secondly, will you ensure the next family and sexual violence action plan includes a specific strategy to tackle the threat of an actual use of firearms in family- and gender-based violence situations?

Thirdly, will you formally request the Police minister reinstate a dedicated avenue by which Engender Equality, the Alana & Madeleine Foundation, and other family violence survivors are consulted on and included in the development of gun law reforms, and if not, why not?

#### **ANSWER**

**Ms PALMER** - I'll just seek some advice.

I thank the honourable member for Nelson for the question. Well, there was quite a number of questions in that. What I will say is, it is a great privilege to once again hold this portfolio of Women and the Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence. I believe I said in this place the first time I had this portfolio, might have even been in a response to a question to the member for Murchison, that it is a weight on my shoulders as a minister. You know, over the four years that I've been in and out of this portfolio, and certainly following on from the work of former minister Jacquie Petrusma, there's been extraordinary investment in this space and yet we still continue to see, here in Tasmania, women in particular impacted by family and sexual violence.

It's been really good, I've only had one meeting with the federal minister, Tanya Plibersek, specific to this, but it has been really encouraging to see her talking about how we can't keep doing what we've always done because we just don't seem to be moving the dial. I really look forward to working with her and with other ministers across Australia, the states and territories on this.

What I can say is that yes, there is an evaluation happening with regard to the Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan: Survivors At the Centre. Terribly important that we go through that evaluation process and don't just do what we've always done hoping that there will be a different outcome.

That is a really important piece of work I'm certainly very keen to see thoroughly investigated as we move towards our Fourth Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan. Obviously, with regard to the part of your question around firearms, that absolutely will need to be part. It is part of the conversations that we have because whilst firearms are only recorded in a small proportion of family violence incidents, their presence significantly increases the risk of serious harm or death, but also the threat.

It's the threat and psychological damage that can be done to a person where there are threats. It is good to see that Tasmania Police treat access to all threatened use of a firearm as a high-risk indicator and takes immediate action to protect victim/survivors, attending officers and of course the broader community. What's really important to me in this discussion on firearms is that people who have actually used or threatened a firearm do not have access to firearms.

Also, really good to be working with the attorney on a series of new legislation and amendments to legislation that further strengthens protections right across the board in the family violence area. My focus is certainly on ensuring that firearms are not in the hands of people who pose a risk to their partners, to their families or indeed the broader community. It certainly will need to be very much consulted on as we move into our Fourth Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan.

**Gun Law Reform - Plans for Consultation**

**Ms WEBB question to MINISTER for WOMEN and the PREVENTION of FAMILY VIOLENCE, Ms PALMER**

[2.47 p.m.]

Thank you, minister for your statements there and I would absolutely state I know you have a genuine commitment to this portfolio and pleased to see you back with the portfolio. I appreciate the broader comments you made around that. However, you didn't answer my questions and wondering if you would take it on notice if I put them to you specifically so I can get more specific answers to the questions I posed on how these two areas intersect and what you in your portfolio responsibilities will be ensuring in relation to that intersection.

**ANSWER**

**Ms PALMER** - Yes, I'm very happy to do that and take that on notice and if you could forward that through, that would be great.

**Bell Bay Aluminium - Effect on Power Grid**

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

[2.48 p.m.]

Minister, Bell Bay Aluminium is not only a major employer, it also plays a strategic role in Tasmania's electricity system by helping TasNetworks keep the grid stable. Has your government assessed what losing that capability would mean for the security and future cost of Tasmania's electricity network and will you release that assessment?

**ANSWER**

I thank the member for the question and would say at the outset that the government is critically aware of the importance of Bell Bay Aluminium. Rio Tinto, which has had a storied history in Tasmania of up to 70 years, I think it is a very large employer. It has a very large supply chain. It is one of our largest exporters and its absence from Tasmania is not an outcome that we are contemplating. We are very focused and, certainly as Energy Minister, I am and have been and continue to be very focused on providing a long-term energy contract for Bell Bay Aluminium. It is worth noting, these conversations have been going on for a period of time, particularly since the Commonwealth government has walked back its commitment to Bell Bay Aluminium around the green aluminium production credits. Sadly though, commitments were made by the Prime Minister and minister Ayres that northern Tasmania and Bell Bay should expect to be included in that conversation. We had originally sought that 12-month extension of the power contract at Bell Bay Aluminium to allow the commonwealth government to continue to work on the Green Aluminium Production Credit scheme and how it would apply. Obviously, since that has changed, we are now working to understand what a subsequent different funding opportunity could look like.

This is not an issue that is peculiar to Tasmania. All, except for Bell Bay Aluminium of Rio Tinto's aluminium smelters across the country are receiving. At Tomago in New South

Wales, work is continuing there to land a deal between the commonwealth and the New South Wales government that is high hundreds of millions of dollars.

I'm advised for the Boyne Island smelter in Queensland, a deal has been dealt there and, again, I'm advised that is a billion dollars each for the Queensland and commonwealth government. For Bell Bay Aluminium there will be a gap between what Rio Tinto says is a commercial energy price for the smelter. There will be a gap between what Hydro says is a commercial price for it and that is, in reflection of its charter, a price at which any lower is a net cost impact to the Tasmanian taxpayer, to the government's bottom line.

We're working on all those things. We want to make sure that this gets done.

What was the question?

**Mr Edmunds** - The grid.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Thank you. It is important. Obviously, as you mentioned in your question, Bell Bay Aluminium performs a number of functions in the electricity system. It's our biggest energy user. It's important for stability and a range of other services that it offers in terms of load shedding. The government has always understood the importance of major industrial customers to Tasmania's electricity system.

I can talk about those things, but I don't think I will. I would say we're not contemplating the exit of Bell Bay Aluminium from the Tasmanian energy scene, and we will be working with the commonwealth to provide the same support for Tasmania and Tasmanian jobs that it has shown a willingness for New South Wales and Queensland.

### **Wharf Infrastructure Devonport and Burnie**

**Mr HISCUTT question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT**

[2.53 p.m.]

Minister, are you aware and can you provide any updates as to whether there are any major defects affecting the port or wharf infrastructure at Devonport or Burnie ports?

### **ANSWER**

I thank the member for the question. Certainly, nothing at Devonport that I'm aware of. I was there last week having another look, and I was quite satisfied with everything, the way it was happening there. I can't think of anything other than some very minor maintenance issues that they're working through just to tidy up projects as they come to an end.

Burnie is a little bit different, of course, with Berth 4 there.

We know and we've talked comprehensively about the syphoning problem. I think it's four wharves that have been built over the top of one another over the last 150 odd years there or would be seen if you look down the end and look at all the different bits of engineering over the years. We did some test drilling there and found all sorts of things including some old

abattoir equipment when they drilled down through there, so you never know what's underneath or poked underneath the wharf.

BridgePro Engineering does have a contract there at the moment to restore that wharf. As of last week, they were 50 per cent through the job of sheet piling to block the hole where it's been syphoning out. Part of that process is also drilling holes and the simplest way to is to drill holes into the wharf and then filling it full of grout and then testing to make sure they've got it all, and that's based on what they did last year. Now, as part of that process, where the wharf was weak, they installed sensors on the wharf, and what they're finding at the moment, they've made the sensors fairly sensitive so that any vibration or movement of the wharf is picked up while stevedores or contractors are working near the wharf.

About once a week they do set those off, either by vibration, but tidal and wave action will also set them off, that's how sensitive they are. When that happens, all the workers move back and the engineers come in; Tasports or BridgePro engineers have access to the sensors to be able to check out that there's no problem happening, and to make sure that it was only a vibration or a very minor thing that has set them off, and then allow the people to start work again. So, the way they've been set, they have been going off on a semi-regular basis, but the job as a whole is progressing very well. Like I said, over 50 per cent of the piling is done in the remediation of the siphoning hole, and they're a bit less than 50 per cent of the way through the drilling and grouting project; but if you add them both together, the project progression is pretty well on time. Thank you.

#### **Ashley Youth Detention Centre - Incident of October 2025**

**Ms ARMITAGE question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATRAY**

[2.56 p.m.]

Regarding the fire and malicious damage event at Ashley Youth Detention Centre in October 2025, have any charges been laid against any person involved, and if not, why not?

#### **ANSWER**

Just way of explanation, because it's charges, it relates to the minister for Police. In respect to the incident at AYDC on 5 October 2025, three young people were charged with arson, and destroying property, in contravention of the *Criminal Code Act 1924* and *Police Offences Act 1935*. The three young people all pleaded guilty to the matters, and each was convicted. Their sentences were global, including other matters. Youth 1 (16 years of age at the time of the offence): 18 months detention order, wholly suspended for two years; youth 2 (15 years of age at the time of offence): 36 week detention order ; youth 3 (16 years of age at the time of offence): conviction recorded.

## MOTION

### Time Limits Sessional Order

[2.58 p.m.]

**Ms ARMITAGE** (Launceston) - Having commended my contribution before the lunch break with a bit of a preamble, and history of this motion, I do move -

That the Legislative Council agree that, for the duration of the 52nd Parliament (or until further order), the following Sessional Order apply to proceedings in the Legislative Council:

- (1) Application - this Sessional Order applies to:
  - (a) Second reading speeches on bills;
  - (b) Contributions during Committee stage consideration of a bill or matter (including multiple speaks);
  - (c) Third reading speeches on bills;
  - (d) Government or Private members' motions;
  - (e) Contributions in response to Government or Private members' motions;
- (2) Second Reading Speeches - Time Limits
  - (a) The Member moving the Second Reading may speak for up to 60 minutes.
  - (b) The Member who moved the Second Reading may speak for up to 60 minutes in reply.
  - (c) Any other Member may speak for up to 60 minutes.
- (3) Government or Private members' motions - Time Limits
  - (a) The Member moving the motion may speak for up to 60 minutes.
  - (b) Any other Member may speak for up to 60 minutes.
- (4) Committee Stage - Time Limits
  - (a) Each Member may speak up to three (3) times to the same question, in accordance with the Council's procedures.
  - (b) Each contribution ('speak') by a Member is limited to 15 minutes.

- (5) Committee Stage - Amendments
  - (a) The Member moving an amendment may speak up to 15 minutes.
  - (b) Each Member may speak up to three (3) times to the same amendment in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.
  - (c) Each contribution ('speak') by a Member is limited to 10 minutes.
- (6) Third Reading - Time Limits
  - (a) The Member moving the Third Reading may speak for up to 15 minutes.
  - (b) The Member who moved the Third Reading may speak for up to 15 minutes in reply.
  - (c) Any other Member may speak for up to 10 minutes.
- (7) Inaugural Speech Time Limits
  - (a) A Member shall be entitled to speak for an unlimited period of time.
- (8) Extensions and Flexibility
  - (a) The time limits in clauses 2-4 may be extended:
    - (i) By leave of the Council; or
    - (ii) On motion, without notice, moved at any time by any Member and determined without debate.
  - (b) A Motion under 5(a)(ii) must specify:
    - (i) The Member(s) to whom the extension applies;
    - (ii) The additional time proposed; and
    - (iii) The reason why an extension is requested.
  - (c) Where a Member is addressing the question and is near the expiry of time, the Chair may allow the Member to conclude their remarks, consistent with orderly conduct of business.
- (9) Effect

- (a) This Sessional Order operates as a temporary Order of the Council for the purposes set out in Clause 1.

Just to go back to where I was before the lunch break, as I said, I did give a little bit of a history, the fact that I first moved a similar motion in 2014. So, getting onto the committee stage arrangements that are equally important: the committee is where much of the detailed scrutiny occurs. It's where legislation is examined clause by clause; it's where members seek explanations, test propositions, and explore the practical operation of laws. That's why this motion preserves a member's ability to speak up to three times on the same question during committee consideration, with each contribution lasting up to 15 minutes.

When amendments are before the council, the member moving the amendment may speak for up to 15 minutes, and members may again speak three times to the amendment, with contribution up to 10 minutes each. Those provisions recognise that scrutiny is often at its most effective when members can engage in a genuine exchange of questions, answers and propositions. At the third reading stage, the mover may speak for up to 15 minutes and exercise a right of reply for up to 15 minutes, with other members allotted up to 10 minutes, and importantly, this motion preserves a longstanding parliamentary tradition by ensuring that inaugural speeches remain entirely unrestricted. Newly-elected members deserve the opportunity to address this Chamber for the first time without limitation, and this order expressly protects that principle.

I believe it's also important to recognise how parliamentary debate is viewed beyond this Chamber. Most Tasmanians do not spend their days reading *Hansard* from cover to cover. They encounter parliament through headlines, news reports, social media, live streams and short excerpts from our proceedings. For them, clarity matters. When debate is well structured and focused on the question before the Chair, it becomes easier for the public to understand what parliament is examining and why. They can see what issues are being tested, they can understand the arguments being advanced and they can judge for themselves whether parliament is doing its job. That visibility strengthens confidence in the parliamentary process. A structured debate framework helps achieve that outcome. It encourages all of us to focus on the central questions before the House.

So what does this bill do? Who will it affect? What risks have been identified? What safeguards are needed? What questions remain unanswered? Those are the issues that matter. Those are the issues the public expects us to examine, and those are the issues that deserve our time and attention. Some may ask: why introduce a framework at all? My answer is simple: because structured speaking arrangements are normal throughout Australia, including in jurisdictions with strong and respected upper houses. They do not diminish scrutiny; they organise it.

Across Australia, most parliaments routinely operate with speaking limits. I believe there might be one house that doesn't have them. Committee time allocations procedures ensure debate remains focused and manageable while still preserving opportunities for detailed examination. The principle is well established; the lesson is equally clear. Structure and scrutiny are not opponents: they're partners. One concern that may be raised is that members need the flexibility to address particularly complex matters, and I agree entirely. That's why this motion includes important safeguards. Where additional time is genuinely needed, it can be granted by leave of the Council. Alternatively, any member can move a motion without notice, and determined without debate, to extend speaking time. The Council therefore remains

fully in control of its proceedings. If additional scrutiny is required, additional time can be provided. Nothing in this motion takes that power away. Indeed, that flexibility is one of its greatest strengths. It provides a structure for ordinary business while preserving discretion for exceptional circumstances.

Another concern may be that we already possess mechanisms to manage debate, and that's true; but there's value in establishing clear expectations from the outset. A predictable framework assists members in preparing contributions. It assists the orderly scheduling of business. It promotes fairness across the Chamber and it provides greater certainty to everyone involved in the parliamentary process. Above all, this motion is measured and proportionate. It's not a permanent change; it's a sessional order. It applies for the duration of this parliament, unless the Council determines otherwise. It can be reviewed. It can be refined and, if necessary, it can be discontinued. That's the very nature of a sessional order. So, it's not a leap into the unknown; to my mind, it's a practical and cautious step that seeks to balance robust scrutiny with the efficient conduct of business.

I hear that some members are saying that perhaps we don't need this motion before us and that we can just simply stand up and say a member no longer be heard; but to my mind, who in this house, when someone is speaking, wants to stand up and say a member no longer be heard? No one wants to do that, because someone may not be prepared, they may not have put their prime points in a certain part of their speech, and I think it's just something that no one would do.

So, we can remain a strong House of review, we can continue to hold governments to account, we can continue to subject legislation to detailed examination, and we can do all of that within a framework that promotes clarity, fairness and good parliamentary practice. I believe that this motion No. 13 before us, the Time Limit Sessional Orders that, as I've said, I've moved today on the notice paper, actually gives the Standing Orders Committee - and as mentioned earlier, I have moved a motion in 2023 for this matter to go to the Standing Orders Committee, but I believe this motion before us now, in a trial period, gives information and evidence for the Standing Orders Committee to actually look at it more wholesomely, more fully and actually make a decision whether we should or whether we shouldn't. So, if a trial period is not successful, then obviously it just can be discontinued, so, for those reasons, I commend the Sessional Order to the Council and ask members to support it.

### INAUGURAL SPEECH

**Member for Huon - Ms Clare Glade-Wright**

[3.05 p.m.]

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Members, it gives me great pleasure to call to the lectern for the very first time the new member for Huon. Just to remind members that as this is the first contribution, we'll extend all the courtesies that we do to all first contributions in this place. I would like to welcome to the Chamber Nick, Michael and Luca, who are family and friends of the honourable member.

**Ms GLADE-WRIGHT** (Huon) - I acknowledge the motion as moved by the member for Launceston. It is a worthwhile motion and I support it. But with your indulgence, I turn

now to offer my first words in this Chamber as the member for Huon, and I will return to the motion at the end.

To stand in this Chamber is an extraordinary privilege, and I do so mindful that this seat belongs to the people of Huon, noting their contributions to its thriving communities. The Huon electorate is relatively new. The area has been represented in the Legislative Council since 1856 and first became an electorate in 1900. But in the scheme of things, this is only a recent slice of history, because this area was originally inhabited by the Muwinina people, the Lylequonny people, the Melukerdee people and the Nuenonne people. These people cared for the lands and waters not just for 200 years, but thousands and thousands of years. They were the first leaders responsible for sustaining their communities. They were the first teachers, hunters, fishers, the first doctors, midwives, scientists, chefs, homemakers, the first land and water managers, artists, dancers, musicians, storytellers, architects, innovators, navigators, boat builders, bushfire managers and custodians. I have utmost respect for the thousands of years of knowledge that has been passed down over time, the knowledge that lives on past a terrible invasion and exists today in the Palawa people. I acknowledge the Palawa people and I acknowledge the important work of Weetapoon Aboriginal Corporation and South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation, both of which have a direct presence and role in the Huon.

In my opinion, true recognition requires more than just acknowledgement, it requires action. Our shared future will be stronger when the Palawa are not merely consulted and acknowledged but respected as partners in shaping the future of our conservation, land use, planning, water management, heritage protection and natural resource management, and most of all, their ongoing quest for self-determination and their right to shape decisions that affect their communities, culture and future.

In more recent times, the Huon has been shaped by an extraordinary network of people. The people of the Huon are remarkably active and engaged, as evidenced by the many groups and organisations that contribute to the strength of our region. There are progress associations and hall committees, community and volunteer organisations, service clubs, Landcare and Coastcare groups, community gardens, friends' sheds, women's groups, neighbourhood houses, markets and crop swaps, historical societies, sporting clubs, youth and senior citizens groups, business and tourism associations, emergency service volunteer brigades, wildlife rescue and multicultural organisations, disability advocacy groups, LGBTIQ+ groups, churches and faith-based community groups, school associations and parent and friends committees. On top of all of that there is an abundance of art galleries, artists, musicians, writers and theatre groups.

I would like to show off my scarf, which was made by a Cygnet local, Debra Weiss, who creates these beautiful fabrics featuring beautiful endemic species - don't make me try and say the botanical name of this particular endemic species because it's quite difficult, but it's also known as the red seaweed, so we will go with that - I wear this as a gesture of support for our local artists and in recognition of the vital role that art plays in our community.

The Huon is known for its rich agricultural heritage, particularly its apple orchards, cherries, berry farms and premium food production. There is a strong maritime history that continues today with skilled boat builders, and the iconic Huon Pine is a timber central to the region's identity. The Huon hosts the Cygnet Folk Festival, the Huon Show, A Taste of the Huon, the Mediaeval Festival and Renaissance Fair, Huon Valley Midwinter Festival and Dover Sea Fest. The region is renowned for breathtaking natural beauty and attracts visitors to

Bruny Island, the Huon River, Tahune Airwalk, Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs, Cockle Creek, the Far South wilderness and to experience food and wine tourism.

As you can see, and I know that Section 99(8) of the Standing Orders says that I can't start a quarrel, but I clearly represent the best electorate in Tasmania. That brings me to Chapter 2, which is my story. I was born and raised in southern Tasmania in a family of artists. My dad is here today. As a teenager, I was convinced Tasmania was the daggiest place on earth and I couldn't wait to leave. I dreamed of becoming a famous actress. After school I studied stage acting at BAPA, the Ballarat Academy of Performing Arts.

By the time I graduated, however, I realised that acting wasn't my calling, so I headed off to La Trobe University to do a law degree, but after completing 2 university degrees, a sense of adventure had come over me, and I booked a ticket to Africa. For a year I travelled through Africa with an overland expedition company, visiting 26 African countries.

In West Africa, I wandered the souks of Morocco, crossed the Sahara, I visited Timbuktu, I saw the coffin makers in Ghana, I trekked the Dogon trek in Mali, and I saw the voodoo culture in Togo. The next leg of the journey was Cairo to Cape Town, top to bottom down the East Coast. I saw the ancient wonders in Egypt and Sudan. I explored the rocky churches of Lalibela in Ethiopia. I skydived over the Namibian desert, I whitewater rafted down the Zambezi River and I saw remarkable places and unforgettable wildlife.

The warmth of the people of Africa is something you can never forget. Inspired by those experiences, I applied to become a tour leader myself. After obtaining a medium rigid truck licence and completing training in England, including some basic truck mechanics, I spent the next two years leading expeditions through South America. Along with my passengers, we trekked the Andes, explored Patagonia, we partied at Rio Carnival, we kayaked around icebergs, tobogganed down live volcanoes, trekked glaciers, and visited ancient sites.

I experienced countless adventures that challenged and shaped me. I have a few great stories to tell probably another time about surviving countless border crossings with corrupt border officials and one time even finding myself face down in the sand on a beach at night with a gun to my head while the truck was being ransacked. Another time.

It was a pretty adventurous time in my life. Between Europe, Africa and South America, I spent four years travelling, visiting 52 countries in total, navigating unfamiliar places, solving problems on the run, managing groups of people. I was good at that and adapting to whatever circumstances arose. My Spanish was getting pretty good at that time as well. Those experiences taught me resilience. They gave me a broader perspective on the world and opened my eyes to the different ways that other cultures organise themselves and make their decisions.

Eventually, I left my life of adventure and returned home to start a family, only to discover that Tasmania, this little island that I had once been so eager to escape, was in fact an extraordinarily special place. Travelling the world gave me a much deeper appreciation for the beauty of Lutruwita/Tasmania and the strength of its communities. My children, Priya, who's 11 and little Xander, who's now 8, became the focus of the next stage of my life and I made sure that I taught them just how special our island is.

I've built and operated an award-winning eco-tourism business, the Hobart Hideaway Pods, which received 6 different tourism awards, including for sustainability. One of my

proudest achievements was incorporating sustainability and education into the business, including an Aboriginal plant trail in the native gardens, developed with guidance from the wonderful Trish Hodge.

At that point in time, politics was the furthest thing from my mind, and I certainly had no plans to enter public life. But that brings me to the next chapter, which is Chapter 3: Getting Elected.

This chapter begins in 2019 during the federal election. Climate change had become one of the defining issues and I remember feeling deeply concerned when Scott Morrison was returned as Prime Minister who was not much short of a climate change denier.

Around that time, I came across a social media post that would ultimately change the course of my life. Its message was simple, it said: rather than being overwhelmed by the global problems, instead just focus locally on where you can make a difference. Taking that advice to heart, I became involved with the community group Sustainable Living in Kingborough. Together we undertook a range of community initiatives from tree giveaways to hosting film screenings. We won a grant to install a Fogo bin outside a local cafe, where we noticed their efforts to provide compostable coffee cups were ending up in landfill bins, and much, much more.

As I learned more about the environmental impacts of organic waste going to landfill, I successfully petitioned Kingborough Council to introduce the Fogo bins - the green waste bins with the green lids. To see that petition debated, I attended my very first council meeting and I was fascinated. Before long, I was attending council meetings regularly and in 2021 I was elected to Kingborough Council through a by-election. Eighteen months later, I was elected Deputy Mayor.

In 2024, I unsuccessfully put myself forward at a state election. It was an invaluable experience, but it felt a little bit like a dress rehearsal. I returned to my role as Deputy Mayor, committed to serving my community at the local level.

Then, towards the end of 2025, which wasn't so long ago actually, the community group Voices of Franklin approached me about standing for the Legislative Council seat of Huon. My initial response was an emphatic no. However, they persisted and ultimately convinced me that I had something worthwhile to offer.

At this point in time, I will give a shout-out to the Voices of Franklin Group, Luca's behind me, who are dedicated to grassroots community consultation and the processes set out by the community independence movement right across Australia as spearheaded by Cathy McGowan in Victoria which was then followed by the Teals.

Once selected as their community-endorsed candidate, a remarkable group of volunteers came together to build the campaign. Some of them are here today, but lots of them are actually watching online. Michael Digby, Luca, Lara Wynn, Kathy, Ant, just to name a few. They're a whole army of volunteers, including my two children, but everyone knows who they are and I remain profoundly grateful for their support. Luca, I acknowledge your tremendous effort and support. You're such a powerhouse and I am forever grateful.

I'm also grateful for the support from Climate 200. With the shared values of integrity in politics, gender equality and climate action, their endorsement was another proud achievement of my campaign.

But what struck me most about the campaign was that it was never really about me. Even though I have a university degree in stage acting, I still get a little bit nervous public speaking and being in the spotlight. So instead, we made sure that the campaign's modus operandi was about elevating the community's voices and ensuring that they were being heard.

That brings me to the next two chapters of my story, because the two things that I heard loud and clear from the community was the desire for healthy waterways and tiny homes. I'd like to speak to both of these things now as I promised that if elected, I would champion these two things for my community, and I want to set the tone for my advocacy moving forward.

Chapter 4: healthy waterways. For many in my electorate, the health of the Huon Estuary and the D'Entrecasteaux Channel is a defining issue, hosting 85 per cent of Tasmania's aquaculture. These beautiful waterways, with their striking views and quiet serenity are part of what draws people to live there. There are hundreds of kilometres of coastlines, bays, beaches and coves where families fish from jetties, children learn to swim and paddle, and people boat, walk, dive, kayak and gather with friends.

The Huon also has a strong community of cold-water swimmers. They know the waters intimately and they speak to me about the importance of the waterways for their mental health and social connection. Their close observation is a form of citizen science which I value. Many of these people express concerns about what they are observing, with seagrass beds disappearing and shellfish becoming less prevalent. I heard, too, of the noise and light disturbances that anyone living near an aquaculture facility experiences on a daily or nightly basis.

One of the things that I learned over time is that public debates around environmental issues can often become highly polarised. On one side, there can be a tendency towards alarmism. On the other side, there can be a tendency for dismissal. Neither of those approaches are particularly useful.

I've spent a considerable amount of time speaking with various scientists to try and understand what's actually going on. What was explained to me is far more nuanced than what is often being presented. The evidence certainly does not support the idea that the Huon waterways are some kind of ecological wasteland. There are many indicators that continue to show resilience within the system but equally, however, the science does not support the view that there is nothing to worry about. Many scientists are concerned about the risk of a sudden ecosystem collapse. The concern is that there are multiple pressures that are acting simultaneously on an ecosystem that is already facing the additional challenge of a rapidly changing climate, resulting in the frequency and severity of marine heatwaves. On top of that, there's agricultural land run-off, an ageing septic system and ageing wastewater infrastructure and aquaculture, all of which contribute nutrient load into the marine environment.

A healthy system can absorb stress. A resilient system can adapt to change but as the pressures accumulate, there is a growing risk that the ecosystem can approach a tipping point beyond which recovery becomes increasingly difficult.

I like to think about it like a little fish tank, when you get a little fishy and it's swimming around in the fish tank and it's all clean and nice and everything's fine, and then suddenly it's green. That is the sign of an ecosystem collapse, and that is what is at risk in the waters of my electorate.

I aspire to the concept of doughnut economics developed by an economist, Kate Raworth. I find it compelling because it asks us to rethink the way we define success. Too often when discussing industries and environmental management, we reduce the conversation to economic output. We ask: How many jobs is it creating? How much revenue is it generating? We ask what contribution it makes to exports or gross state product. These are important questions, but they're not the only questions. Doughnut economics proposes that the purpose of an economy is not just endless growth.

The idea is simple. Imagine a doughnut. The hole in the middle represents where people are missing out on the basics they need for a good life: health, housing, work, things like that. The outside edge of the doughnut is the limit of what the natural world can cope with before the environment starts to decline. Between those two boundaries, within the doughnut shape, lies what Raworth describes as a safe and just operating space for humanity. When viewed through that lens, I believe there is a strong argument that the future of aquaculture in Tasmania should move further out to sea and into deeper waters. The community just want their beaches back.

This view is reinforced by the upper House inquiry into finfish farming which recommended removing aquaculture from shallow waters.

I want to be absolutely clear: this is not an argument against aquaculture. Aquaculture provides employment and economic benefits to many regional communities. I recognise that and I respect that. Rather, it is an argument about location and long-term sustainability.

If we can find ways for aquaculture to continue prospering in deeper, more exposed offshore environments, it would restore amenity, reduce the conflict, allow greater public enjoyment of beaches, and coastal environments, and, most importantly, it would reduce the risk of ecosystem collapse. Surely that represents a positive outcome. That would be consistent with the principles of doughnut economics, rather than simply focusing on the lowest possible cost of production.

Regardless of one's views about aquaculture, I believe there is one thing on which we should all be able to agree. We need a far better understanding of those cumulative pressures that I mentioned before. At present, there is significant monitoring occurring, but much of that work remains fragmented.

For nearly three decades, the award-winning Derwent Estuary Program has brought government councils, scientist, industry and community together to understand and improve the Derwent's health. Through public reporting, trend-tracking, and evidence-based decision-making, it has built trust and transparency. A similar program in the waterways of my electorate, could help us move beyond arguments about individual sources of impact, and instead focus on the health of the system as a whole. It could provide the independent, transparent, and accessible information, that communities have repeatedly told me that they want. In fact, during my campaign I launched a petition calling on the government to implement a Healthy Waterways Program, and it was signed by the Weedy Seadragons, and the

D'Entrecasteaux Dippers who swim in the channel, the Channel Aquaholics from Woodbridge, the Cunningham Cormorants, and the Cunningham Cephalopods from Cunningham - these are all cold-water swimming groups, by the way, I didn't say that - the Dunking Southern Rites from Dennes Point, the Cygnet Sea Urchins from Randalls Bay, and the Franklin Frosties from Franklin. Along with over 500 individual signatures. There's an appetite, definitely, for a healthy waterways program.

The challenge before us is not choosing between the environment and the economy. The challenge is ensuring that both can thrive together, and that is the test that matters, and that is why I believe a doughnut economics approach, combined with the Derwent Estuary-styled program, and moving aquaculture further out to sea, offers the most constructive path forward for my community, and for the waterways.

Our job in this place is to keep ideas alive, and available, until the politically impossible, becomes the politically inevitable, and that is what I intend to do. That brings me to my next chapter, which is about tiny houses. Again, applying the doughnut economics model, whereby we must not overshoot the Earth's resources, we too should not leave vulnerable people behind.

Chapter 5. Tiny Houses. What is a tiny house? A tiny house is a movable dwelling on wheels. Unlike caravans, a tiny house is built for long-term living with greater storage, comfort and amenity. They are generally heavier and more house-like than a caravan, which is designed just for travel, but they offer a pathway to homeownership when owning land is out of reach. A professionally built tiny house on wheels can cost as little as \$90,000. While even a really high-spec fancy one can be built for under \$200,000.

Again, I'll reiterate: the defining element of a tiny house is the ability to own your own home without needing to own land. A tiny house-owner will find a land host, and they can lease a small parcel of land which gives the ability to move somewhere else when required. Therefore, tiny houses really are only suitable to rural areas, which is mostly my electorate in which there are lots of rural areas. While I was out campaigning, I had the pleasure of meeting the tiny house community. There are many, many people, living in tiny houses, but unfortunately most are opting to fly under council's radar because there is no easy way to get approval as it stands. Because tiny houses are a relatively new typology, they don't fit neatly into existing legislative frameworks. If a tiny house is road registrable, it's usually treated as a caravan and doesn't require building or planning approval. But as soon as you live in it permanently, or you connect to services, or you add a little deck, anything like that, it must be assessed as a dwelling. Permanent dwellings in Tasmania must comply with the National Construction Code, and most tiny houses on wheels struggle to meet this code because they're built as a lightweight structure rather than a fixed standalone house. Which means that tiny house-owners go around in circles in the compliance journey and often never come out with a legal solution.

The question before us is whether Tasmania should create a sensible regulatory pathway that allows this form of housing to be used safely, legally and appropriately. Tiny houses on wheels certainly aren't for everyone. I mean, really, you can't fit a family of six in a tiny house. They're more for singles or a couple. But what they do have the potential for is to form a part of a solution which would free up other housing stock for those people who do want a standalone house. Once I started talking about tiny homes in the community, I was overwhelmed with people reaching out. Many builders called me telling me that they could

churn tiny houses out very quickly, and there was just an unbelievable amount of people got in touch saying that they wanted to live in them.

So why has this issue resonated so strongly? This won't be lost on anybody here, but Tasmania is in the grip of the housing affordability crisis. Homeowners are under immense financial pressure, also known as mortgage stress, while renters are facing some of the highest rental rates in the country.

The scale of the problem is reflected in the social housing wait list. As of January, more than 5300 applications were waiting for social housing, including more than 4100 people who were homeless or living in temporary accommodation. The wait list is not simply a measure of housing need, it is evidence that we do not have enough homes to house people who want them. Beyond those official figures are many more Tasmanians sleeping in cars, couch surfing or doing whatever they can to keep a roof over their head.

Housing is a human right. We need a human rights act in this state, but that's a topic for another day. If that came to this place, I would support that, but for right now, the scale of the crisis demands practical, creative and innovative solutions to housing supply.

One of the strongest arguments for tiny home reform is the range of people who could benefit. For older Tasmanians, a tiny house on wheels could support intergenerational care with an ability to live close to family. They could also offer older women, which is one of the fastest growing groups experiencing housing insecurity, a more achievable housing option. For younger Tasmanians, down the other end of the spectrum, a tiny house could provide an affordable path to independence while they save a deposit for a house. A tiny house could also help the people in the middle, also known as the 'missing middle', people who do not quite qualify for social housing but cannot afford conventional homeownership.

There are many facing financial hardship after a relationship breakdown or fleeing domestic violence, or later in life when securing a long-term mortgage becomes much harder. Did you know that once you're in your fifties you can't get a standard 30-year loan? When speaking with the tiny house community, Sally told me that after returning to Tasmania, and despite having a sizeable deposit, she could not secure a standard 30-year mortgage due to being in her early fifties. This effectively locked her out of the traditional housing market, but a tiny home gave her an affordable place to call home.

Cherie, a mother who spent much of her life renting, told me that a tiny home was her pathway to housing security after her children had grown up. Tony and Deb shared how retrenchment, ill-health and the prospect of carrying a mortgage into their seventies led them to embrace tiny living so they could retire with dignity and lower living costs. While Sabrina and her husband, unable to afford local land, built a modest \$90,000 home on wheels and now live happily on a retired woman's property, providing companionship, security and practical help to their landlady while freeing up a conventional rental home for someone else.

These stories show how a well-regulated framework for tiny houses on wheels could create housing opportunities across every stage of adult life. Reform would also benefit rural landowners by earning modest supplementary income and making productive use of underutilised land. Tiny houses have a smaller environmental footprint than a conventional home and they're effortless to heat and cool, making them great for the environment too, and they present economic opportunities for builders. Importantly, councils are not resisting this

conversation. I haven't spoken to other councils, but along with both Kingborough and Huon Valley Councils, I'm sure there are other councils who are supportive or actively advocating for reforms that would provide a compliance pathway.

We know that people from every stage of life want to live in them; we know that builders want to build them; we know that land hosts want to host them; we know that councils want to approve them. They're good for business, they're good for the environment, and we're in a housing crisis: seems like a no-brainer to me. Other jurisdictions around Australia have already begun the task of establishing approval pathways. In Western Australia, the Shire of Capel approved a tiny home community by treating the proposal as a 'use not listed' within its planning framework, allowing the local authority to assess the merits of the development: very creative.

In New South Wales, Shell Harbour City Council has adopted a two-year tiny homes pilot program. The proposal allows one registered tiny house on wheels per residential lot, so you've got no issue with slums, just one little tiny house on each rural property, subject to conditions relating to servicing, setbacks, bush fire protection, flood risks and safety requirements. These examples demonstrate that governments and councils across Australia are finding ways to adapt existing frameworks to accommodate new housing models. The housing crisis requires us to think differently and consider new and emerging forms of housing that can safely, affordably and sustainably meet people's needs. Tiny houses on wheels will not solve the housing crisis on their own; however, they could provide older Tasmanians with security, young people with independence, families with flexibility, land owners and builders with opportunities, and communities with additional housing supply. The challenge before us is not whether we can regulate them; the challenge is whether we have the courage and imagination to do so. Political will is all it will take.

I think I better wrap up now, because I've laid down the two things that I want to champion on behalf of my electorate. I'm looking forward to working constructively with you all in this House, and I would like to finish by giving some thanks. Firstly, I would like to thank Michael Roberts, who has been my mentor for the last six years. Michael, thank you for your guidance and for your wisdom and sharing this journey with me.

I would like to acknowledge my predecessor, Dean Harriss, and thank him for his service to the people of the Huon. I'm well aware of how fond the members of this council are of Mr Harriss. I acknowledge the hard work of all the candidates who contested the Huon election. Electors were lucky for choice, I thought. The campaign was conducted respectfully with debate focused on ideas rather than personalities. I hope that standard continues in future elections, especially in the upcoming local government elections.

A shout out to my friend, Lara, whose support during the first eight weeks of my election was invaluable, as I found myself jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire; and thank you to my family - my dear dad is here - for all of your support, and to all of the volunteers and electors who got behind me. I really see my role as being the vehicle for the voices of my community; and lastly, I thank the members of this Council and the parliamentary staff for the warm welcome that everybody has extended to me. I've never felt like I've had a silly question, and that, in my opinion, is a credit to this institution. Thank you.

Finally, I want to briefly address the motion before the house on speaking time limits. I support the motion moved by the member for Launceston, and I do so because I believe it

speaks to the way this Chamber can best use its time. This motion is not about gagging debate, nor is it about discouraging members from making a full contribution. It's about recognising that the time of this House is valuable and that our work is best served when contributions are clear, focused and effective. When there is a substantial legislative workload before us, overly lengthy speeches can prevent us from completing the work Tasmanians expect of us, especially given that we only have 28 days of the year to debate government business: we can actually debate government business for less than 8 per cent of the year.

In the Australian Senate, a senator may speak for a maximum of 20 minutes in any general debate, with an additional 10-minute extension. Is our work very different from theirs? The skill of parliamentary debate is not measured by how long we can hold the floor, but how clearly we can make our case and respond to the matter before us and, where possible, persuade our colleagues. If the central points of an argument cannot be made within an hour, then perhaps the task before us is to sharpen the argument itself. We've all heard speeches where the strongest point is made early and then returned to again and again. Repetition does not necessarily strengthen an argument; often, it simply makes it harder for the audience to remain engaged. Time limits can encourage all of us to prepare a little bit more carefully, choose our words deliberately, and make our contributions in a way that respects both the Chamber and the public that we serve. For those reasons, I commend the motion to the House.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

**Ms O'Connor** - We can't clap for you, Clare, but we would if we could.

**Mr PRESIDENT** - We can 'hear hear'. I do congratulate the honourable member for Huon for a very informative, entertaining and thought-provoking contribution, and I know all the members in this Chamber look very forward to your next contribution. Of course, it may be time limited. Welcome, and we do look forward to your future contributions in this Chamber.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

### MOTION

#### Time Limits Sessional Order

[3.42 p.m.]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) - Thank you, Mr President. I'd first like to start by commending the member for Huon for her inaugural speech. It's always a bit of a nervous time to get up there and think, what do I actually say and what really matters; I think you represented your electorate well and I'm sure they'll continue to look forward to your contributions and standing up for them, as we all like to do. I will dispute the fact about the best part of the electorate: I've got a far bigger and better electorate than you. Anyway, that's what we all do in here.

To focus on the motion that the member for Launceston has brought to us, the writer, [inaudible TBC 3:43:14] has observed that what a society needs is not a forum where settled opinions do battle and victory is the only aim, but places that train people in a genuine habit of

exchanging ideas: 'the forge and working-house of thought' itself. That is what a House of review is meant to be, and I fear this motion puts that at risk.

I thank the member for Launceston for bringing this motion forward to us, and I want to seriously engage with what's actually before us, because this is a different proposition to the ones I've responded to in this place before, including motions regarding speaking times in 2014 and 2023. Members may or may not be aware that the Standing Orders Committee is currently looking at a review of the Standing Orders as a whole, because the standing Orders themselves have not had a comprehensive review for many, many years. The last time this was done was before I was elected, so that is a very long time and it's a matter that has been a bit of a frustration for me.

This matter of speaking times, as well as a range of other matters related to our Standing Orders, are before the Standing Orders Committee right now. For members who may not appreciate what that means, the process is there would be work done by the committee. A paper or a suggested change to the Standing Orders - which one assumes there will be, because there are a lot of things that need addressing in that - will be put to all members for comment and then we can make an agreed decision about the way forward. That's in train; that's happening now. We should absolutely ensure our Standing Orders are contemporary and any such review and indeed any change of this kind should respond to the question: what is it we're trying to achieve and what is the problem we're trying to solve? Any decision must be based on the importance of our role in this place and not on matters that may frustrate us or irritate us at any point in time. Our Standing Orders must be robust and effective to support the role of this House as a house of review.

The House that undertakes thorough and critical scrutiny and passage of the state budget and also ensures that the last check and balance of the decisions of this government or other members are robust and fully understood through critical analysis. That the laws are free from error or unintended consequences as much as possible and are accurate, proportionate and appropriate sometimes takes time and arbitrary time limits are not a thing that should be, in my view, considered in a house of review where there is no stated problem that needs addressing or an imperative to fix it.

This motion before us is not a motion asking whether the principle of time limit should be considered or asking the question be referred to the Standing Orders Committee. I know the member for Launceston has done that in the past, and I will come to that. A referral to the Standing Orders Committee would provide for an evidence-based examination as previous motions on this subject have done before.

Rather this is a proposed sessional order with specific time allocations for second reading, speeches, committee stage contributions, amendments, third readings and a bespoke extension mechanism proposed to apply for the duration of this session of Parliament. Yes, it is a limited session. It's three years, that's quite a time, and I do go to the question of how we measure success.

If we don't have a problem we need to fix in that when the Standing Orders Committee looked at this question some years ago - I was on the Standing Orders Committee then - we did ask the Parliamentary Research Service to actually undertake some reviews of the length of speeches and that have been made. Other than one outlier speech, no one had spoken or there was hardly a speech at or beyond an hour. So what is the problem we're trying to address here?

The decision of the Standing House Committee at that time it was not actually a problem here to fix and so, no further change was made at that time.

The power of speech in this place must be protected and yes, you should be able to make your point and seek to inform the debate within an hour. Almost every member does, all the time. Do we actually have a problem here? As I've said, what are the consequences of limiting, debating this Chamber, a house of review whose very role is different to the Lower House that does have speaking limits for different reasons. I know the member for Hobart's been in both and we will see what she has to think.

Procedure and proper process are critical to the operations of Parliament and yes, our Standing Orders do indeed need review. As I said, that's on foot, but substantive change should be done through a consultation and through a full understanding of why we do not have time limits, as well as why we might introduce them. We also would need to understand by the introduction of speaking limits what might be lost by imposing the time limits.

Even just for this session when the government is not at the current moment, I think most of us would agree except perhaps for the government members here, that the government is not the epitome of transparency, openness and credibility. I made these points deliberately and urge members to consider the consequences. Once a power is taken away or diminished, it's very hard to get it back. It is critically important, this power that we have, and we need to be really careful with that.

Who's to say that someone think, well, hardly anyone speaks for an hour, an hour's too long. Maybe make it 45 minutes, Maybe make it 30? You know what I mean? An arbitrary time limit that's been set arbitrarily with no basis for the time. With no problem we're trying to fix it I can see, what has been demonstrated is not something we should be doing lightly.

I did find some of the comments in the media release put out by the member for Launceston quite insulting, not only to this House, but to me as an individual and to other members of this Chamber. To describe the work of this committee, and I know it's been reported in the media as well, and they make their own comments about this, but to be stated as a 'publicly funded talkfest' does a disservice to every member who has done the research, engaged with constituents and stakeholders, and put in the hours of genuine scrutiny this House is known for. That is why I'm deeply concerned about the implications on this motion. It does a disservice also to the taxpayers of Tasmania who are, in fact, well served by that scrutiny.

One of the challenges we face in this House is that we're often seen by the government, and by some other parties who may disagree with the positions this House reaches collectively, as an impediment to progress. But we are the last check and balance. There are others who laude our achievements as being that last check and balance, thank God for the upper House. It depends where you sit. These others do see see this role of scrutiny and unlimited scrutiny to the point that all matters have been thoroughly canvassed, as one of the most important parts of our parliamentary role precisely because we undertake that thorough, rigorous scrutiny and ensure, as best as we can, that things are accurate, correct, or not fundamentally flawed, and that if they are, that they do not pass this House. And haven't we seen some of that come through this House over the years? Things that need to be fixed. The clerks working their guts out, trying to fix problems that have come up from the other place. Without it, that scrutiny and that attention to detail, this House supported by our clerks, could have let errors and inaccuracies

and actual real legal problems proceed. That is hardly in the best interest of the people of Tasmania.

That is where the work happens: in the Chamber, in this Parliament. Yes, you gather information outside the Parliament, you prepare your argument, you engage with your stakeholders and your community, but it is the strength of the debate, the visual part of the debate, that is critical and should not be given up on. I know that member for Launceston said that not many people watched the feed; I will tell you, there's a lot of people who do watch the feed. I'm staggered when I go to public function stuff: 'Oh yeah, I was watching Parliament the other day,' I think, 'you're one of those individuals, are you, that spend time watching Parliament.' You know, it's amazing, the number of people who do. I am genuinely surprised they actually do, particularly when they're interested in the topic that's up for debate. Once you give up a power that this House has, it's deeply concerning to me. It is a power we have for a reason; we haven't established the reason no longer exists. It is the power of persuasion in the power of debate. To limit it arbitrarily, as this motion proposes, it's a power that's very hard to get back. Despite the arguments that it's only a trial. How do you measure success when it may not actually be tested?

Now let's think about that critical power, the power of persuasion, the power of the argument, the power of the debate, and let us think very carefully about what we might be seeking to give up here. More than 2000 years ago, the Greeks worked out something about this that we would do well to remember: The philosopher Socrates never wrote a book. He never lectured from a podium. He walked through the agora, the marketplace, into the courts and the gathering places of Athens, drawing citizens in with conversation, what the Greeks called *dialogous*, an exchange of ideas through two people speaking. He held that none of us carries more than a fragment of the truth and it is only through open, sustained exchange that we test our opinions, catch our own errors and come closer to what is actually true. That's not a bad description of what we do in this Chamber, actually, and what the chamber exists to do? That's Socrates. Aristotle, his intellectual heir, took the the study of persuasion further in his book *Rhetoric*, he set out how genuine persuasion is actually built on the credibility of the speaker, the soundness of the argument, and an honest appeal to the judgment of the audience, and that formula still underlies almost every effective speech and debate given since, including in this Chamber.

Aristotle also distinguished deliberative oratory and speech of an assembly weighing a decision still to be made from the oratory of the courts, which looks backwards to establish guilt or innocence, from the oratory of ceremony, which only praises or blames. Ours is deliberative speech; its purpose is to help us weigh what is expedient and what is harmful, so the better course can be chosen, and that takes exactly as long as it takes.

Neither of these two philosophers treated brevity as a virtue in itself, or the clock as an aid to better judgement. What they understood is that good judgement is earned through the sometimes slow, sometimes difficult work of dialogue and persuasion. Opinions tested, arguments properly built, minds genuinely engaged with one another. That is what a House of Review is for and is also what this motion risks constraining.

This is a matter that requires proper scrutiny and proper consideration, and that role belongs to the Standing Orders Committee, who will consult with the whole membership. As I said, it's with the Standing Orders Committee now.

We need to remember that our primary function is to legislate, and setting arbitrary time-limits, even with the power to extend, is a very blunt instrument. We undertake a critical role in this place. We need to remember that parliament is supreme, and we are a House of Review with a role to scrutinise everything that this government, or any government, brings forward. A change of this kind requires an open mind, a proper look at the evidence, and a full understanding the problem we are seeking to address.

I acknowledge this motion asks us to adopt a change directly as a sessional order, which means it can be trialled, and then reconsidered at the next session of parliament, or when the standing orders themselves are changed. That's true. But how are we going to measure success with the standing orders can be looking at it right now and hoping to get that work done in a timely manner. I'm looking at members who perhaps need to get on and do some work in that committee, and then why not test it through that? Because standing orders can be changed, if there really is a problem. What harm could be done by going through this approach?

Even so, it is a substantive change to a procedure and process that is important in undertaking our role as a House of Review. Yes, we'll debate it. We'll have differing points of views expressed here during the afternoon, and that's important and that's good. But I'm deeply concerned about implementing an arbitrary time-limit without a problem being identified, without a genuine need to do so, when an active process is in place, that should be considering this through taking evidence and understanding the potential implications.

While I was preparing for this debate, I did go back to my previous comments on similar motions regarding time-limits for contributions in this House, including what I said in 2014, and again in 2023. I just want to reiterate just some of those points, because they remain entirely relevant.

The numbers proposed in this motion seem reasonable in my view, and I'm not suggesting for a minute they might be unreasonable, and the vast majority of speeches - it's demonstrated by the fact that the vast majority of speeches and contributions made, since I've been here, would not be impacted by the proposed change. Therefore, do we actually have a problem that this motion seeks to address?

As I noted in 2023, the proposed timelines are not 10-minute limits, and I previously pointed out that at the time, and I haven't been back to check, one jurisdiction had a 10-minute time limit, which I believe is unworkable.

At that time, when I was looking at this, I understood that Queensland, only one House, Legislative Assembly, for example, had a 10-minute limit for a second reading speech on a private member's bill. I always thought that disrespectful to the nature of many issues that come before us as private members bills, and that is one reason we should not compare this House to others. We run our own business here, and we have done that for two centuries, without limiting our power of full review and speech.

Consider, for example, the member for Mersey who brought in the voluntary assisted dying bill.

**Sitting suspended from 4 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.**

**MOTION**

**Time Limits Sessional Order**

**Resumed from above.**

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) - Mr President, before the break, I was talking about why it's important not to compare ourselves to other jurisdictions. We do our own thing in this place, and we do it well, and comparing with others and saying whether we're the same or different from them is a bit of a moot point. But I also was talking about the private members' bills and how sometimes those are the ones that bring up some of the more controversial, challenging and complex matters.

I was just about to speak about the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill the Member for Mersey brought in. I reflect on if there had been time limits imposed on that, acknowledging that there's a mechanism to extend it, but I don't think people's trains of thought should be interrupted when they're trying to deal with what is pretty challenging information and detail in that sort of debate.

If we were trying to reflect the views of our community and the broader ethical, moral, medical and personal issues involved, you certainly couldn't do it justice in 10 minutes, which is what the Queensland parliament seemed to think was okay. It would, in my view, be even difficult in an hour in some circumstances, depending on the amount of personal and other experience you had in a particular topic.

I'm not suggesting that this motion calls for, nor indeed what the Standing Orders Committee might recommend, is such a rigorous, tight timeframe but making the point the short limit is disrespectful to the nature of some private members' legislation. An hour limit is just an arbitrary time limit, just as a 10-minute limit is notionally an arbitrary time limit.

I've observed it's often the private members' bills that bring forward some of these more contentious issues because governments of whatever colour find them a bit too hot to handle. It's easier if you can take it away from the government, they can focus on things that are perhaps a bit more straightforward and easier to get through the parliament and facilitate access to Parliamentary Council for other members.

We saw with the with the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill, we're seeing it now with the conversion and banning of conversion therapy bill in that other place that is out for consultation at the moment. To think debate on such a bill, such as the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill, could be limited even to an hour I find extraordinary on such matters. Even an hour may limit a person with many aspects to present lived experience, professional, personal, legal, technical or et cetera, should be given time to be expressed in reviewing of critical, often contentious legislation.

In those matters, there are always two sides to a debate and the people you're representing need to appreciate whichever side you fall on, whether it's the side they support or the side they don't, that you've had the opportunity to clearly articulate how you've considered their viewpoint. That maybe the predominant viewpoint in your electorate that is not the decision you land on. I have had to do that more than once.

This motion is far from what I consider and highly and highly inappropriate 10-minute limit as I've referred to. However, 60 minutes for a second reading speech or for a motion, 15 minutes for the committee stage, 10 minutes on an amendment. These are considerably more generous allocations, obviously, and I want to state that because the proposal doesn't present unreasonable time limits in my view, and it does have limited avenues for longer speaking times. It's the principle of the matter here and the fact that whether there is actually a problem that needs to be fixed; but generosity of allocation does not resolve that question. Whenever this subject arises, I keep coming back to: what is the problem we're actually trying to fix? Critically, why would we impose arbitrary time limits in the House of review where scrutiny is critical? No two bills are the same. They are all serious and they all warrant debate proportionate to their complexity and their consequences. Sometimes I find it a bit disappointing when bills go through this place with very limited and, occasionally, no debate at all. I think we've probably failed in our duty when that happens as a collective. I've been in the House when that's occurred and I've not risen to my feet.

There is a real risk that arbitrary limits constrain debate, particularly when the matter is complex or a bill or motion contains multiple issues bundled together. We do see that in some of the bills, like the Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill, which can contain the tiniest bit in the last part of the bill that could have the most impact on people in our community, and the last thing you want to do is see that overlooked or not have the time to properly explore it. Mr President, you yourself as a presiding officer have a role and a power to call members to order if they're acting outside of our Standing Orders, including if they're being repetitive or irrelevant.

Last time we debated this matter, I referred to the Legal Profession Amendment Bill. The Leader would have been in the House at the time: it was enough to stop three doors. The integrity bill, a complex and important piece of legislation at the time, took the time it needed and it was quite a long time. A 60-minute limit might sit comfortably and cover most contributions most of the time, and I accept that, but most of the time is precisely the point. We're not here to legislate on average cases. We're here to make sure the House of review can properly and fully examine every bill that comes before it, including the reasonably rare one that genuinely needs more time.

That is not merely a hypothetical concern. When the Standing Orders Committee considered this matter in 2024, as I mentioned at the beginning, and I just want to restate it now, it asked the Parliamentary Research Service to undertake a review of speech length, and that review found that very rarely speeches were actually excessive in length, and most were not even close to treading the limits this motion proposes. It is not a common matter at all, or problem, if you see it as a problem; I do know there are exceptions to those, but they are outliers rather than the norm. Some may then say, well, this motion will have no discernible impact. That may well be true, but true for the majority of matters we debate. Why would we limit ourselves if that's already the situation that occurs?

For those where it does matter, the option should be, in my mind, the norm. We do not try and limit or restrict artificially or arbitrarily. The member for Launceston mentioned this in her contribution: we do have an untested mechanism in our current Standing Orders that can be tested if debate becomes repetitive and irrelevant. Following that, it's up to the House if the member is permitted to continue, and the member for Launceston said, you know, who wants to use it? Well, no-one probably wants to use it, but it's a power that's there, and if we really felt that that this was being an egregious use of parliamentary time, it's there. It's never been

used in my time here. It might have been before I was here, I don't know, but it's certainly there. Whether it stays there in that current form when the Standing Orders Committee reviews all of these matters, maybe that will change, but that's open for debate and further consideration too.

The other challenge I had: I was genuinely struggling to understand how some of this would work in practice, and I say that as someone trying to give the mechanism a fair hearing rather than dismiss it, because it may well pass this House. Part 8(a)(ii) to the motion allows the time limits to be extended by leave or by a motion moved without notice and determined without debate, which is similar to the member no longer be heard motion. The motion has to specify the member to whom it applies, the additional time proposed, and the reason for the extension. That's all reasonable. I do believe there's possibly an error in the wording of the motion in 8(b). I think it should read, 'a motion under 8(a)(ii)', not 5(a)(ii), because 5(a)(ii) is not relevant, it's not even there. So, that would need correcting, but it doesn't change the point that I'm trying to make here.

That aside, it's unclear how leave of the Council will be granted unless some form of motion is put, or does the member just keep going until they're pulled up by the section 8(a)(ii) motion? Or is it the job of the presiding officer to pull them up? It's a little bit unclear. These matters can be worked out, but I'm just saying if you're going to bring in something without going through a consultative process and look at how the mechanism that actually would apply, these things need to be thought through.

Of course, much of this, possibly, in practice will rely on the presiding officer, and the need for consistency of approach will be critical to maintain the respect and trust of all members. That's challenging when you have different chairs in the Chair; the president may be replaced by myself as a deputy president, or, sorry, an acting president. To have consistency in approach could be challenging. I see a situation in the middle of a live debate, on a contentious bill, that has the potential to create a procedural detour that disrupts a critical point being made by the speaker. Yes, if you know you've only got an hour, then you'll try and make all your key points up front perhaps, but sometimes interjections fit there, and other matters that were raised by other members that you might not have contemplated when you prepared what you wanted to say.

So, suddenly you're making a really critical point, and someone moves that your time's up or whatever, or you can be no longer heard, and it can be quite disruptive. I don't think it's necessary. I don't think we need it. It's unclear from the motion who actually moves such a motion and at what point, and what happens if the leave is refused, and the motion is voted down? I assume the person has to sit down and shut up, and that's the end of it. If you wanted to be really vitriolic, you got sick of someone in particular, you could do that; but that's the personal thing. It's not an appropriate approach to take. Everyone has a right to be here, and to represent their electorate, to make the contribution they believe best represents Tasmania and their electorate.

Does that become in effect the way this motion would effectively operate, a vote to silence a member partway through their conversation without the debate on that question, because there is no debate on it, as I read it, the same as if the member no longer be heard? I note that the Standing Order that the member no longer be heard currently has no debate on that question if it is put, so it's similar to that. We don't want to use that; why would we want to use this? I do not say that to be alarmist, but as a genuine question as to how the mechanism sits alongside the existing safeguard we already have for genuine filibustering: a Standing

Order allowing a motion that a member be no longer heard, which has actually never been tested, and itself is somewhat of a blunt instrument, and yes, we should discuss that at the Standing Orders Committee. Or is there a better mechanism, is there different way? That's something that should be discussed.

The Chair's discretion under part 8(c), whether it's the President or in the chair of committee stage, raises a similar question. It says a member may be allowed to conclude their remarks when near the expiry of their time, 'consistent with orderly conduct of business', but near is not defined and 'may allow' is discretionary and not a right. I do not doubt the good faith of whoever occupies the chair, it may be me at times; but a rule that depends this heavily on a case-by-case judgment call being applied consistently across every Chair is not obviously simple or fairer than the flexible approach we operate under now, where a point of order, and a motion that a member no longer be heard, already gives the House the tools to deal with the genuine problems should they arise. It is also open to any member to call a point of order if they feel someone is being repetitive, has gone completely off topic, and the presiding officer has not picked it up, because it is the presiding officer's job to try to keep them on track within the Standing Orders.

I did also have some concerns about the 10-minute third reading limitation. Now, the third reading debate is not something that we often engage in, but it is there for when circumstances change, or new information comes to light, and that's when you can speak on the third reading; not just because you want to have a third crack at it. It's because new information comes to light. You might want to use the opportunity to say that although, for example, in the second reading you suggested your support or opposition to the bill, but then, on the way out of the Committee stage and into the third reading, you have changed your position. You might wish to explain to your community and other Tasmanians why you changed your mind. Ten minutes is a pretty arbitrary time limit there, too, because you're talking about new information, not rehashing the debate of the past. I am genuinely concerned about that point.

Another thing I believe is relevant here is that the debate on motions of bills are not the same as a public presentation. I would also hope that members do keep an open mind when coming into the Chamber for debate, knowing that the research and work done will inform their position. But I do believe you all need to be open to other points of view expressed in the Chamber, as I talked about our Greek philosophers, and should have the courage and conviction to change their position where evidence dictates that it should. That's what good leadership is about. I have seen the power of debate change people's minds. In fact, I'm sure it changed the member of Mersey's mind once when I spoke many years ago. He probably can't remember it, he's so traumatised by it.

**Mr Gaffney** - I was probably scared.

**Ms FORREST** - But it can. This is the thing: if you've got an open mind going into a debate - you might have come with the position, but sometimes the evidence that's presented during the debate is persuasive. I return to the point that no-one holds all the knowledge or all the information; a good leader is willing to admit that, 'Okay, I've had my mind changed.' We and we need to be able to do that, and we need the public to allow us to do it, which is a separate matter.

There is little point of debate if you come in with a fixed, immovable position. If you come in with a really fixed view, you're never going to change your mind. You sort of wonder what's the point of debate at all? We may as well have no debate. We might just come in here and vote.

When I prepare for a public presentation, I'm far more conscious of the need to keep my comments succinct, on point and relevant to the setting. Is it at the end of the day? Is it just before lunch? Are you stopping the people getting to lunch or to drinks? Who's the audience? Have they had a really heavy session before? All those things. In that kind of setting, it is much about more about a case of standing up, make your key points, speak briefly to each, clarify your main message you want the audience to take home and finish. Potentially leaving them wanting more, or at least knowing what your key message was. They're not voting. You're not trying to encourage them to form a particular opinion. It's a very different framework. There's plenty of readily available material in the neuropsychology field on the ability to listen, concentrate and retain the spoken word. I absolutely agree that if you just ramble on with out trying to keep others engaged, you risk losing people's attention and perhaps their support. I may have lost some of you already.

But debate in this place is not a public presentation. It is a genuinely important process of scrutinising matters that come before our House. Sometimes what I and other members put on the record in a second reading speech or in a committee on a difficult amendment reflects the views gathered from constituents that need to be heard in full, including views that run contrary to where I or any one of you are ultimately heading.

As I said previously, on particularly controversial debates, it's important that a variety of voices are heard, because where there are controversial issues there will be disparate and differing views. It is important that those who hold their views to have the opportunity to have their voices heard in a tangible way and to see their views reflected in this parliament. If I reiterated only three or four views from people who happen to support the position I was taking and ignored all those views to the contrary, I am doing them a great disservice. I always try not to do that. I know not everyone prefers that approach, but to me it's important that for people I represent know that I've heard them, particularly when I disagree with them.

I have made longer contributions on particularly controversial issues in my own electorate for exactly that reason, so that if anyone later challenges me on whether I properly considered an issue, the *Hansard* record shows that I did in detail, not just in a tacit summary approach. If it's not written down, it's not on *Hansard*, someone can say, 'Show me the evidence that you have considered what I put to you'.

Sometimes, on genuinely controversial matters, we need the opportunity to ensure everything brought to the debate is properly recorded, while still being conscious of the risk of putting people to sleep. Some of us take a little while to learn that balance. I know I certainly did, and I'm very happy to admit it. But we are the last stop here. We are the House of review, the last port of call before legislation becomes law. We must ensure things are properly and fully examined and prosecuted.

We are not a large parliament, and I do not believe the imposition of time-limits on this important role sits comfortably within a strong democracy, openness, transparency and the full assessment of any particular issue.

In some other much larger parliaments, if every member could speak for an unlimited time, you can imagine it would be difficult to see the progress of legislation. But we're not in that position.

In any event, I would say comparing ourselves to other parliaments, as I said, is irrelevant. Every jurisdiction has its own history, its own size and its own reasons for organising its business the way it does.

The fact that structured speaking times are a standard practice elsewhere, including in the other place here, does not of itself tell us anything about whether they are right for this Chamber or about the problem we're trying to solve here. What matters is the role we have here in this Chamber, and that role is an important one that we should all take seriously, regardless of how other places choose to run theirs.

We're also not local government. It's a very different role, and yes there are time-limits there, but we are not local government. So, again, it's not comparing like with like at all.

I did refer to the member for Launceston's media statement earlier today where she said:

Effective review is measured by the quality of scrutiny, not simply the quantity of words.

I do agree with that in part but what I do not accept is that those two are in tension or mutually exclusive, or that limiting the quantity somehow improves the quality.

The quality of scrutiny in this place comes precisely from members having the time to properly test an issue, whether it takes 10 minutes or an hour, without a clock deciding in advance how much time anyone bill deserves.

In a House of Review, it is critical we are not constrained by arbitrarily imposed time-limits where there is very little evidence the process has been misused.

It is for members to consider if they are personally misusing the process. It is more a question of whether we're respecting the time other members have to sit and listen. I am conscious of that. If colleagues aren't engaged and listening, you are not in a position to persuade others. If a member goes on and on, they'll lose their audience and they risk losing their very point and the argument they set out to make. Self-correcting pressure already exists, so I go back to the question, what is the problem we're trying to fix? I do not believe there's a demonstrated one.

Yes, I absolutely agree. Occasionally, a particular member's contribution has gone on for a long time, including my own - more so in the past - but that is their right and no one has sought to use the Standing Order that's available if other members are unhappy with that. That option has always been available to members.

If anyone wishes to exercise it, it's up to the person in the chair to progress the standing order and put the question to a vote without debate. That is how it is dealt with, and it becomes a matter for all members to decide whether they have heard enough from that person or not. They may well have.

Of particular concern is that this matter, along with the full review of the Standing Orders Committee is already undergoing comprehensive review that will also enable the input and consultation with all members. I believe that is the right process and we should continue to proceed along those lines.

If people are concerned about knowing what time of day we will finish, and I do absolutely recognise the importance of family-friendly hours and not sitting until 'stupid-o'clock', like we do, because that's a workplace health and safety matter in many respects, and they are genuinely important. But this motion is not the way to address that. Not at all. Family-friendly hours and/or having some more clear guidance about when we might finish is about considering set finishing times, additional sitting days. I note the member for Huon's comment about the small number of days we sit. That's set by the government, not by us. The government set the sitting schedule, so extra sitting days could be added and are possibly warranted, so we're not sitting here til 'stupid-o'clock'. And additional sitting weeks.

I think back to the petroleum non-emergency bill we had. That was until 'stupid-o'clock' with a piece of paper that wasn't even a second print of a bill rammed through with no evidence of an actual emergency. Oh, hello, we still haven't had that emergency. It was just appalling. If they really wanted to they could have briefed us that night - yes, it was late - and then come back with fresh heads in the morning and debate it in the morning. The government have the power to do that.

Our primary responsibility in this place is to scrutinise legislation and to ensure that everything that passes this House has been subject to robust, vigorous and thorough debate. And we're talking about family-friendly hours and decent length of time working in a day. We also need to remember that the clerks in this workplace work far longer than we do after we finish a sitting day.

They have all manner of things to finish off, making sure amendments passed during the day are correctly recorded in the bills, recording the votes and proceedings and a whole range of other administrative tasks that most of us don't even see or are hardly aware of. They're also there with a distinct role to advise and assist members, and, if you've got matters coming up tomorrow, we've sat late, you've got a matter you really need to talk to the clerk to get some advice on before things kick off the next day, they could be there giving advice to a number of members that evening as well.

So, let's think about, if that's the problem here, let's look at what the solution is. This will not create a solution, because, if 14 members stand up to speak for a 59 minutes on every bill, we'll never get home. And parliamentary day doesn't finish until you rise. If we kept going till, you know, 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, that would still be today.

I think that is a really important and serious consideration and we should look at that, but not by imposing time limits but by looking at the bigger problem. They also have the work of interacting with committees which is time-consuming, and they also have the really important role of governance, financial management and all the other areas we rarely see.

If family-friendly hours are genuinely the goal, the answer lies in looking at our finishing times and the amount of weeks we sit, not limiting the length of speeches. Altering or limiting the length of speeches does not guarantee an earlier finishing time. As I said, if you all went to

speaking, we'd be here for a very long time. I also raised the question earlier that, if we set this arbitrary limit of one hour, what if we decide, well, that's too long? What next?

We also know that every bill takes as long as it takes to debate. Some bills are short, some are substantial, and that difference should be reflected in how long we take on each not fixed in advance by a clock. So, to pull this all together and wrap up, I'm nearly finished with what I want to say. This motion has not identified a problem that actually exists in this Chamber. When we've gone looking for evidence, as the Standing Order Committee did in 2014, it did not support the case for time limits.

What this motion does is a permanent arbitrary - or potentially permanent because it's hard to get rid of once it's in - arbitrary constraint, but it is permanent for the life of this parliament, which could be three years. Once surrendered, that power will be very hard to reclaim, the power of persuasion, the power of full and proper debate that sits at the heart of what makes this house a house of review. We already have the tools we need to deal with a genuine problem should one arise.

The presiding officer can call a member to order for being irrelevant and repetitive, and any member can raise a point of order. A member who goes on for too long loses their audience. I'm running the risk of that right now. That pressure is real and self-correcting. None of those tools have been used in terms of the member no longer being heard, but this motion doesn't fix that problem. It's trying to fix a problem that doesn't exist or there's no evidence exists.

And, if family-friendly hours are genuinely the concern, the answer lies in our finishing times and our sitting patterns, not in cutting short scrutiny Tasmanians rely on us to provide. And it's not in adding unseen workload to the already heavy workload carried by our clerks and our staff. And, if the concern is about falling in line with other parliaments, I say again our task is not to mirror the other places but to do our job properly, fully, where a bill genuinely demands it and often much more briefly when it does not.

This is, above all, a matter for the Standing Orders Committee, which has already undertaken a broader view that this motion pre-empts. That is where the evidence should be tested, where every member can be properly consulted and where a considered, lasting outcome, rather than a hastily adopted session order, can be reached.

I would prefer to await the deliberations of the Standing Orders Committee on its broader review of the Standing Orders, and I'll approach that matter, as I always do, with an open mind, seeking the input of all members and on evidence we can gain on these particular matters, as well as others, before we move any suggested or proposed changes. So, on that basis, I'm unable to support the motion.

[5.00 p.m.]

**Mr GAFFNEY** (Mersey) - I rise today to speak to the proposed time limit session order introduced by the member for Launceston. However, I do congratulate the member for Huon for your speech and I thought it was really good. So, congratulations. I also thank the member for Murchison for her experienced contribution, echoing quite a bit of what I'm going to present now, but I'll return. I like to think about what is the problem or issue that we're trying to fix with this.

The arguments for and against speaking times are well known, and I acknowledge the honourable member for bringing her motion to this place. However, I do not believe the Legislative Council as a house of review, or the Tasmanian public, will gain any benefit from yet more restrictive regulation. I believe this proposal will directly inhibit the work of this place and further erode public trust in political processes. Supporters may argue that speaking limits might increase our efficiency, would reduce unnecessary delay and encourage targeted debate. These are not problems or issues that I've observed in the Tasmanian Legislative Council. As a house of review, fulsome and informed debate must be encouraged and given the time it needs to produce well-considered discourse. Time barriers in this place are neither necessary nor, I believe, appropriate.

I recognise there's a great deal of important and significant business to deal with in this parliament, and some of which may well be highly controversial. Members will progress the work with sound proposals, clear communication, genuine engagement and hard graft from those bringing forward legislation and other motions. Imposing speaking limits has the risk of preventing the members of this House from doing their jobs properly. The best way to improve efficiency is through sound parliamentary process and good government practice, and not relying on another logjam of legislation the government seeks to force through at the end of the calendar year. With that in place, this House, and the legislation it examines, will be better for it.

There are several clear reasons why speaking limits are not appropriate in our Legislative Council. The independent character of this place allows the rigorous debate expected of an open parliamentary system. We have nothing to hide. The public has nothing to fear from our fierce independence. Limiting that debate would inevitably weaken the thorough democratic scrutiny this Council is here to provide. Nor does this House abuse the privilege of speaking. Members do not filibuster or speak simply to waste time. In speaking as an independent, like many of my fellow members, we are largely beyond the constraints of the party political process. We use that privilege to express our thoughts and concerns and represent the views of our constituents and properly debate the matters before us.

We ask questions of the government and suggest improvements and propose amendments to legislation. Of course, several recent legislative proposals have prompted lengthy speeches, and rightly so. Members on all sides have generally agreed that those proposals were significant and deserved careful examination through proper parliamentary process. Sometimes, though, thorough scrutiny takes time, and we should not place an arbitrary limit on it as if we were billing by the minute. We are not lawyers, we are legislators. For instance, during the debate on the Macquarie Point stadium proposal late last year, the Premier himself said that scrutiny improves proposals and that the primary role of the upper house is to provide that scrutiny. He spoke positively about the Legislative Council's role and process and acknowledged that the marathon session had thoroughly tested the stadium proposal and would lead to a better result. Similar comments have been made by the members of the opposition as well as independent and Green members in this House and the other place.

Another important point is that legislation is not being put to a hostile upper house. Despite some criticism directed at this Council, we work constructively, challenging the government where appropriate, and with other members who bring forward legislation, motions, and speeches. We recognise priorities, we encourage positive communication and do what we can to meet reasonable timelines. The government is not battling an uncooperative

upper House; quite the opposite in fact, as they receive legitimate, respectful, and constructive feedback with the opportunity to respond.

Earlier this year we worked with the government to ensure that the Local Government Amendment (Targeted Reform) Bill 2026 was passed within its requested time frame. If members wanted to obstruct parliamentary business by the misuse of speaking time, they would not be working with the other honourable members to expedite priority legislation, and if a member did deliberately choose to misuse unrestricted time limits to thwart open debate, the Legislative Council, as we've heard, already has ways to hold them to account. However, that has not been necessary because this House does not, in my opinion, have that problem, and probably never will.

Having seen a government, unfortunately, in recent times that is hell-bent on forcing enabling legislation for poorly-considered ideas through the Tasmanian parliament, I believe that is inappropriate to constrain the ability of our House of review to debate them. Open speaking times allow debate in a way that can tease out potential problems and pitfalls before potentially faulty legislation makes its way onto the statute book. Complex proposals, proposals with far-reaching consequences and proposals that have been poorly developed or explained must not be rushed through debate without being properly considered.

They need more than a quick once-over and an all good here; they need careful, rigorous review, without an automatic limit on the time available. Indeed, sometimes there seems to be, or appears to be, a feeling that members in the other place let the legislation pass down there and expect complex but appropriate amendments by members in the upper House. Even legislation that may have been developed with the best of intentions can lead to unintended consequences. The diversity of backgrounds and knowledge in this place does lead to members playing a greater role at times than other members.

Mr President, we must only look back at what was the highly controversial *Workplaces (Protection from Protesters) Act 2014*, and its provisions that were struck down by the High Court due to its unconstitutional failings. The government's response in the Police Offences Amendment (Workplace Protection) Bill 2022 came to us in this place, where following expansive debate and contributions from all sides, suitable amendments were made to protect those protesting workplace rights, and removing proposed increases to penalties for street obstruction that were originally sought by the government.

I'm not sure an equitable conclusion could have been reached on that bill with restricted time limits. More recently, we've seen the government's Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 stall, its proposed legislation that has attracted a great deal of public and political attention, progress on which has been curtailed by the government as it probably foreshadowed its potential failure. A few honourable members have already made expansive contributions, and no doubt there are more speeches to come that may breach the time limits proposed in this motion. The Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition will continue its expanded work plan, and the government is still to respond to questions put by those few members that have already spoken.

The greyhound bill is just another example of poorly-developed and poorly-communicated proposals, which also consume time that could be spent quickly dealing with straightforward and worthwhile measures. Members in this place should not wish to shorten or curtail Legislative Council debates, and imposing speaking limits is not the right

answer. The answer is for leaders to act in good faith, consult openly with the Tasmanian community before bringing controversial legislation; engage seriously with members' concerns here and in the other place; communicate early; engage respectfully with stakeholders; use established regulatory and advisory channels to inform legislation; and not to impose time constraints for proper debate.

I've called these the easy arguments because our political rebuttals are convenient to make, but they are also factually correct. The Legislative Council, as it currently operates, serves our political system and representative democracy very well. There is no need for this change, and imposing time restrictions would, I believe, weaken the effective system already in place; the case against speaking limits is not only about political convenience or responding to current circumstances. As members of parliament, we must also protect the integrity of the legislative process and preserve this Council's role as a calm and considered House of review. We are not merely a political institution; we're also custodians of sound democratic process and defenders of public trust. This is not merely an idealistic, aspirational assertion, but it may often seem so in today's age of politics; our upper House is one which sits in one of the most fair and properly democratic settings in recent history. It is our role as legislators to champion our democracy, especially in the House constitutionally entrusted as the House of review. These considerations of institutional integrity and acting as the bastion of proper process negate the need for imposed time limits in the Legislative Council.

To put it plainly: implementing strict time limits on every matter without regard to complexity would set the Legislative Council on a dangerous course. Legislative matters are not a one size fits all, but that reverses the onus. Instead of trusting members to use their time responsibly, it requires them to justify speaking beyond an accepted limit. Once a default limit is established, it will carry into the next parliament and those that follow. It will be seen as indulgent to exceed prescribed limits and may well be weaponised by opponents. Over time members will inevitably conform and the quality of their contributions will suffer.

If we look to other jurisdictions in their upper houses where they have them, they all come with a veritable smorgasbord of standing orders seeking to regulate members' contributions. These are all upper houses with significantly more members than us in this place. In larger houses with more members, I can understand that there may be some sense of how time limits, where they exist, may have come about. In reference to this point, I will consider it in terms of potential limits on second reading contributions, traditionally where the more expansive speeches are made.

If we look to the largest upper houses, two of which are New South Wales, with 42 members, and Victoria with 40 members, they both have complex, structured speaking limits based on the order of speaking, by whom, the hierarchy, and on the character of the bill, with speaking limits that can range in minutes from 60, 45, 40, 20, 15, 10 or down to just five for the lowest-order speakers. I imagine the clerks in those places must be very familiar with their various stopwatches. Next, we have Western Australia with 37 members and a simple 45-minute limit. Lastly, we have South Australia with 22 members and our own Tasmanian Legislative Council with 15, both of which have unlimited speaking and second-reading speaking times.

What is the problem, as we've heard from the Member for Murchison? We are the smallest House by far when compared to other states. Even South Australia, with half as many again, has no need for time limits. It's only the bigger mainland states that have them to expedite

the larger cohorts of speakers that may want to contribute. It stands to reason that with only 15 members in this place dealing with the same legislation as the lower House with 35 members, that time restrictions would lead to an unacceptable time bias between the Chambers. It is true many speeches and debates do not need lengthy individual contributions; however, that does not mean that the default position of the Legislative Council should be to restrict its members from giving a full examination of a bill in the second reading speech.

Legislation proposals and motions can be complex and demanding. The most difficult matters are also becoming more complex than their predecessors. A report that once ran for 10 pages may now run to 100. A planning proposal that once affected a single council area, such as the recent Stony Rise development in Devonport, or just one of the regulatory systems, may now need to be considered in the context of the whole state and an expanding regulatory environment. Debate on complex matters of that kind should not be limited by default simply for us to be like the largest mainland states. Rigorous and comprehensive debate on complex matters and matters of serious public importance is a fundamental part of our political system.

Beyond the need to properly consider complex matters, speaking limits also threaten parliamentary representations. Members will know that I often include word for word the concerns and views Tasmanians have shared with me about the matters before us. Many other members do the same. I do not always agree with every view that I place on the record, nor do I need to endorse a constituent's concern to raise it. This goes back to the member for Murchison's point: our role is to ensure that those concerns are properly heard and recorded in *Hansard* for the future and to be tested by other honourable members through debate.

Indeed, a time constraint or limitation of speech length may well mean that members would need to focus on a preferred position or option, rather than fully exploring the issue on behalf of their constituents. There are few public records that can preserve community concerns for the future without being altered by those who come later. Parliamentary debate and the *Hansard* provide one such record. If speaking limits are imposed on the Tasmanian Legislative Council, the record will be diminished and our open democracy will be blighted.

In closing, I ask members to preserve the discretion this Council has traditionally given us as members in the use of debate time. Where there is no abuse of process, and there is none in this place, that discretion supports democratic procedure, proper representation and the integrity of this institution. A prescribed speaking limit would change what is expected of both current and future members, and it would change this House for the worse. The idiom 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' or 'don't mess with a good thing.' We would move from a system that fosters and encourages debate to one that limits it by its intent. And for what? This House does not routinely sit through unnecessarily lengthy debates, and its members do not abuse the process, damage parliamentary outcomes or frustrate the intentions of lawmakers. In fact, members do the opposite. They work together to prioritise business and use the Council's time in the most effective way possible.

In the 17 years I have been in this place, I probably have had two or three, maybe four, speeches that have gone over the 60 minutes. I could be wrong there, but the stadium, the same-sex marriage and obviously the end-of-life choice *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021*. For that one, I'll elaborate a little bit. I think we had between 10 and 16 hours of briefings for that bill. If I was limited to one hour to be able to present that bill at the beginning and the end, it would be nonsense. It would not have occurred. The same-sex-marriage debate was huge in this place,

and I was shocked that I actually went over the hour. I did 100 minutes on that and I didn't think that was possible, but that was such an important issue. The stadium: we went for a long time, and as the Premier has said that debate strengthened the outcome, not that it was the outcome I would have preferred, but it strengthened the outcome and strengthened and added to the debate.

There are times where my opinion will change regarding the bill or amendment because of the feedback and the debate in this place, and that's how it should be. Sometimes when I come into this place, I'm sitting on the fence, I'm not quite certain and the debate in this place is taken up by those people who are passionate about that cause, and that's really important. We must be able to change our mind on the evidence that's presented. Most of my speeches are under 20 minutes. You know, I'm not that good on my feet here, and so I limit the time that I do speak. But when I want to speak for an hour, or an hour-and-a-half, I don't want to have somebody sitting at the desk there going 'ding' 'Time's up, 30 seconds to go'. I then don't want to have to have a debate about whether I should be able to continue in the flow of my speech. That's nonsense.

**Ms Webb** - You won't even get a chance to debate it.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Exactly. We will not save time by constraining debate. The real obstacle to parliamentary efficiency is not members speaking their minds, it is poor government practice. Strong, well-considered and well-drafted proposals generally pass through parliament with little delay. Proposals that are questionable, complex or far-reaching naturally warrant closer examination.

I respectfully ask newer members to perhaps listen to the experienced voices in this place who have been here for a number of years. I would encourage newer members or parliament who may be sitting on the fence on this notice of motion not to abandon a highly regarded review process which benefits Tasmania and is integral to an important legislative process. That is our role. That is how we restore and maintain public trust in the political process. We are making laws; we're not sitting at a council table making agenda items. We are making laws in this place.

Representations by elected members of the House of review should not be constrained by an arbitrary timeframe. If we are constrained by what we want to do when we're putting laws into our books, into the *Hansard*, we are not doing the right thing by the people of Tasmania. Ours is a House of review, and I do not accept, and hopefully we will not have a time restraint in this place, because it will not serve the people of Tasmania, and it will not make for better legislation. In fact, it will make for weaker legislation.

[5.20 p.m.]

**Mr HISCUTT** (Montgomery) - Firstly, may I also commend the member for Huon for her contribution. There are many stories that I hope to hear over the next five or six years around the Chamber of her travels on other parts of this planet and I'm looking forward to hearing those.

I would like to thank the honourable member for Launceston for raising this notice of motion. I think it is sensible to debate and challenge our sessional and Standing Orders on occasion. This challenge ensures that they are robust, modern, and fit-for-purpose.

I've never been a believer that the answer to the question of 'why do we do that' should be 'because that is the way it's always been done'. However, we are standing in a building that is built on the principles of, 'That is how it's always been done'.

I'm not sure how many times I've heard the word 'intitled' outside of this Chamber compared to the number of times I've heard your good self mention it here, Mr President. I'm sure it would be very minimal, and I'm sure that wording is that way because it's the way it's always been done. We come to a counterpoint of views: the way it has always been done and the ability to question that viewpoint.

Time limits apply in the other place, and they're making laws as well, and as far as a quick Google search goes, they apply in every other jurisdiction in Australia, I think, apart from South Australia's upper House, so why should we be unique in this matter, and why are we having this debate in the first place?

I'm fairly certain that the application of this sessional order will not affect me. I'm not overly verbose, my lexicon is not so sophisticated, my vocabulary less quintessentially abstract. I joke to people that at least my English be goodlier than yours.

I believe that I can make salient points and achieve the two objectives that our speeches are given within the time limits. I also feel, on the odd occasion where I can't, a particular subject that's important to my region or that I'm passionate about, I feel confident that I can convince the Chamber that it is worth listening to more of what I have to say.

I believe our speeches are given in this Chamber for two reasons. Firstly, to convince those around the Chamber to come to a conclusion, to sway opinions and to convince those around us that our views are worth considering; to bring fact and reason to life through words; to create a frame of reference that another member may never have considered. Our objective here is to represent our people and make decisions in the best interests of Tasmania. People's views on that will be different and so we must use reason and debate to encourage others to see things through our lens.

The second reason that we speak in this Chamber is to ensure that the public know our viewpoint. It is important to be able to point to the debate when people ask why you voted one way or another and say: 'Look here, here are the reasons they are on the public record. You may agree or otherwise, but you can see how I work to a conclusion.' This is an important role and that is why our debate is public, not behind closed doors. So the question now remains, how much time do you need to achieve these two goals?

If you cannot do the first, convincing me and other members to change our minds in the first 30 to 40 minutes, then I don't think a further three or four hours of debate is going to make a difference. There comes a point when the presenter has either taken too long to explain each of their points or spent too much time trying to delve into the details of each point. They quite often lead to the opposite outcome. A point that could have been made in five minutes and packed a punch being delivered over the course of an hour becomes mundane and lacks coherence. The other side of the coin becomes: How much time does one need to be able to justify their decisions to their constituents? Once again the above points apply.

Some scholar in 200 years' time may get excited about the views of a certain politician at a point in time and their reasons. I'm sure future historians will be thankful, but the people

who watch parliament or subsequently read *Hansard* would number in the thousands, I admit, but not huge portions of our population.

Perhaps our parliamentary time could be better spent on the decisions instead of unnecessary debate - and note that I use the word 'unnecessary'. This does not mean that robust and sometimes combative debate should not be continued. It should just not be allowed to continue without point.

Perhaps there are opportunities outside of the Chamber to ensure that our constituents know the way you have voted a certain way, or you are always welcome to table papers. Perhaps the extended speech could be tabled while the substantive speech could be spoken.

As some in this Chamber may well decry, it's okay, there is a mechanism for when someone talks too long. I believe it's Standing Order 102 that says a Motion without Notice may be made that any member who is speaking:

Be not further heard.

The problem with that is that we're all so polite. Although I'm thinking it, I don't want to be the person who stands up and tells a member to essentially 'shut up'.

The proposed solution would at least make that question neutral. Of course, a member has the option to ask for an extension, but they will be aware that they may not be granted it, and they would need to have ensured that their substantive position was placed. It also is considerably more polite to be asked to move the debate on as a collective rather than an individual essentially asking the Chamber that a member has said too much.

The other matter raised in all this is fairness. I would like to think that we all respect each other in this House. I know that I've only been here a year, but even I on quite a few occasions have cut my contributions short or not made it at all due to the fact that it would make the day longer and often the night go on for so much longer.

It has come to a point in the night - often after other speakers have had significant proportions of their time on their feet - I have a question that may be relevant, and I would have asked it, but I don't because I know it would keep everyone here that a little bit extra. Maybe I should be more selfish and just take that time that I'm entitled to. I don't feel that that is appropriate.

I think that those who made our standing orders without a time limit probably thought that members would be concise and respectful and there would be an expectation that all would get a fair go. It sometimes doesn't feel like that in this Chamber and, as I've said previously, maybe I should become a bit more pigheaded about it, but I don't like the direction that heads towards. We should not be engaging in a race to the bottom.

More accurate timelines would also allow for better planning. At least there would be some semblance of expectation for when the debate on a bill would end. There would be a maximum at least, or, if we call for an adjournment after the next speaker, at least we could rough into the schedule when that would be. This would help with the health and safety aspect of the job for members and staff, though I acknowledge the points made by other members that it also doesn't completely solve that issue.

I don't particularly like supporting this bill, and I'm still not sure that I will, and I'll listen to the continued debate closely. The member for Murchison certainly had a lot of interesting points that I hadn't considered, but the tradition of time limits comes with responsibility.

I know I've only been here a short time, but, from my experience talking with previous members and having family who's been in this Chamber for 30 of the past 40 years or so, of whom I've had many conversations with, I believe that I'm qualified to state that the tradition was that speeches were concise and reasonable. One does not go without the other.

Once again, I thank the honourable member for Launceston for the way that she's gone about this bill. I think that by introducing this as a sessional order has given me some comfort to the point that I can consider supporting this bill. Think of it as a try before you buy. Hopefully, by the time the next session of parliament goes by, we can let this drop and not need it anymore.

However, if the lessons are not learnt, then we may need to consider this as a standing order. It is a pity that it has come to this. Tradition has been broken and, so, now this tradition may need to break. I look forward to the other contributions and, though I have indicated my likely support, I'll reserve my final decision for the end of the debate, which I hope is not too long.

[5.28 p.m.]

**Ms WEBB** (Nelson) - I rise to speak to this motion No.13 on our notice paper and before I begin I would first like, though, to extend my congratulations to the member for Huon on the occasion of her inaugural speech today. Well done, and we look forward to your full participation in this place henceforth. Now to the motion, and I thank other members who have already made contributions and appreciate the things that they have raised as part of those contributions.

Some of them will be aligned with some matters that I speak to in mine, and I probably have a couple of extra matters to speak to as well and, of course, this is not the first time this Chamber has had brought before it the matter of time limits on debates, as we have already discussed. And I acknowledge the member for Launceston's ongoing tenacity on the matter. The two previous debates of 2014 and 2023 are instructive and I believe remain pertinent to the current debate today.

And, at the outset, I will state I held reservations regarding the need for imposing time limits on contributions made by members of this Chamber during the previous debate that I was here for on the matter and I continue to hold those reservations, largely because the arguments raised during those previous debates of 2014 and 2023, which failed to sway the Chamber at those times, I do not consider to be any more convincing now.

Many of those points have been presented already by some others here today. However, I'll touch on a few which I consider to be especially relevant to today's debate, and I think the first place to start is by assessing the motion before us against the role and functions of this Chamber within its broader Westminster parliamentary principles and context. It was approximately six weeks ago that we were all celebrating the bicentenary of the first formal sitting of the Legislative Council held on the 21 June 1826 at Nipaluna/Hobart on the unceded

lands of the Muwina people. The parliament's celebratory materials of this anniversary produced for the occasion states this:

Over two centuries, the Legislative Council has played a vital role in shaping Tasmania's democracy. This bicentenary offers an opportunity to reflect on the Council's rich and complex history and the generations of Tasmanians who have contributed to its work, while also looking to the future, recognising the Council's purpose in representing Tasmania's diverse communities, rigorously reviewing and scrutinising legislation, and upholding accountability and oversight, guided by enduring principles of integrity and independence in service to the people.

To reiterate, as a Westminster house of review, this Chamber's fundamental role and responsibilities are rigorously reviewing and scrutinising legislation and upholding accountability and oversight, guided by enduring principles of integrity and independence in the service of Tasmania's diverse communities.

I'm loath to be taking unilateral action to reduce and limit the democratic rights and tools currently available to members who are elected on behalf of their communities to undertake those fundamental roles and responsibilities. Further, I think it's interesting to note the annotated standing orders of the NSW Legislative Council, which, when considering any amendment of those standing orders for that house of review, states the following:

Any such revisions should, and will, be assessed against the fundamental principles of parliamentary law, practice and procedure, which include that public business be conducted in a decent and orderly manner; that the rights of the minority are protected; and that every member is able to fully and freely express their opinion; that full opportunity is provided for the consideration of every measure; that heedless and impulsive legislative action is prevented; and that the executive government is able to be held to account.

I think that summary crystallises many of the key democratic roles both within and without a house of review, which must be taken into consideration whenever we're considering revising our operational rules. It's incumbent upon us that any revision of our standing and sessional rules for this place furthers and upholds these fundamental democratic and bicameral Westminster principles. An essential component of that consideration isn't just how those rules may benefit the government of the day pursuing its legislative agenda, or our work hours undertaken in this place, but of equal importance is how well those operational rules deliver for those we represent and the broader Tasmanian community.

Specifically, I emphasise the particular point made by the NSW Legislative Council standing orders document, that the rights of the minority are protected, along with the Tasmanian Parliament's description of this Chamber's obligations towards Tasmania's diverse communities. These statements make the significant point that deliberative space needs to be provided for those voices, perspectives, and points of view which are at risk of not being heard or of not being heard as strongly, clearly or loudly as others during particular debates.

Others have already emphasised the specific house-of-review responsibilities this Chamber has, which is markedly distinct to the other place. Yes, both chambers are charged

with presenting, analysing and debating legislation and other parliamentary measures dealing with current public policy. However, as has been noted by others, the house of review, this place, is relied upon by the community and stakeholders as providing a second opinion, safeguard if you will. People expect us to be both thorough, exhaustive, as well as ensuring bills are examined from the perspectives of as many potentially affected by it as possible.

As the former member for Hobart Mr Rob Valentine is cited as saying in an Australian Parliamentary Review article by the Tasmanian associate professor Kate Crowley:

Valentine observed that the Council is not there to be a rubber stamp. It is there to examine and to pull apart line-by-line the government's legislation and to make sure that there aren't any unintended consequences, that there is consistency.

Further, as being pointed out, the other place does have time limits imposed on the debates in that chamber, and I have lost count of how many times we hear during debate on bills that in that other place comments from both the government and non-government members that, oh well, we won't have time to go into that here now, or to propose that amendment now, instead, the upper house will need to do it, the upper house will need to clean up.

How often have matters been deferred to this place because the other place could not fit that necessary examination and subsequent fixing of identified issues within their time limits there? I know I've had stakeholders comment over my time in this place, and I'm sure other members also would have had similar statements made to them, that they're thankful the upper House operates without such constraint, to ensure their matter of interest can be thoroughly examined in a comprehensive manner, whether they like the eventual outcome or not. That's the principle of ensuring the rights of the minority are protected and that Tasmania's diverse communities are being represented in action, a fundamental principle which I'm sure every member in this place is keenly aware of and strives to deliver; but we must be very clear we do not inadvertently undermine or inhibit our capacity to do so when contemplating changing our operational procedures.

I mentioned earlier that we need to ensure the Chamber's procedures protect external as well as internal democratic involvement and rights, and by that I mean: a key threshold test is whether our procedures walk the democratic and inclusion talk for both members within the Chamber as well as for our respective electorates, and ultimately the broader Tasmanian community. When it comes to ensuring internal democratic equity, I think it's worth revisiting the 2014 contribution of the honourable Leonie Hiscutt, the then-member for Montgomery:

Whatever the outcomes of this motion, it should be remembered that this Council is a House of review and should not restrict members with time when they have had to do their own research, become familiar with every aspect of a particular issue. This motion will probably advantage parties. For example, there are two Liberal members here at the moment and only one Labor. That gives us, the Liberals, twice as much time as the member for Derwent. When there were five Labor members, as there have been in the past, if they had time limits of 15 minutes, that would give them 75 minutes. That would give them 75 minutes in an argument they have already agreed upon, and each member could address one aspect of each issue in depth. An independent

would only have 15 minutes to get their argument across and respond to the points of the five. Whatever time limit is set, that is just an example.

While we know not every member speaks on every matter considered in this place, however, I think that a very significant point made by Mrs Hiscutt back in 2014, and which remains relevant to the debate today, particularly for independent members. As we know, there is inevitably a wide range of views on matters within our electorates. On some we won't hear a whisper from the community or our constituents, and then on others everyone appears to have an opinion, and a strongly-held one at that. They then expect to see in here that their elected member has considered that input. As an independent, I can attest to the fact that the responsibility of reflecting such a range of views and input, and discussing how they may or may not have influenced an eventual vote, is something I consider fundamental to how I am accountable to my electorate. Often, and particularly on contentious matters, it is not enough to just state on the public record how we intend to vote, but also to detail what was considered to inform that vote and why, when weighing up a range of inputs, some were more influential or convincing than others.

One last point on inclusion: this is not our Chamber. We are representatives for our respective electorates, communities, stakeholders. The parliament is the people's and this Chamber is part of that. So, we are merely the temporary custodians on behalf of our electorates and also on behalf of future representatives. I do not feel comfortable introducing a structural restriction upon the future member for Nelson, for example, or for any other future member of this Chamber in the tools that they may have available to them in this place upon which to pursue the matters concerning their communities at some point in the future, and with such minimal examination of a change proposed.

As also noted by other members during the previous 2014 and 2023 debates, it can be difficult to undo changes once made. Other members have made this point too, and I'll come back to it. The key lens by which matters which come before us are viewed is generally the question: what is the problem we are seeking to solve here? Has a problem been established? In terms of this motion, I don't believe a problem has been sufficiently identified and demonstrated with evidence. In this context, is the lack of time limits something continuously and broadly raised as a demonstrated problem, or just as a personal irritation? What is the specific problem it presents? What data supports that contention? Other than the member for Launceston, respectfully, I do not tend to hear this being raised as a problem either by the community or others within this place in terms of a demonstrated issue, other than perhaps people's personal aversion to long speeches or disinclination to make them themselves, which is absolutely fine. Are the current arrangements preventing or choking the government's legislative agenda? Again, others may have a different opinion, but I would say absolutely not.

The most recent Legislative Council Annual Report for 2024/25 details the following: 42 bills were agreed to by both Houses; 11 bills were returned to the House of Assembly with amendments from this place; three bills were not agreed to by this place; and 12 bills lapsed at prorogation. I realise other business also occurred which may or may not be covered by that data. I also note the annual report states the Chamber sat an average of five hours 21 minutes for the 44 days it sat that calendar year, with the longest day being nine hours and 46 minutes; which gets me to another recurrent theme raised during the previous as well as this debate, one which I think risks inaccurately conflating efficiency with curtailed debate and scrutiny options.

For example, we've heard that apparently this Chamber needs to truncate its debates and consideration of parliamentary matters due to the limited number of sitting days scheduled in each calendar year. I'm sorry, but I do find that rather spurious and perhaps argued from a place of ignorance or inexperience. The sitting days of this parliament are no more set in stone than our current standing and sessional orders are. This particular argument would hold more weight if we had seen sustained calls from those making it for additional sitting days to be inserted into the calendar, which we haven't.

Further, this House is master of its own destiny, as most of us are well aware. This Council could move and pass our motion to add additional sitting days for this Chamber if it really felt the need, or felt it would deliver a particularly beneficial outcome. However, this option has not been pursued or even, as far as I'm aware, canvassed in a structured way, indicating that the argument for there being few sitting days and any apparent constraint that presents to the capacity to deal with business before the Chamber is not, it would seem, of paramount concern to those asserting it.

Similarly, there may be an argument made for the need to modernise the parliament by shifting to family-friendly hours on sitting days, which, while I agree to be a laudable and necessary consideration, is not prevented by our current approach to debate contributions and their length. Again, if the key problem we are trying to solve is family-friendly sitting hours, I would find that an easier argument to accept if other efforts to establish family-friendly sitting hours had been raised and pursued consistently by those making that argument.

Instead, recent examples which come to mind include last year's debate on the stadium order, during which I did seek leave of this House to adjourn debate until the following day at about half an hour after midnight, due to the lateness of the hour and impact on staff, only for that request to be rejected by this Chamber. Further, I note that recently the draft government business schedule issued by the Leader's office has begun to state unilaterally that this Chamber will sit until 10.00 p.m. each Wednesday night. If there were consultative discussions regarding this, I must have missed them, but again, to make the point, potentially one way of addressing the need for family-friendly hours could be to start with a consultative approach with all Chamber members regarding the adjournment of our sitting days and the number of sitting days we have in a year. That's not a conversation that I have seen anyone instigating in this place.

Instead, where we've landed today is a discussion about limiting the very valuable discretion that members have in this place, but more on that later. I'm comfortable acknowledging there have been occasions on which my contributions on government business items in this place have been lengthy. Those contributions, such as on the government's contentious Gaming Control Amendment (Future Gaming Market) Bill in 2021 and, more recently, the equally-contentious Macquarie Point Stadium order are two examples. In both those instances, I held and continue to hold deep and personal convictions regarding those matters. However, it was not just my concerns or perspectives alone that I was voicing during either of those contributions. Just as many other members in this place seek to do, I was also undertaking my responsibility to raise the range of views and concerns held by members of my electorate, of key stakeholders and subject matter experts.

I regard it as significantly important to voice those concerns and that evidence and that input to ensure that they were placed on the public parliamentary record, particularly on matters that are contentious.

In some instances, we do this on behalf of those who felt their voices have been dismissed or ignored or not heard through the other processes in the development and consideration of a bill.

Just for the record in this place, of those examples I just provided of lengthy contributions that I have made in this place, I believe it would be inappropriate to label either as being a 'publicly funded talk fest', for example. If that's the contention of any member of this place, I would suggest they go read those contributions and see that they were delivered with focus, with clear content, with an evidence base, and absolute clarity throughout.

It's a key function of the House of Review to do this work, and as highlighted by Mrs Hiscutt whom I formally quoted, we cannot predict or underestimate when we will have the responsibility of placing comprehensively the range of community views on the record, or note on the parliamentary record matters of evidence or expert advice, or to hold the line for the community on a matter that they feel overwhelmingly strongly about.

We saw that with the government's previous DAP bill where the community letters and submissions were thought relevant and necessary to be placed on the public record, and many in this place gave lengthy contributions to do so.

A more current example may possibly be the upcoming greyhound racing ban bill to be brought on, or continued with. Some members may be quite comfortable speaking briefly or even not at all, whereas I would be surprised if there were not others who feel it would be their responsibility to place, very clearly and thoroughly, the experiences, concerns, the arguments that they are requested to do on behalf of stakeholders and constituents, and to do in the delivery of their own intentions on that bill.

I may or may not agree with those positions, but I do defend their right to be voiced in their democratic House of Review - this House of Review which is the second opinion, as it were - and for each member to determine what is required to do so faithfully and accountably on behalf of their community in each instance.

It's interesting to hear assertions made in the context of this motion about the purpose of speeches in this place. There seems to be a lot of focus on the fact that speeches in this place are for the purpose of convincing others. I agree that that is one purpose of speeches in this place, but it isn't the sole purpose. A speech in this place isn't delivered merely to try to convince others of your view so that they vote the same way you vote. There are other very important functions of speeches in this place, and they would include being responsible to your community, to be accountable for the position you are taking so that you put on the record in a way that's then publicly accountable to the community what your view is, how you've arrived at it, and a justification for that.

It's also about creating a parliamentary record. Parliamentary records can become very important down the track when things might be contested in the courts, when things might be revisited in other legislation, and legislators at that point in time turn to look at earlier debates in this place and the parliamentary record of it. Placing evidence and matters for consideration on the parliamentary public record is a valid and important function of speeches in this place. Sometimes, on matters of great complexity and depth, that takes a while to do. It's going to be incumbent on any member to use their discretion for how they go about doing that and to what extent.

While the rules suggested in this motion allow for a request to be made to the Chamber for a longer speaking time, I do not regard that as an appropriate safeguard that members will have the opportunity to exercise their discretion to faithfully deliver on what they regard to be their role on behalf of their constituents and community. It's just as likely, potentially, that that request will be denied, and then where will that leave that member? Perhaps, especially, if the request is made by a member who's speaking later in the debate or later in a sitting day on that particular debate, and then seeks for what they believe to be good reason, but cannot express actually, as per the rules of this motion, a good reason to speak for longer.

I believe that's particularly important, and I know the member for Murchison raised a range of questions regarding this in her contribution, and I would absolutely reiterate them, because the same matters and concerns occurred to me regarding this function of seeking extra time. When is that going to need to occur? Is it before you begin business on the bill? Do you have to pre-warn that you have potentially a longer contribution? Is it before you rise to speak, or at the time you rise to speak? Is it, as the member for Mersey I believe said, at the time, you get a ding to say you've run out of time? You know, at what point is this consideration made? As others have mentioned, I believe the member for Murchison mentioned, many times, when we get up to speak, we may have prepared remarks, but we may also have remarks that have occurred to us on listening to others, when we find that there are other points we may want to respond to, or raise, that have been generated in the course of the debate. It's quite likely for many members here, that you may have prepared remarks that you know to be of a certain approximate length of time. We all know how many words we generally speak in a minute, so we can generally know how long our prepared remarks will take, but we don't know what may arise and, in our discretion, we feel need to be dealt with, as part of our remarks during any particular debate.

The other thing that I find quite interesting is to contemplate how on Earth we're going to be measuring success, if this sessional order passes through today, and it's in place for potentially up to three years, through to the next general election that's called. At that time, presumably, when we come to establish the next parliament, post that election, there will have to be consideration of whether to reinstate the sessional order, or whether it potentially becomes a Standing Order, or any of those sorts of options, or whether we step away.

**Ms Forrest** - Hopefully the Standing Order review will be finished by then.

**Ms WEBB** - You never know, member for Murchison, you never know. Certainly, it could be taken responsibility for by that committee, and really locked in, I believe.

But what I was going to say about this is, how will we measure success, or outcomes from this motion, at that time of putting these sessional orders in place? Because, of course, we haven't clearly identified the problem to be solved, or the desired outcomes of this motion. It will be impossible, then, to determine the degree to which we have successfully achieved them or addressed the problem. As it stands, the only way we'll be able to measure the success of this motion will be to survey the members of this place to ask if they have been less annoyed by the infrequent lengthy speeches that they had previously been exposed to. That will be the only actual valid measure we'll have, because we haven't actually specified the problem we're trying to solve here, or the data on which we've demonstrated that problem, or what we expect to be delivered as a result of these sessional orders being in place, in terms of that problem, and the data that's associated with it. That is going to be a problem for us.

The other thing about this motion that I have a few questions about relate to - and again, some others have raised some of these, and so I'll just reiterate that I'm also interested to hear some potential answers on it. How will enforcement occur, who's responsible for it, and how we ensure consistency of that? What new equipment, or impact, will this have on the operations, the physical and practical operations of this Chamber? What examination was made of the full impact of this motion and any unintended consequences of it? Who was consulted on the detail in this motion, it's a very detailed sessional orders change that's being imposed, who was consulted on that? Were the Chamber staff, was the Clerk consulted on this, was the presiding officer consulted? I certainly wasn't, maybe other members were, that I'm not aware of. Did we consult with any experts, with any particular experts in the Tasmanian parliament and its functioning, and this Chamber and its functioning? What consultation occurred, and then what consideration was given to what might have arisen from that consultation, and where can we see that?

The key question, really, and I'm sure we'll come back to this at some stage, is why on Earth are we circumventing a process that is already in train. Apparently, from the Standing Orders Committee, there's already consideration through an appropriate channel being given to this matter, and for some reason we are here today contemplating circumventing that proper process and imposing instead something that, as far as I'm aware, has not been remotely consulted appropriately, developed appropriately, or taken through appropriate channels.

I agree with the honourable member for Launceston that it is indeed a sensible thing to do to periodically review our operational procedures to double check that they're fit for purpose and meeting all requirements and considerations to best serve the role and responsibilities of this place. She must be a very active participant of the Standing Orders Committee. No doubt she's pursuing those things through that committee also. However, I'm not convinced that this motion is the best or appropriate process for undertaking such a health check. I note that the previous motions of 2014 and 2023 were not as specific or granular but, instead, sought to refer the matter for consideration to the Chamber's Standing Orders Committee.

This motion, before us seeks to bypass that step, I recognise it's within the scope of the Chamber to amend our standing orders and rules and session orders just by resolution of this place, such as this motion proposes. However, it is broadly recognised as best practice for any proposed changes and new standing orders to be finalised and implemented following a referral to the parliament's respective standing committee on standing orders or procedures. There is well established precedent across other parliaments, as well as the assembly in this parliament, where those proposed reforms are either introduced for a trial period as sessional orders or immediately as finalised amended standing orders.

I accept the honourable member for Launceston's contention that the motion before us can be perceived as a trial via sessional orders. However, I'm concerned that this motion appears to skip the first procedural step of a referral to our Standing Orders Committee and instead go straight to the implementation within this Chamber's sessional orders for the remaining life of the 52nd parliament, which could be up to a period of three years, as we've said. None of us know what issues, what bills, what other business may come into this place during that time, and what the constraints in this motion will mean to the quality of the work done in this place on behalf of our communities.

I'm also bemused in the light of the fact that, as we have heard today, the Legislative Council Standing Orders Committee is currently in the process of undertaking a review on a range of matters which could include introducing time limits on debates. In that context, this motion does appear to pre-empt the committee's work, which may allow for a more thorough examination of the relevant matters. It would certainly involve consultation with members of this place, which is something that's been skipped here. It may also propose a range of alternative models to inform subsequent Chamber debate on changes to achieve clear ends. I've long argued that decisions we make in this place should be evidence-based. I've heard much opinion and genuine concerns raised as part of the debate today even which are all worthwhile and should be heard. However, those concerns do not provide evidence of an actual or established problem, let alone provide an evidence-based solution. My strong preference is to allow the Standing Orders Committee to undertake and complete its current work, which should then be brought back to this Chamber to inform any further consideration of this matter. That would be the appropriate process.

I think we can all agree that quicker is not necessarily better. If something requires longer examination in the interests of thoroughness and the public interest, then I believe the Tasmanian community would expect that examination to occur without fear, favour or unnecessary constraint. People do not necessarily only want a quick answer, they want the best answer. That is what this constitutional house of review has a proud tradition of providing, or at least seeking on best efforts to provide.

As the member for Murchison mentioned in her contribution, the vast majority of speeches in this place already occur within the time frames outlined in this motion. Let me just pause there. This is, I think, crucial. The vast majority of speeches in this place already occur within the timeframes outlined in this motion - that is not a reason to support this motion. Quite the opposite, in fact. That requires us to ask and consider what this motion will prevent and preclude. Let's be very clear, this motion does not target the vast majority of contributions and business conducted in this place. This motion targets the rare and extraordinary contributions from members. Given it will not touch the vast majority of contributions, the only thing it ensures is that every member of this place will lose their ability to make a rare and extraordinary contribution at least for the next three years and possibly beyond.

That is the outcome of this motion, and that is the outcome that must not be considered lightly. This is about the opportunity for members discharging their duty as they see fit for their electorate and for the state. Because this motion does not affect the vast majority of contributions in this place, its passage will not ensure more businesses conducted in this place. It won't. The passage of this motion will not guard against a lack of focus or lack of cogence in members contributions. We don't police that.

The passage of this motion will affect a tiny fraction of the total overall experience of those community members who may engage with the proceedings of this Chamber. The passage of this motion will not ensure shorter, family-friendly sitting days. It won't. It can't deliver that. Various other mechanisms, many of which we could discuss fruitfully, could deliver family-friendly sitting days. This motion doesn't deliver that.

The member moving this motion suggests this motion provides structure. As you and others in this place are already well aware, we have clear structure in debates in this place and clear mechanisms for appropriately considering changes to those structures. What the passage of this motion would actually do is remove entirely a discretion of each member to undertake

their role as they deem most appropriate and required on matters that will be the rare, the out-of-the-ordinary and that a member considers warrants exceptional attention.

That's what we lose with this motion and substantively it delivers us nothing, and that is why when we get to the end of a period, if it comes to be in place, we will not be able to measure its success because we haven't defined the problem, we haven't provided the evidence for it. we haven't decided how we could possibly measure its success. And what it takes away is not the vast majority of the work and the contribution of this place, it takes away a discretion that I find astonishing to think any member would willingly give up in this place.

It's astonishing to me that any member of this place would accede to the removal of that valuable and hallowed discretion in a rare and extraordinary moment to do the work that they deem required for their community. Because, once you remove such things, it is very rare to regain it. So, on that, I will certainly not be supporting this motion.

[6.03 p.m.]

**Ms LOVELL** (Rumney) - Before I start my contribution on the motion, I, too, want to acknowledge the member for Huon on her beautiful inaugural speech today. It was a really touching insight into what's brought you here and your journey before this and what you hope to achieve and congratulations on getting the opportunity to do that and I look forward to many more contributions from you in the future.

I feel a bit like I've been embodied by the former Member for Rosevears Kerry Finch, which is weird, and, people, stay with me, because some people may remember this, some might not. I could be entirely on my own here, but I've been sitting here listening to this debate and thinking what a privilege it is for the 15 of us to be in this position where we can be having this debate about something that obviously there are strong feelings on either side of this debate. There have been compelling arguments put forward on both sides.

But it just I don't know something - I had a flashback to a late-night debate that we were all having here at one stage years ago and people were getting quite emotional. It had been a long day. It was late at night. Everyone was getting a bit tetchy, and I just remember the former member for Rosevears getting up and saying how fantastic this is, that we get to be having this debate and gave everyone a bit of a pep talk, almost. Anyway, yes, it was a weird moment.

**Ms Forrest** - Well, he straightened his jacket and buttoned it up.

**Ms LOVELL** - Yes, he would have. Yes. I don't even think he had a chance of practising that speech in the mirror, either. I think it was very off the cuff, which was unusual, but it was a good one; but it did strike me, as I've been listening to this debate, that we are in such a position of privilege to be able to be in this place having the debate, and that it is the 15 members of this Chamber that get to make this decision for this Chamber now, and that's why we're debating this sessional order amendment, and I want to thank the member for Launceston for bringing this to the Chamber. I know it's not her first attempt on this, and acknowledge that that is not a decision she made lightly, because it is a matter where people do have strong views on either side. So, it's not a something that has been done on a whim and certainly not without serious consideration. I agree that this is a matter that shouldn't be considered lightly. That point has been made a number of times and I agree with that; but I have confidence that this is not a decision that has been made lightly. I think we've all spent time considering this and thinking about our position on this matter.

So, I'm not going to speak to the points that have been made by others, because I feel like this is an issue where our views have equal weight. We all have an equal opportunity to put our views on the record, and we all have an equal decision to make here. I agree with some of the points that have been made. I disagree with some others. There is no right or wrong here. In my view, this is a decision about the way this parliament chooses to operate. It happens differently in other jurisdictions. Every parliament is different and that's a decision for this parliament to make. I don't think it is a question of what's right or wrong. I think it's a question of what does this Chamber want to happen for the next period of this parliament.

For me personally, I have thought about this and I've thought about matters that have been put on both side, and I've thought about that long before this debate too. I think none of the issues that have been brought forward today have been surprises to anybody. I don't disagree with a lot of what has been said. I absolutely agree that we have a role as a House of review to apply thorough scrutiny to government legislation and other matters that are brought to us by both the government and other members. I don't believe that that will be impeded by this motion. One of the commitments that I've made to myself and to my community, and to the community more broadly, is that I will always look for opportunities to remove obstacles for people who might otherwise consider a career in parliament, and for me, this is one of the matters that I can support, which I believe personally would have removed an obstacle that I faced when I was first elected.

I know this motion on its own won't necessarily shorten our sitting days. I know it won't mean we have family-friendly hours all of a sudden, I'm not naive; but I do know and I can recall when my children were younger many, many times in this place - and there were times in previous parliaments where we did sit very late, more often than we do now, and we have done it fairly often in the last 12 months as well. I want to say on record: I have no issue with sitting late. I never will complain about being here in this place late. I actually quite enjoy some of the late-night debates that we have. I think sometimes that's when we do some of our best work in this place, because it means we're debating something that people are committed to and want to stay and see through, but I do recall many times when my children were younger as a co-parent, somebody who parents my children alone for half of the time and they spend the rest of their time with their father, I was reliant on people caring for my children when I couldn't be there, and it's not always easy and it wasn't always easy for me, and I have amazing support.

I have fantastic parents who live very close to me and are happy to look after my children whenever I need them. They're doing lots of Uber driving for them this week as an example, but they're a little bit older now, they can take care of themselves a little bit more safely at night. They can get themselves their dinner and they can get themselves into bed if necessary, although it's not ideal, but they can; but when they were littler, there were times where I knew we were sitting late and I had no idea when we would finish - no idea at all, and if I had at least been able to say, 'Okay, there's three members left to speak. I know we're going to be done by the next three hours.' That would have helped me manage my responsibilities at home, but -

**Ms Forrest** - That's assuming the government don't drop another piece of legislation in.

**Ms LOVELL** - Well, yes, but again, we're the masters of our own destiny and we can adjourn. This Chamber knows that. We can adjourn when we want to, but if I knew that there was a set number of people left to speak and a set amount of time that was the maximum they

could speak for, that would have been something for me to help plan around. As it was, I had no idea, and there were times when we were here for many, many more hours and that was something that was difficult for me; so, wherever there's an opportunity for me to help remove an obstacle or a potential obstacle for somebody who might want to consider a career in parliament, remembering that that is primarily younger people with younger children and particularly women often, then I will take the opportunity to do that.

I have had conversations with the member for Launceston about this motion prior to the debate, and some of the things that I'd raised with the member have been addressed in this motion, so the three things that I said that I would want to see in a motion before I would consider supporting it were that the time limits were generous enough, and I think they are generous enough, and I think that point has been made by members who have pointed out that it's very rare that we go over these time limits, so that suggests to me that they are generous enough; that there is a provision for a member to seek additional time if they need or wish, and I do feel confident that that would be supported by this Chamber.

So, I do feel confident that this Chamber would not try to impede somebody from having a say, and never has because, again, the flipside of that, as members have pointed out, is that in my time here since 2017, nobody has ever moved, to my knowledge and to my recollection, that a member no longer be heard. So, it's very rare that this Chamber tries to cut short anyone's contribution; in fact, I've never seen somebody's contribution cut short. I do feel confident that they would honour that in reverse and allow members to have the time they need to make the contribution they wish to make, but I do also think that this kind of structure can help members plan for what they might want to say and plan for their contribution and know that these limits are in place. Other parliaments deal with it; I don't see why we need to be any different.

I love parliament. Actually, this is one of my favourite parts of my job. I love the debates that we have in here. I love being a member of the Legislative Council. This is a Chamber that I feel most often is able to conduct itself in a really respectful way, and where we do have the ability to have decisions made on the floor of parliament and where people might make up their mind on the floor, I'm not concerned that this motion will change any of the good things that I think we do in this place and any of the scrutiny that we apply. I feel like this won't impede my ability to do my job as the member for Rumney and to represent my community.

I'm also comforted by the fact that this is not forever, and I know members have different views on that. I don't believe that this is a change that will be in place forever. It's a sessional order. It's a decision that's being made by this parliament right now. A future parliament with a different makeup could make a very different decision. Sessional orders can be amended too. This doesn't even need to be in place for the rest of this parliament. If there's a change in makeup of this Chamber, or if people feel that it's not working, it can be amended again, so nothing we're doing here is locking anything in beyond certainly the next parliament. It's not locking it in for any period of time. That's up to this Chamber to decide.

It is often said that this Chamber is a master of its own destiny, and I feel that this is a good example of where everyone in this Chamber has an equal view, an equal voice, an equal vote and the decision will be made. It may pass, it may fail, but it will be a decision that's made by this Chamber, so I for one will be supporting the motion and we'll see how the rest of the debate plays out.

[6.14 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Hobart) - I's been another fascinating debate in this Council. Before I begin, I also want to acknowledge the delightful, informative, entertaining and engaging inaugural speech of the honourable member for Huon. What a wildly exciting life you've had in parts, a bit like Humphrey B. Bear, but I thought that your stories of your travels to other parts of the world and the things that you did there and the courage with which you embraced those adventures was very impressive. So, thank you and welcome.

By all accounts, and I've heard this for many years, this Legislative Council is the most powerful upper house in the Westminster world. There's a number of reasons for that, one of which is that we can reject a budget, send the lower house to an election and sit back and watch the show. But we also have, uniquely, no restrictions on speaking time, and that has been in place for 200 years. We've just celebrated our 200th birthday. What we're doing here potentially, by way of a motion to this place, is we're giving away our power. We are giving away something which has been held in this place by the custodians who see it through for the past 200 years and we're giving it away potentially in an afternoon's debate.

Now power is not a dirty word, of course. As a Green, I well understand it's about how you use it when you have it, and while, over the journey, from time to time, particularly when I was in the other place, I would gnash and rail against this House, and I did see it and have seen it in the past as an obstacle to progressive progress, but that was a different Council made up of different people. As someone whose parliamentary life was sort of forged, if you like, in the crucible of the Assembly, when I first looked at this notice of motion, I thought to myself, 'You beauty, speaking limits.' I really did. Because it's just part of the way it operates in the other place, but it also leads to deficiencies. Deficiencies in debate. Deficiencies in analysis of legislation. Restrictions on how we can represent the voices of our communities.

It can be intensely frustrating as a member of the other place when you're deep in a bill, you are presenting your party's position, your values, your analysis of this bill, and in that place you've got either 30 minutes if you're the mover, but generally you have 20 minutes. I remember when the education bill came into the Assembly in 2016. It's one of the thickest bills I've seen, an enormous piece of legislation. And that was not long after, you know, 18 months after the 2014 state election where, as a result of that election, the newly-elected Hodgman Liberal government came in and scoured out the standing and sessional orders with a clear intention to crimp the capacity of the Greens to hold them to account. We had our speaking rights cut singularly for us. So, I understand the pain of speaking time limits, but I also understand that it can diminish a house's capacity to properly examine legislation and, having been in this place now for two and a half years, and I see what comes up from time to time from the other place, and I see the work that we do here, and it's thorough, it's dedicated. There are some people in here who work so incredibly hard, and quite often we will improve and strengthen legislation that comes from the House of Assembly.

So, while it was tempting to support this motion, in the end, after thinking about it and talking to my colleagues about it, the difficulty that I have here with this is the process. I think it's a really inadequate process for making such a significant change to the way this house has operated for 200 years. It's an inadequate process for ceding a power that we've held in this place for 200 years.

It's quite, and I say this with respect to the member for Launceston, and I know this is not the first rodeo on this issue, but, for such a substantial change, it's quite thinly consulted.

Now I have questions, and they're questions that have been put by other members. We've had some outstanding contributions from the members for Murchison, Mersey and Nelson, detailed arguments and questions asked, and I have some questions for the mover. How was the time limit, the proposed time limit, for the first clauses in this bill, down to five, sorry four, the time limit of 60 minutes arrived at? Because it seems to me it's been a really sort of arbitrary process, from some of the conversations that I've had in here. It was shorter earlier in the original draft of this motion. Now, well, I understand that it was shorter earlier, and then there was a discussion, or discussions, and it's now been extended to 60 minutes. I'd like to understand how that time frame of 60 minutes was arrived at. Is there any other jurisdiction that we can look to, of a house such as ours that has this kind of time limit on second-reading debates, and the like? Why was the decision made, for example, to only retain that power to speak for an unlimited period for inaugural speeches? Why do we give that power, why would we retain that power for a member who has only just been elected, but not provide it to the rest of the council. Again, it seems to me to be very arbitrary.

I went back and reminded myself of the membership of the Standing Orders Committee of this House. Standing Orders Committee has on it yourself, Mr President, the Chair of Committees, the member for Murchison, the member for Launceston, the member for McIntyre and the member for Elwick. Pretty good committee, pretty capable operators on there. I would like to understand, if this matter was referred, or if a broader question of speaking limits was referred to the Standing Orders Committee back in 2023, what happened. Now, I suspect the answer is that we had a government that was sent to the polls or sent itself to the polls twice. I understand it's been a very disrupted couple of years from a parliamentary perspective. But there is an open process, and opportunity, on the Standing Orders Committee for this very question to be examined, consulted and recommendations made.

Now, I've read the room, and, because the two potential parties of government would seem to be supporting this motion, I believe it will get through. I simply say to independent members of this place, you might ask yourself why. Why would the two parties of government be so keen to reduce the power of this place? Is it because periodically this place is a thorn in their collective hide? I suspect so. Taking some power away from this place, it will suit a government of the day.

**Ms Forrest** - We can get four perspectives from the government; only one from an individual independent.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Yes, that's right, but another way of looking at that is that you might have four government members or four opposition members in this place, but the quality of the debate is diminished because only one member of the party will speak on a particular issue.

**Ms Forrest** - Maybe not.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Well, that's what happens. So it is very unfortunate that we are apparently so willing to give away this power in an afternoon's debate, especially when we've got a committee and a process that this place has established to examine and answer these questions and come back to us with some recommendations. I don't understand, and I hope the member for Launceston in her reply could be really clear about, first of all, what's the problem we're trying to solve here, but secondly, why wasn't this taken through the Standing Orders Committee, because the thing about power is once you give it away, it's very, very hard to get

back. If it becomes this House's practice to have hard speaking limits as a sessional order, we'll just be sort of in the groove of it. After the next election, when the sessional orders come back for a refresher in this place, it will have become an accepted practice.

So, I think everyone in here needs to be really clear: once we give his power away it'll be very hard to grab it back again. It would seem that a majority of members in this place are quite comfortable with that: some of them, anyway. So, there's been much talk of how desirable it is to have family-friendly hours in this place; yes, it's definitely desirable. How achievable it is with the kind of sitting calendar that we have is a not particularly open question.

I've worked in and around parliaments since I was a journalist, but in Canberra between 1993, 1994 and 1995, a single mother of a four-year-old child working in the office of the justice minister, many nights of the week my son would be sleeping on the couch in the ministerial office, because the House of Representatives was still sitting and it would sit until 11, 12, 1 in the morning; not just obscenely family-unfriendly hours, but sort of hostile-to-a-good-life hours, and some changes were made to that. There is a somewhat more family-friendly structure to the parliamentary day in both Houses in Canberra, but it is still so far from ideal for family life.

I mean, just look at it practically, and it's the same here: most members of most electorates in both Houses in our Federal Parliament leave their families every Sunday night and they don't get back till Thursday or Friday: very unfriendly for families. Now, the other place has a hard adjournment time, except I think there's been an adjustment so there's some flex on Wednesdays, but I might be a bit vague on that; but again, many was a day with the will of the House that we sat very late. Mr President, I think you were a member of this place when we sat until sunrise getting the Tasmanian Forest Agreement legislation through the House.

**Ms Forrest** - Don't remind us. We're all still traumatised.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Yes, very traumatised. I had to race home, get my two small children and terrier, and bring them up to the Murray Street offices to sleep on the couches there, and I guess this is my long way of saying -

**Ms Palmer** - Lucky you didn't live in Launceston; you wouldn't have gotten to see your dog or your children.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Never see them, that's right. Well, that was a night where they were at home on their own, because I didn't have any family here to give them to, so I totally hear you and it's a long-winded way of saying parliaments, broadly, are not family-friendly workplaces, and we can tinker around some of the structures of the day to improve that, but unless you increase your number of sitting days, our loved ones, our kids, our pets will continue to see very little of us on sitting weeks.

**Ms Palmer** - Again, unless you live in Launceston. Where you have to be even further away, so that's not family-friendly either.

**Mr Hiscutt** - Or the north-west. More time away from your family.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - I totally hear you.

**Ms Webb** - So, shouldn't we have full consideration of it through some mechanism that's properly appropriate?

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Some mechanism like -

**Ms Webb** - The Standing Orders Committee?

**Ms O'CONNOR** - A Standing Orders Committee.

**Mr Hiscutt** - Three years, I think they've had it there, since 2023.

**Ms Webb** - How many motions have we had for family-friendly sitting hours inquiries?

**Ms O'CONNOR** - I understand that, but it doesn't mean just because there hasn't been the time and space to do a body of work because we had two premature elections -

**Ms Webb** - Three, actually.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - 2021, 2024, 2025: that's right. So we had three premature elections since that scandalous election in 2018, but there's also been two since the referral of this matter to the Standing Orders Committee. So, I am not taking issue with the Standing Orders Committee not having been able to fix the Standing Orders or consult with us or deal with the time limits issue, because I understand the reality of where we are. Now, I am not going to make a particularly long speech today, although the temptation was to filibuster and prove the point and then alienate everyone in here and go down in a screaming heap, but -

**Mr Duigan** - That's what's got us here.

**Ms Webb** - Who has filibustered? Point to a filibuster.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Yes, I would love the honourable member for Windermere to, because I'm quite conscious, and I'm well trained from the Assembly, and yes, I've spoken at length on particular issues which I think this Council would benefit from a more detailed understanding of or a perspective on it, such as climate, for example, but I can't remember talking for more than an hour on any subject, but I'm very happy to stand corrected, and I don't think that's the point. What's got us here, I think, is potentially a frustration with one or two members. That's what I think has potentially got us here.

So, there's a couple of things that were said in the honourable member for Launceston's contribution that I just wanted to challenge. The case was put that this motion will enable the Legislative Council to better fulfil its role of effectively holding government to account and scrutinising legislation. Well, honestly, I think we already do a terrific job of that, having now sat on Government Administration Committee A, and Estimates, and GBE hearings, watched what happens here in Question Time each day. I think we do effectively hold government to account, and we scrutinise legislation to the nth degree, and it is a fact that out in the community people recognise that. People recognise the work of this place in fixing government's mistakes and being a check on their excesses, and in fact the role of the Council in relation to the early Assembly was to keep a check on the excesses of the public place, because this was the place of the landed gentry.

Anyway, I just dispute that this will improve our capacity to effectively hold government to account or scrutinise legislation. The honourable member for Launceston also said if we pass this motion, every member will have an opportunity to contribute to any debate. Well, we do. We already have that opportunity to contribute to any debate, and that's one of the strengths of this place: you can see everyone feels empowered, or not, if you don't feel like you have something valuable to add to a debate on an issue, but we have that free will in here and that authority to contribute to any debate. Curbing or setting time limits definitely won't improve that.

I appreciate that the honourable member for Launceston acknowledged that the appropriate forum for the question of time limits was the Standing Orders Committee, which is why it was referred in 2023. It's still the appropriate forum.

I'd like to provide anyone who's wavering, or anyone who supports the principles of time limits but wants to see a process that's consultative and thorough play out an opportunity back to that first appropriate procedural point, and that is back to the Standing Orders Committee. Therefore, I propose an amendment on the motion No 13 that we:

*Leave out,*

'for the duration of the 52nd Parliament or until further order, the following sessional order apply to proceedings in the Legislative Council.'

*After 'That the Legislative Council agree that,' insert,*

'the following proposed sessional order be referred to the Standing Orders Committee for consultation, consideration and report'.

This is the appropriate process and forum for dealing with questions of time limits in the Legislative Council. As I said earlier, I think there are arguments for setting time limits, but let's have the conversation about it. As a council through the Standing Orders Committee, where ideally there'd be a consultative process and an engagement with members about how we might modernise the Standing and Sessional Orders.

I have a few ideas. We should have more matter of public importance debates, and that should be more freely available.

We should have more structure and clarity around the adjournments, because the beauty of the adjournment in the Assembly is that they don't need a debate like a special interest matter, because every sitting night you have five minutes to get up and say something that is burning in you as a local representative, or that your constituents have asked you to raise, or when you want to raise a query with the government. There's plenty of room for improvement in the Standing and Sessional Orders.

Some of the language is delightfully antique, like, 'a member shall not provoke a quarrel', which is my favourite Standing Order of them all. But, again, do we want to do away with that sort of language? I don't know. What I do know is that if you have a proper consultative process of Standing and Sessional Order renewal, it's something that unites everyone. In the Assembly, I believe it was six or seven years ago now, our former clerk, Mr Shane Donnelly OA - he wasn't an Order of Australia at that time - went through a process of tidying up our Standing

Orders. It wasn't a ruthless slashing of language. It was getting real clarity about what the rules meant, making sure that they were workable, that they flowed one from the other, but also that what ended up being presented to the parliament as the final set of Standing and Sessional Orders was something that we all felt we owned and we all supported to a significant extent. Because you can't always be happy all the time. That would be the best process here, because we're about to do something pretty serious here, and it's being done with worryingly casual regard. We're about to give away a power that I don't think many other places in the world hold; many other upper houses or lower houses hold; a power that has been used ever so rarely since I got into this place, and even before as a casual observer of the Legislative Council. There haven't been all that many very long contributions in this place.

I hope, honourable members, even if you support time limits, will consider supporting this amendment so at least we can get back to some proper process that's inclusive where, whatever the outcome, we can all feel like we've contributed towards it, and we're all certain it's gone through good process, which with all respect to the honourable member for Launceston, I don't think this notice of motion has. I hope the amendment is supported.

**Ms ARMITAGE** (Launceston) - Thank you, Mr President, and I thank the member for Hobart for the contribution and also for putting an amendment up. It's always good for robust debates for us to actually have our say. I certainly never want to stifle that.

Amending the Standing Orders is not something that can or should be done without a great deal of thought and evidence. I'm not going to go into any discussion we've had in the Standing Orders Committee because I don't believe it's appropriate for me to speak about what we're doing in the Standing Orders Committee. As far as I'm concerned, that's a confidential committee and I don't believe I should be saying what we looked at, what we haven't looked at. As far as I'm concerned.

**Ms O'Connor** - Well, I mean, in this case -

**Ms ARMITAGE** - But it's not appropriate for me to go into what we're looking at in the Standing Orders Committee, as a member of the committee, but what I am going to say is what my Sessional Order will provide to the Standing Orders Committee. It has had this question that I've put before it since March 2023. It is a difficult thing. It's a lot of work for the Standing Orders Committee to review all the Standing Orders, and I see that my Sessional Order will provide that very committee who already has the request to look at time limits, the ability and the evidence to see how the trial has gone.

No-one knows how long this term of government will go. It might last, it might go for three years, it might go for one month, but there's nothing stopping - If members are not happy with whatever time limits we have in place - and regarding the member for McIntyre: we've had a discussion about changing third readings - but if members are not happy with any time limits they get up today - and I'm only one member, so the Chamber has to agree to it; I can simply put it up - but it's up to the Chamber to agree whether we have it or not. There's nothing stopping someone actually moving a motion during that period to cancel the Sessional Order. It's a Sessional Order, which means it is a trial. If it works, it works. If it doesn't work, it doesn't work.

Would it last for three years? Maybe not. It's up to the Chamber. Therefore, I do ask the members not to support the current amendment because it's already before the Standing Orders

Committee where it's been for three years. This is purely a Sessional Order to give them some evidence to see how it's working, so the members of the committee can see how it's working. If it doesn't look like members are happy with it, any member can move an order to cease the Sessional Order. To me it's a trial. I won't go on, but I would ask that members realise it is with the Standing Orders Committee already. It's purely a trial. Anyone can stop it at any time. It's purely up to the Chamber.

[6.44 p.m.]

**Mr GAFFNEY** (Mersey) - Thank you and I won't speak for long. I will support the amendment. I just think it's proper process. I'm really concerned where we're going with this. I'd like to ask the member from Launceston who perhaps might be able to reiterate that. How many speeches in the last 12 months have gone over 60 minutes? You would obviously have that information because you've been investigated that. I don't think there's been that many. Some people may not speak for 60 minutes, but some people may feel as though they have to. Therefore, why are we denying that member of parliament their right to represent their community for as long as they see fit?

**Ms Armitage** - We're not, they can get an extension of time.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That's fine, but why are we changing the rules when we've got a process there? So, I just think it's - this is so frustrating coming from a place where we should be not giving away what we have in this spot. We haven't even had a briefing on this motion, and here we are changing the rules, changing the pale [76.45.24] dynamics, and we haven't even had a briefing. What other piece of legislation will we change to do that?

How can we, with people who have been here nanoseconds, six months, 12 months, oh yeah, we'll change it because I don't like it when people speak for too long, because that's not what - because it's going to upset my day of getting home. I don't know what time I'm going get home because somebody's spoken for 60 minutes.

**Member** - No-one said that.

**Ms Palmer** - That's, that's not an appropriate - that's unfair to say that.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - No, no, that's no. Excuse me, minister, you've been in this place -

**Ms Palmer** - Member for Rosevears, thank you.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Member for Rosevears.

We get frustrated when I see improper process, and this is what's happening. We have a committee for this thing. We have a committee to look at it. That's there to be done, and we've come up with something to change. No hearings, no briefings, no nothing. Just a, oh, come up with 60 minutes.

**Ms Armitage** - It's a trial.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - A trial of what? There has been no reason. How many times in the last 12 months has somebody spoken for over 60 minutes? You wouldn't know.

**Ms Armitage** - Yes, but I'm not going to answer this question. It's a trial, it's not a legislation.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Exactly.

[6.46 p.m.]

**Mr HISCUTT** (Montgomery) - Thank you, just a quick contribution to give my reasons for not supporting the amendment. Mainly as I see that it is already there in the Standing Orders Committee, I think this decision needs to be made on this motion as it has been put forward. It's not that I don't necessarily think that it shouldn't be, or should be, decided by the Standing Orders, but I don't think adding it to this particular session order adds any value. I understand the position that member put the amendment. I just think that it is already with the Standing Orders Committee and, so, changing that on this particular motion as it's put forward would not make a big difference in that scenario. I wouldn't vote for or against it.

**Ms O'Connor** - Well I dispute pretty much every word you just said, but you're entitled to your view.

**Mr HISCUTT** - That's fine.

[6.47 p.m.]

**Ms LOVELL** (Rumney) - I also won't support the amendment. I appreciate what the member for Hobart is trying to do, but I think, as many members have already said, the Standing Orders Committee is already looking at this. So, I think the decision for us today is either we want to institute this new sessional order, in which case we vote for the motion, or we don't because we want the Standing Orders Committee to continue its work, which would achieve the same as this amendment. So, I think it's easier just to have a clean vote on that.

I do also, and I am trying to limit my comments to the amendment, but I do want to just make one point. I think most people would recognise, as soon as we're elected to this place, everybody has an equal vote, and everybody has an equal view, and, yes, some people have been around a lot longer than others. That's the nature of the parliament that we're in, and the way our electoral system works. Particularly in this place we do have, I guess, a more frequent rotation of members as new members come in and out of this place. But every member has an equal vote as soon as they're elected. They're elected as a member to represent their community, and their vote should carry equal weight. We all come with different levels of experience, and experience from other places as well, which can inform the way we choose to do things in this Chamber. I don't think it's fair to say that newer members should listen to members who have been around for much longer just because that's the way we've always done it, because there can be -

**Ms O'Connor** - No-one is saying that.

**Ms LOVELL** - Well, that is what was said. That is what was said just a moment ago. I didn't - I'm not saying you said it, member for Hobart, but it is what was said.

I think everyone in this place brings experience from a range of different backgrounds that helps to inform the way we conduct ourselves in this chamber. So, I won't be supporting the amendment, and we'll hope that this debate wraps up soon.

[6.49 p.m.]

**Ms THOMAS** (Elwick) - I, too, just rise to put my reasons on the record why I won't support this amendment. In fact, I think it's entirely different from the motion that's proposed, and would be a separate motion in itself, rather than amendment to the actual motion. I also question whether the Standing Orders Committee even actually has the power, or the jurisdiction, to review sessional orders, because what we're being asked to consider here is that the proposed sessional order be referred to the Standing Orders Committee for consultation, consideration, report. The Standing Orders Committee has a role to review the Standing Orders. We're being through this motion being asked to review a sessional order, which is different. The work of the Standing Orders Committee underway has been mentioned by other members will continue. We will review the Standing Orders, and that work will continue.

That will take some time and it will involve consultation and importantly, it will involve consultation and it will take time because the Standing Orders are much more permanent and less frequently changed than sessional orders.

Contrary to what's been suggested through the debate to date, we're not permanently giving something away through this motion. We're not being asked to amend the Standing Orders but to introduce a session order that will apply to this session of the parliament, the 52nd session of the parliament. So, that's my reasoning for not supporting this motion.

[6.51 p.m.]

**Ms WEBB** (Nelson) - I'll rise to add my support for this amendment and just speak on a couple of points relating to that. Firstly, the fact that this motion is relating to sessional orders is not at all incompatible with the role of the Standing Orders Committee. The purview of the Standing Orders Committee includes the Standing Orders of this place and anything basically under that, which would include sessional orders, but also include things like conventions that relate to the procedures of this place, conventions we have relating to adjournment speeches, for example, or the like.

Matters relating to those things are all in the purview of the Standing Orders Committee, and I presume that that committee would be aware that that sits within its purview and, therefore, this amendment in and of itself isn't out of order in terms of sending a proposed sessional order, series of session orders, to that committee for examination. Let's just be clear on that for a start.

Because process does matter and clarity of purpose matters and both those things here are problematic, which is why I support the amendment, because it allows us to follow an important agreed formal process for this place to do something as fundamental as consider changing the rules that apply, whether that be permanently or even in a sessional sense.

It also is important, in my view, to follow that process in a way that's inclusive of the members of this place. My understanding is that that committee, if it was to consider this specific set of sessional orders that is proposed in the motion, would then have to consult with the rest of us about it, perhaps also consult with other members. That would help a lot, I think, not just with the appropriate consultation, but also with clarity.

Because I find it absolutely bizarre that the member for Launceston would stand here and say instituting this session or order now with the passage of this motion will allow the Standing Orders Committee to see whether it works, because she hasn't remotely defined what that would

mean. What will be the measure of success of this motion that she's put forward, the sessional orders in it?

Of course, it's going to stop people speaking more than 60 minutes generally. That's what the effect it's going to have is, but that's not a decision about whether it works like that's just simply what it describes as the new procedure. What's the problem we're trying to solve here, Mr President? That's what has never been made clear. The Standing Orders Committee won't have the opportunity, if this is in place, to decide whether it's worked, because the member for Launceston has not articulated what the outcome is that she wants to achieve, what problems she's trying to solve.

The thing about the Standing Orders Committee's consideration of it is that they could do that piece of work too. And what would then be the case once there was clarity about the problem that we were trying to solve? For example, are we trying to find the best mechanism to have better family friendly hours in our sitting days? Are we trying to find a mechanism to ensure that there's greater representation for our community? Are we trying to find a mechanism that ensures whatever it might be?

The Standing Orders Committee could consider this set of sessional orders in the motion, but it would also be able to consider whether there are other, better indicated, better evidenced options for achieving those outcomes because there's certainly no guarantee that this motion achieves, for example, those outcomes around family-friendly sitting hours, around getting through business. There's nothing to indicate that.

Sending this to the Standing Orders Committee - and people may well say, 'Well, that's a process that's happening anyway'. Sure. All we're doing then is reinforcing that, yes, that process is one we want that committee to undertake in an appropriate manner, and that we can all then participate in, as is rightly done as part of the formalities of this Chamber. I presume that the member for Launceston, as a member of that committee, has presented the committee for consideration these Sessional Orders. I presume it's already underway, we don't know but presumably it would be bizarre, one would have thought, to be a member of the committee and not have taken this to the committee.

That provides us with an appropriate opportunity. I find it really interesting that on matters of process people run hot and cold in this place, don't they? I'm probably one of them

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**Ms O'Connor** - Different sets of rules.

**Ms WEBB** - I'm probably one of them, potentially. But I name it up. I've named it up on other things where I've said this process is absolutely appalling, and I might still be supporting the outcome of it. But it's interesting on this topic; there's a clear right process here. It's not being followed, unless we amend as per this amendment.

Of course, for some members the problem being solved is they don't want to hear from other members for more than 60 minutes. They don't want to hear from other members for longer than that. If that's the problem they want solved, I'm sure they'll explain that in their contributions. We've already heard, I believe by interjection in other contributions, suggestions that there's filibustering, that this is going to solve that problem. I reject that. I've never seen filibustering here. In fact, I'm going to fess up to something: I've never filibustered here in this

place, because a filibuster, just to be clear with everybody, if you look at the definition, is to give a very long speech for the purpose of delay. That's what a filibuster is. I've made many long speeches in this place of different lengths, sometimes up to 60 minutes, sometimes past it, sometimes well past it. Absolutely, with one exception, none of those speeches have been a filibuster, and I challenge anyone to say that they were because what I was doing was putting valid, cogent information, evidence, concerns, expert opinions, et cetera, on the record. They were not for the purpose of delay.

The one time I have filibustered in this place, it's a fairly recent occasion and I did it on request of the government. To get them through to a reasonable end time, so they weren't embarrassed at the end of a day stopping too early. That's a confession I'm prepared to make here. I filibustered once in this place, and it was to help the government not be embarrassed about their lack of business in this place. You're welcome, government. The one filibuster I have ever done here was for that purpose. Members can now go away, or people watching can now go away and try and figure out which contribution that was. That's the one filibuster I've ever done here, and I absolutely challenge anybody else to suggest that any of my other contributions in this place were for a purpose of delay. They were for a purpose of doing what I believed to be the entire correct contribution to make on the matter at hand.

We can all see where this is going, and that's fine. Of course. We are all here with one vote. Nothing about these challenges that, no one suggested that we have somehow uneven votes in this place. Things go the way they go as a result of debate and then voting. I believe it's utterly sad actually, that we're going to do this in this way, and it's for, I think, simply - the only cogent purpose that actually we can define from this, is that the majority here don't want to hear from members for more than 60 minutes, and they're prepared to give away their right and the ready availability to exercise their discretion for times they might - in extraordinary, exceptional circumstances - think that that's needed to do their job properly. They're prepared to give that away so they don't have to listen to people beyond 60 minutes in this place, regardless of whether we say there's the availability to ask for longer time. I can tell you for sure if we're at 9.00 p.m. at night and I get up to start my contribution, I'm not getting more than 60 minutes even if I ask for it. I can tell you that. That's the end of my contribution on the amendment. I support it.

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

**The Council divided -**

**AYES 3**

Mr Gaffney  
Ms O'Connor  
Ms Webb (Teller)

**NOES 9**

Ms Armitage  
Mr Duigan  
Mr Edmunds  
Ms Glade-Wright  
Mr Hiscutt  
Ms Palmer  
Ms Thomas (Teller)  
Mr Vincent

**Motion negatived.**

[7.03 p.m.]

**Ms PALMER** (Minister for Education) - Like other members, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the member for Huon on her inaugural speech. It's always lovely to hear the personal, intriguing parts of someone's life. I did mention, but I will put it on the record, I was watching your dad's face when you were talking about some of the things you got up to and I hope I'm never listening to any of my children make such disclosures, to be fair; I'd rather just not know. It's lovely to have you here. I thought it was incredibly kind and incredibly respectful of you to also mention the former member for Huon. I thought that was just really lovely and I believe it probably shows a little bit more of your heart to us as well. Thank you for acknowledging him. That's lovely.

I am rising in support of this motion, and I want to thank the member for Launceston for bringing it on. It does raise an important question about how we conduct our business and how we can ensure that our debate does remain effective, fair and productive. I absolutely believe every member deserves the opportunity to contribute at any given time in their career, whether you've just become a member or whether you've been a member here for some decades as we have some members like that. I certainly remember it was only a few months, I think, when I first became the Member for Rosevears that indeed I was on my feet with the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill, with very little experience in this place, but, you know, 49 years of experience in life, and very much appreciated that debate. I think this is not a job where you get the opportunity to find your feet. You're up, you're on, and, now that you've spoken, you are too. So, that's just the way that this job is.

I found it so fascinating coming to this place, considering my former career being in commercial news service, where we operated in seconds, not hours. You know, if you had a sort of soft story, you'd get about 30 seconds in a voice over; if you had a reasonable story, you'd get about a minute and ten seconds. If you had a cracker, a cracker story with brilliant vision, you'd get about a minute and 40 seconds. You'd just think that that was the bee's knees, and then it was actually the Member for Hobart who was my producer at the time, who came up with the idea that on a Sunday night you could do a feature.

**Ms O'Connor** - Tasmania In Focus.

**Ms PALMER** - Tasmania In Focus - you got a feature and you got four minutes. We couldn't believe it, and I remember being about eight months pregnant at the time, it was the anniversary of the 1967 Hobart bushfires, and I got one of these gigs, and I got my four minutes and I did absolutely love it. So, quite a transition to come to this place that does have unlimited speaking times, and I have spent quite some time sitting there thinking, goodness me, you know, when you're used to dealing in 'get the facts out, get your message across, get out what you have to say, make it strong' to sort of be here in a very different environment, but I have respected that environment in the six years that I have been here.

I do think that reasonable time limits does encourage us as members to focus on our strongest arguments, and also ensuring that our debates are clear and they are concise and that they are relevant, and I think there is also a really important workplace consideration here, and it's been mentioned by others, and I have been in this place where there have been some very lengthy contributions that have gone into the evening, into the early hours of the morning, and I think where I've had concern around that is that I have sometimes felt that the standard of the debate has at times diminished. We've seen people really emotional. I've sat here listening to contributions at 1.00 a.m., listening to members crying outside, and I don't think that's a good

workplace. That has worried me. I also think for our parliamentary staff, our departmental representatives, remember our departments have to be here often to be advising til late at night as well. Our Hansard reporters are here, our attendants, our security personnel, and the many others that make up that parliamentary team that are here to support us debating throughout the day and throughout the night.

When we talk about what is the problem that we're trying to solve, I actually think that is a bit of a problem, and I just think some of these extended settings which come when there are at times lengthy contributions, they can lead to fatigue for the person who is presenting as well. We can see a diminishing of the quality of the debate and the decision making, and I do have concern, especially for the staff and advisers and department people who sit through that time with us.

I really do respect the views of all members in this place and I think we should all be respectful of each other's points of view and for me, in in my electorate, there has been many a time when people have said to me, 'Why on Earth was the debate going on for so long and, and why does that happen?', and I've had to explain to them, 'Well, you know, it's an unlimited time. You could speak for as long as your stamina or what you have to say.'

And so, you know, I do believe that there are parts of our community who think we could be more efficient in the way that we present here. And I do see that this is an opportunity to, as you know the member for Launceston has said, we're not carving this into concrete, it's a trial and why would we not, you know, try to do that?

I do want to say, you know, there's been a bit of commentary around the opportunity to extend time, and I absolutely see the importance of that in this because I do agree that there are times when they would require extended opportunity for members to speak. I think we're all really aware of the different passions that people hold in this place and I think we would all be quite respectful of a genuine request to do that. I commend the member for Launceston for having that as part of this motion.

I'm not gonna speak for much longer, but there is something I wanna say. The Member for Rumney isn't here, but I thought it was quite vulnerable of her to talk about her as a person who is co-parenting her children, and I just wanna commend her for, you know, as I say, being vulnerable and talking about how she has had to manage that and I've actually sat with her while she's been frantically messaging and making calls to her family to say, 'I just don't know what's gonna happen. Can you stay? Can you take them to your house?'

That is a reality for members who live down here. The reality for some of us who don't live down here is that maybe it doesn't matter what time we get home because we don't get to go home. We don't get to see our families. We don't get to see our kids off to school in the morning, don't get to kiss my husband goodnight. I'm here and I'm here for those days, so I think we have to be careful that when we talk about a possible solution to we're sort of using the term 'family friendly working hours'. The Member for Hobart said this isn't a family friendly job and, and she's right and, so, let's not confuse with extra sitting days turning this into a family-friendly job. That's not what it will be for people who don't live in in Hobart or the surrounding areas.

That will be further time away from our family, but, even more importantly, that's time away from my community that I need to hear the views of, that I want to spend time with

supporting all of those community groups who we do our special interest matters. We talk about them. That's having time with them, and that's how I think I'm a better member by the time that I do spend in my community and in my electorate.

I just want to be careful that we're not confusing family-friendly hours by saying we should have more sitting days, because that actually does not work and that is not family-friendly for people who don't live here. But I'm really grateful that we are having this debate. I think it's fantastic. I haven't quite got to the point as the Member for Rumney for, you know, having the former member for Rosevears ringing in my ears. I have known him for a very, very long time. It wasn't the first place my mind went to. But it is great that we are able to have this debate in a respectful way, because each one of us comes to this place with an opinion and we think carefully before we get up and we speak.

I will say that just before I finish, I have been asked by the Leader to move that the debate does stand adjourned for the purposes of a dinner break. Thank you, Mr President.

### **Debate adjourned.**

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Thank you Mr President and I know that perhaps that wasn't on everybody's radar, it certainly wasn't on mine earlier, but circumstances have unfolded.

And, so, I move -

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

This is for the purpose of a dinner break and I'll organise for the bells to be rung at 8.10 p.m.

**Sitting suspended from 7.15 p.m. to 8.14 p.m.**

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Member for Murchison - Ms Forrest**

[8.14 p.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council)(by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That the honourable member for Murchison, Ms Forrest, be granted leave of absence from the service of the Council for the remainder of this day's sitting.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **MOTION**

**Time Limits Sessional Order**

[8.15 p.m.]

**Mr VINCENT** (Prosser - Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Thank you, Mr President, and as well I'd like to congratulate the member of Huon on a very informative speech, and they always are, and haven't been here for long enough to hear too many of them, but those I have, and the few I read beforehand, it's always fascinating to see what makes people tick, and remarkable stories there that you passed on to us.

Since coming into this place, I guess I've always respected everybody's opinion, and I'd always like to think in all my positions in life, and that as a mayor, my strength, or ability, is listening to a lot of different sides of debate and being able to weigh up things and still make a decision that I feel comfortable with, whether that's right or wrong, to go home of a night and be able to sleep comfortably that you've actually done that. I do congratulate all the passion, and all the people tonight with the comments during the day that they've made, and I do appreciate that. It's fair to say that I'm not a wordsmith: I'm a pretty rough and ready boy, and I think it's too late in life to change now. So, preparing speeches, or making elegant points of argument, are not always my strong point, but I'm pretty simple in the way I think about things.

I've cut this speech down, so it is short and deliberate for how I'm thinking on this subject. I would really like to recognise the point that member for Montgomery made, I might be paraphrasing it a little bit: if you can't get your point across in 15 to 20 minutes, you're in trouble if you've got to go for an hour. I fully understand that, although I do appreciate that sometimes extra points of clarification and input are required. Now, if a point can't be made concisely, it's often not the point that is being made. The best contributions in this Chamber have always been the tight, well-prepared ones, and a time limit doesn't work against good speeches; it aims squarely at the ones that aren't. A good speech where everyone is engaged, and appreciative of interesting and factual information, is always the best. Ones that show accuracy and knowledge are the ones I enjoy the most. The length does not equal seriousness or accuracy.

As mentioned by the member for Murchison, more changes probably need to happen to improve the debate in the Chamber, and may well be needed in the future, and it's something we should look at, and probably have a session on and talk about some of the things that do frustrate us that we can hand over to appropriate committees in the end; but the time limit disciplines debate without gagging it. Every jurisdiction that uses one still allows extension by leave of the House for genuinely complex matters. A time limit is, if anything, a discipline the Council should adopt, and I cannot see any loss of power in doing so. It doesn't impinge on the public's right to be heard, and it certainly doesn't impinge on the member to be heard. This isn't about saying less; it's about saying it better, and trusting members of this Chamber to know the difference between a point worth making and a point worth cutting.

I did take the time over the last couple of weeks to talk to many people in the community regarding this while I was moving around. It's quite interesting that probably in round figures, 60 per cent didn't give a damn what happened in this House, 20 per cent showed a fair bit of interest, actually, and I had to take a couple of family members out of the equation, but a couple actually watched and made generally derogatory comments about us; but another 20 per cent did take what happens in the Legislative Council very seriously, and I remember being quite surprised by a couple of them, but their points were quite simple to me: get to the point and make it sharp, make it deliberate, and get on with it. Thank you. I do support the motion.

[8.20 p.m.]

**Mr EDMUNDS** (Pembroke) - Very briefly, thank you to the mover of the motion, the member for Launceston. Thank you to all people who have contributed and congratulations to our newest member, the member for Huon, on a ripper of a first speech. It was very engaging. Well done. This is a prestigious place to be, and I respect each member and their contribution to this debate and above all else, the voters in each division that put them or us in these seats: the Tasmanian people. You could jest that here we are, a cartoonist's dream, a bunch of politicians talking about ourselves, and talking about our ability to talk about ourselves at that, and since prior to 1 p.m., with some spells, admittedly. I appreciate respectful debate as we lay our views on behalf of our communities, and I think as speakers of both sides of this debate have said, we are here fundamentally to represent the views of our constituents.

Like every issue we debate, and indeed every day we front up, we are doing our best for this state, but from different perspectives and experiences. When I first ran for public office, I campaigned on making decision-making and representation relevant and in touch with the people we represent. Keeping politics relevant to the people I represent is my north star. Many speakers have spoken about the valuable role this Chamber plays in our democracy, and I don't believe that this motion throttles that, and I believe there are appropriate safeguards in place. I also note that it's being moved as a sessional order, and future Standing Orders and sessional orders will be informed by the ongoing work of the committee. As others in here have said, this sessional order, I think, makes this place 'clear and predictable', 'clear, focused and effective', and it does provide structure to our scrutiny.

I won't speak about personal circumstances but I am all ears to potential reforms of sitting hours in the operation of the parliament, particularly this place, if they make this place more relevant and in touch with our community, and as others have pointed out, it is not just us here as elected members who are here well into the night. Indeed, it's about far more people than us; but that review is not what we've been asked to debate today. I'll support the motion because I believe it makes this place more relevant and in touch with my community. Thank you.

[8.22 p.m.]

**Mr DUIGAN** (Windermere) - Can I add my congratulations to the member for Huon for her inaugural speech, which I found entertaining and illuminating and most enjoyable. So thank you and welcome, and I would also take this opportunity to thank the member for Launceston for bringing forward this motion. I know that is not something she does lightly, but I'm very pleased to stand to speak in support of the motion, and I will do so in the spirit that it is put forward: briefly and succinctly.

It's not the first time that I have voiced my support for time limits on speaking in this Chamber, and I'm happy to say that my position hasn't changed from that initial debate in which I took part in, I think it was 2023, when we were asked only to give consideration to the introduction of time limits. The Legislative Council of Tasmania, as has been discussed, is one of the very, very few Chambers, certainly in the country, and indeed, I think in the Westminster democratic pantheon of parliaments across the world, that doesn't have some form of speaking limit, and because it has been that way for 200 years doesn't necessarily mean it's right. Indeed, when we typically come across a law which is that old, it typically means it's in need of a refresh, given the evolving nature of the communities we represent.

So, I believe it's time for us to reflect on how we operate here in this Chamber, and this is an opportunity for us to consider a more contemporary model. I think it is a balanced,

even-handed opportunity for us to look at what speaking limits might look like in this Chamber. Again, I would reflect on the unusual nature of the LegCo here in Tasmania being one of the very few that doesn't have any sort of limit. Typically, again, when we legislate, and we would point to outliers, typically they are not at the cutting edge. Time limits support orderly proceedings while preserving members' rights to contribute. They encourage focused, relevant and concise contributions that assist the House in reaching informed decisions. I believe the speaking limits outlined in the motion will provide ample time for all to make meaningful contributions and to scrutinise and question legislation, as is the work of this Chamber.

An argument that can't be made in one hour, I would say, probably can't be made in two. This is not about thwarting debate or silencing democracy; it's not about quietening the critics. It is about finding a best-practice model to make the most effective and efficient use of our time representing the people of our communities. Effective debate is not measured by its length; it is measured by the quality of the arguments presented and the scrutiny applied to the legislation and public policy.

Introducing reasonable limits will encourage members to focus on key issues, improve the flow of debate and, as I say, make better use of the time available to the House. Parliaments must continue to evolve to meet contemporary expectations, and I believe it is a good step for us to take in that direction. I apologise if this is already been said, but according to the third president of the United States:

the most valuable of all talents [is] that of never using two words where one will do.

I support the motion.

[8.27 p.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Before I begin my contribution, I'd like to add my sincere congratulations to the honourable member for Huon. I've just done a count: I have listened to 25 inaugural speeches. In fact, I could count myself: 26. That's number of people who have left this place and been replaced. There's been a plethora of wonderful contributions, and yours is certainly one of those.

I rise to speak on this motion and would like to acknowledge the honourable member for Launceston for her long-held advocacy to these proposed changes, as well as her willingness to listen to feedback, which I believe has helped shape the motion before us today. I was one of those members who did offer a contribution to the honourable member when I saw the first motion that was put forward. I indicated that, regardless of the government's position, as the member for McIntyre, I couldn't support the limits that the honourable member had first proposed. There was some thought about what a new time limit might look like for the second reading contributions, and the honourable member came up with one hour.

As a number of members would know, I have previously expressed concerns around the introduction of time limits in this Chamber. I did go back and read some of those comments, as you would expect one to do, and those concerns have always centred on one key point: ensuring the ability of members to scrutinise legislation and to represent the views of our communities. I've heard that a lot today and certainly endorse that view. That remains my guiding principle.

However, having carefully considered the motion before us today, I am satisfied that what is being proposed strikes a balanced and workable approach. Importantly, this is not open-ended. It presents a Sessional Order with clear parameters, with built-in flexibility. I will walk through a few of the elements of the motion.

Firstly, the application of the order is limited to specific stages of debate: second reading speeches, committee stage contributions, and third reading speeches. I'll have a little bit more to say about those third reading speeches a little bit later in my contribution. I feel it's important that it recognises these are the structured parts of our legislative process where some consistency in timing, I believe, would assist with the conduct of business of this Council.

Secondly, in relation to second reading speeches, members will have - as I've already indicated - up to 60 minutes to contribute. In my view, that is a significant point. Sixty minutes should provide adequate opportunity for any member to put forward a considered and comprehensive contribution, allowing for detailed analysis, for the inclusion of community views and for the articulation of concerns or support for legislation. To my mind, this is not an unreasonable arrangement.

Thirdly, at the Committee stage, each member retains the ability to speak up to three times on a question, with each contribution limited to 15 minutes. Again, I see this as a practical balance. Committee stage is often where the detailed examination occurs, and the ability to speak multiple times is preserved with a framework that encourages focused contributions. This has always been my understanding of how the committees stage process is best approached.

Fourthly, the third reading time limits. I want honourable members to know that I have circulated amendment. I listened carefully to all contributions and I know that we don't often speak on third reading contributions because it has to be new and compelling information on a piece of legislation, but I did feel, after listening to the contribution, particularly from the member for Murchison, that the 15 minutes wouldn't really allow for someone to prosecute an argument and put forward some of that new and compelling information.

Hence, I put forward an amendment to the 15 minutes, and I thought for ease of all of that around the third reading that everything is made to 30 minutes. That means, 30 minutes for the mover and 30 minutes for other members. Considering these four points, there is a clear logic in the structure that is being proposed by the honourable member moving the motion.

However, the most important part of this motion, the part that gives me confidence to support it, is the flexibility that has been built into the arrangements. The motion explicitly allows for extension of time and by leave of the council or by motion without notice, determined without debate. Importantly, that motion must be set, must set out who the extension applies to, how much additional time is sought, and why it is needed.

I believe that's a sensible safeguard and provides that flexibility that would possibly be required. It means that where a matter is complex, where legislation is technical, or where there are significant community issues at stake, members are not prevented from speaking further. They simply need to make the case to the Chamber.

In that sense, the control remains with the council, not with an arbitrary rule. I've always said that not all contributions in this Chamber are about persuasion, and I certainly support

what has been said by other members in regard to that. Much of what we do is about placing information on the public record; information that reflects the voices of our constituents and the issues that matter to them. I believe nothing in this motion prevents that.

It's also worth noting that it is a Sessional Order applying to the duration of the 52nd Parliament, or until any further order is made. I'd like to think it would possibly last for more than a month, as perhaps the honourable member proposing the motion had indicated 'a month or three years or whatever'. But, of course, that's not up to me. That gives the council an opportunity to assess how these arrangements operate in practice and how they work should be evident. The council retains the ability to revisit them, and this is not a permanent change without recourse. It is a measured step that can be evaluated over time.

I do not support imposing limits that would undermine scrutiny or silence members, and in this case with this motion I do support practical reforms that improve how we conduct our business, provided they retain flexibility and fairness.

On balance, I am satisfied that this proposal achieves that and, accordingly, will be supporting the motion moved by the member for Launceston and can advise that the government is also supportive of the motion. And, as I flagged in my contribution, I do have a series of amendments and I also have added to the changes to the time limits the amendment which addresses the matter that was raised by the member for Murchison about the removal of 5A2 and inserting 8A2, so I took the opportunity to put that on the one series of amendments, so I acknowledge the member for Murchison raised that in her contribution.

Amendments proposed by the member for McIntyre, Ms Rattray, myself:

### **Paragraph 6A**

*Leave out 15 minutes*

Insert instead 30 minutes.

### **Paragraph 6B**

*Leave out 15 minutes*

Insert instead 30 minutes.

### **Paragraph 6C**

*Leave out 10 minutes*

Insert instead 30 minutes.

### **Paragraph 8B**

*Leave out 5A2*

Insert instead 8A2.

As I've already flagged and asked members to consider that I thought, for the ease of making it simpler, if all of those references to the third reading opportunity is all 30 minutes, that would make it simpler and not be just picking a time there when it was changing from 15 minutes and then one was changing to 30 minutes which was, 'any other member may speak up to' and it said '10 minutes', I thought for fairness that everyone has that 30 minute opportunity.

I'm happy to listen to members' thoughts around that proposed amendment and I've appreciated this opportunity as well to discuss this important matter about the function of our House.

[8.38 p.m.]

**Ms WEBB** (Nelson) - I would like to put on the record my views on amendments. I appreciate the intent that the member for McIntyre has in presenting the amendments. It makes sense to fix up the inaccuracy that was there in terms of that 8A2 instead of 5A2, so, that's pretty straightforward. A no-brainer for that one.

With the other ones, yes, it gives them more generous amount of time, which is partially in an effort to address the issue that member for Murchison spoke about in some detail in her contribution. I suspect if the member for Murchison at this point in time were she here would say, however, it's fairly arbitrary to come up with numbers to substitute instead, and would also just point to the fact that this all could be done in a way that was more appropriately considered, consulted on, and have an actual reason behind it rather than just be arbitrary, given that that's a significant fundamental problem with this motion in the first place. I'm not going to oppose the amendments. However, they still have the same shortcomings that the motion itself has, so, I put that on the record.

### **Amendments agreed to.**

[8.39 p.m.]

**Ms THOMAS** (Elwick) - Before I commence, I, too, as other members have, congratulate the member for Huon on a very articulate and well-delivered inaugural speech, and it was interesting to hear, as others have said, how you've got to this place, and we look forward to your contributions as you continue to contribute to the debate.

I rise today in support of this motion and in support of what I believe is a modest, reasonable and practical reform to the way this House conducts its business. At its heart, this motion asks a simple question. What is the purpose of debate in this Chamber?

Is it to allow members to test ideas, scrutinise legislation and persuade one another through reasoned time-limited argument, or is it simply to permit members to speak indefinitely because they can? I suspect most Tasmanians would say the answer is obvious.

The Legislative Council is one of the oldest parliamentary institutions in Australia. We are proud of our traditions, we are proud of our independence, we are proud of our reputation as a house of review. But tradition should be preserved because they continue to serve a useful purpose, not simply because they have always existed.

The absence of speaking time limits in this chamber is often cited as one of our distinctive features, but distinctiveness by itself is not a virtue. The question we should ask is whether the

absence of time limits assists us to perform our primary function as a legislative chamber more effectively. I've come to the conclusion that it does not.

This motion does not seek to silence debate and does not seek to diminish scrutiny or reduce the rights of members. What it seeks to do is ensure that debate remains focused, purposeful and accessible while preserving every member's ability to put their views before the council.

The proposed limits are, by any objective measure, generous. A member speaking on a second reading may speak for up to 60 minutes. Every other member may also speak for up to 60 minutes. The mover retains a 60-minute right of reply. Committee stage allows members to speak multiple times on the same question and amendments may be debated repeatedly. Third-reading speeches remain available, and these are not restrictive provisions. If anything, they reflect a recognition that scrutiny is an important part of our work and that members should be afforded substantial opportunities to contribute, but they also acknowledge something equally important, that effective scrutiny is not measured by the number of hours consumed.

A famous quote often attributed to 17th century French mathematician, physicist and philosopher Blaise Pascal reads:

I would have written a shorter letter, but I did not have the time.

The significance of that observation is often misunderstood. Pascal was not suggesting that lengthy communication demonstrates greater effort or greater intellect. Quite the opposite. He was recognising that brevity requires discipline. It requires a person to identify the strongest arguments, discard the weakest ones and present their case with clarity and precision.

Anyone can speak at length. The greater challenge is speaking effectively.

The same principle applies to parliamentary debate, as it absolutely should. The strength of an argument is not measured by its duration. A compelling argument remains compelling whether it is delivered in 10 minutes or 60. Likewise, a weak argument does not become stronger simply because it is repeated for three or four hours.

Indeed, if a member requires several hours to make a point, it is fair to ask whether the point itself is sufficiently clear, sufficiently focused or sufficiently persuasive. We're not elected merely to speak in this place. We're elected to make decisions and scrutinise legislation and hold governments to account. And we are elected to do these things in a way that respects both the institution and the people we represent.

We rightly pride ourselves on being a house of review and that title carries responsibilities. An effective house of review must examine legislation carefully, identify flaws, seek improvements, and hear diverse views. They must also be capable of reaching conclusions, and I would argue reaching conclusions in a timely and effective manner underlines the critical importance of this place.

Review delayed by needlessly lengthy contributions undermines the tasks that we seek to perform, and we should not mistakenly be in a situation where scrutiny becomes an end in itself because ultimately that ceases to be effective scrutiny.

The people of Tasmania expect legislation to be examined thoroughly. They also expect the parliament to function effectively and efficiently. Those expectations are not contradictory. In fact, they are complementary.

Good parliamentary procedure should facilitate both scrutiny and decision making, and the proposal before us helps to achieve that balance. As a house of review we should be prepared to review our own dynamics. The Tasmanian people expect us to provide a contemporary standard of decision making and scrutiny and not be afraid to look at our own rules to ensure we are delivering the very best outcomes.

I firmly believe that holding on to rules simply because they have been in place for a long time is the antithesis of what this house stands for. We should be prepared to examine these matters and not hide behind history or quaint legacy.

There is another aspect of this proposal that deserves consideration: one of the greatest strengths of the Legislative Council is that every member enters this Chamber on an equal footing. Every member possesses one vote, as the member for Rumney clearly articulated earlier. Every member represents a distinct electorate and has the right to contribute to debate. Yet, unlimited speaking times can, paradoxically, undermine that equality. When contributions are uncapped, the amount of time available to debate a matter can become disproportionately occupied by a small number of members. That may not be deliberate; it may simply be the natural consequence of differing speaking styles and approaches. Nevertheless, the result can be that some voices occupy a much larger share of the proceedings than others.

Reasonable time limits help create a more level playing field. They encourage members to focus their key arguments while ensuring a greater number of perspectives can be heard within a reasonable time frame. That is particularly important in a Chamber such as ours, where members bring a diverse range of professional, community and regional experiences to the debate. The value of parliamentary deliberation is not measured solely by how long we speak; it's measured by the breadth of viewpoints that are heard and considered collectively on behalf of all of our constituents. A debate that accommodates 10 well-prepared contributions may well provide greater scrutiny than a debate dominated by one or two lengthy speeches.

Another reason I support this motion is that it addresses the potential for filibustering. Now, I want to be careful here, because I do not suggest that members of this place frequently engage in deliberate filibusters, nor do I question the sincerity with which any member approaches debate. However, parliamentary rules are not created solely for ordinary circumstances. They are created to address the circumstances that may arise in the future. The reality is that unlimited speaking rights creates the possibility of obstruction. Sometimes that obstruction may be intentional, sometimes it may be unintentional. The outcome, however, is often the same: business is delayed, proceedings are prolonged and the focus shifts from the merits of legislation to the endurance of participants. That is not healthy for any parliamentary institution.

We should defeat arguments because they are unpersuasive; we should support arguments because they are compelling. We should not determine political outcomes on the basis of who can remain standing and speaking the longest. Debate should be a contest of ideas, not endurance events. Politics should not be the parliamentary equivalent of survival of the fittest, and the existence of reasonable speaking limits ensures that legislative outcomes are determined on merit rather than on a member's capacity to consume time. The challenge for

every parliament is to find a balance between permitting strong dissent and ensuring that business can ultimately proceed. I believe the motion before us strikes that balance.

Nothing in this proposal prevents vigorous opposition. Nothing prevents detailed examination of legislation, and nothing prevents members from expressing concerns, exposing flaws, or arguing passionately for amendments. The only thing this motion does is establish the principle that debate should progress. That is an entirely reasonable expectation. It is also worth considering the practical consequences of unlimited debate. One of those consequences is the increased likelihood of late-night sittings. Anyone who has spent time in parliamentary institutions knows what happens when debates extend for many hours beyond their expected duration: members become fatigued, staff become fatigued, parliamentary officers become fatigued and the quality of debate can decline, the quality of decision-making can decline, and the public's ability to follow proceedings can decline. None of this strengthens parliamentary democracy: quite the opposite. Parliament should not be most accessible when the vast majority of Tasmanians are asleep.

If one of our goals is to encourage public engagement with the work of this Chamber, then proceedings that stretch deep into the evening and into the early hours of the morning are hardly conducive to that objective. Most Tasmanians have jobs, many have family responsibilities and many wish to engage with the issues before this parliament. We should make that engagement easier rather than harder. Reasonable speaking limits contribute to more predictable proceedings and therefore to greater public accessibility. We should not be relying on mechanisms that, inadvertently or otherwise, increase the likelihood that important legislative debate is hidden behind the cloak of darkness. We should be embracing those which make this Chamber's role accessible as well as relevant. There is also human dimension to this issue -

**Ms O'Connor** - I look forward to you asking for more sitting days.

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Order.

**Ms THOMAS** - Just to clarify a point of order, Mr President: I believe Standing Order 129 is 'member to be heard without interruption'; can you just confirm that?

**Mr PRESIDENT** - That's correct.

**Ms THOMAS** - Thank you, Mr President. There is also a human dimension to this issue. Parliament is often at its best when members are alert, engaged and capable of giving full consideration to the matters before them. Few people would seriously contend that decision-making improves after many consecutive hours of debate extending late into the night. Fatigue affects everyone. It affects concentration and judgment. It affects the capacity to absorb new information and respond thoughtfully to argument.

We should not pretend that members of parliament are somehow immune from those realities. Indeed, because the decisions we make can affect hundreds of thousands of Tasmanians, there is an even stronger argument for ensuring that debates occur in circumstances that are conducive to good decision-making. The public are entitled to expect that legislation receives its most careful consideration when members are operating at their best, not when they are exhausted after hours of unnecessarily prolonged proceedings.

This is not merely a question of convenience; it is a question of good governance. I also think we should consider this proposal through the lens of accountability. Every member of this Chamber has been elected by the people of Tasmania, and a number of members have mentioned this in their contributions. We all represent an electorate and have obligations both within and beyond this building. Our constituents expect us to debate legislation, but they also expect us to be out and about, meeting with local organisations, attending community events, responding to correspondence and advocating on their behalf.

Yes, they expect us to scrutinise government activity and they expect us to vote, but I suspect very few electors arrive at the ballot box saying their highest priority is ensuring their representative retains the ability to speak without limit for an entire afternoon or evening. What voters care about is whether we perform our role effectively, whether we understand legislation, ask good questions and improve public policy. This motion assists us to deliver these outcomes. There is also a broader question about public confidence in parliamentary institutions. Across Australia and, indeed, across many democratic societies, parliaments are frequently encouraged to demonstrate their relevance and their effectiveness to the communities they serve. People rightly expect scrutiny and accountability and robust disagreement, but they also expect parliament to conduct itself in a manner that reflects the realities of contemporary life. Modern workplaces increasingly place value on efficiency, clarity and outcomes.

Businesses do; community organisations do; local councils do; state agencies do. It is therefore unsurprising that members of the public may occasionally question why parliamentary institutions should operate according to a different standard. I'm not suggesting that parliament should function like a corporate boardroom, nor am I suggesting that legislative deliberation should be rushed. However, I do believe that we should demonstrate we take our obligation to use parliamentary time responsibly because the time we spend in this Chamber is not our time; it belongs to the people who elected us.

Every hour devoted to parliamentary proceedings carries a financial cost and an opportunity cost. It involves the resources of the parliament, parliamentary staff, officers of the house, ministerial staff and many others. Those resources should always be utilised in support of meaningful scrutiny and meaningful debate. The introduction of reasonable speaking limits sends a signal that we understand that responsibility. Some may argue that imposing limits risks diminishing the rights of individual members, and I understand that concern. Parliamentary institutions should always be cautious when considering changes to longstanding rights and practices, yet what is being proposed here is not radical. Members will continue to have extensive opportunities to contribute. Members will continue to be able to participate in committee stage on multiple occasions, to move amendments and to seek additional time through mechanisms set out in the motion.

Provision is made for flexibility. Extensions can be granted by leave, by motion. The Chair may permit members who are approaching the end of their allotted time to conclude their remarks. These safeguards recognise that exceptional circumstances may arise. That is sensible: good procedural reform is not rigid, and I applaud the member for Launceston for acknowledging this in the motion. It is principled, yet flexible. I also observe that many parliamentary chambers throughout Australia and across comparable Westminster systems operate effectively with speaking limits. Their existence has not prevented rigorous scrutiny. It has not prevented robust disagreement or strong advocacy. What it has done is encourage discipline, efficiency, and fairness in debate. I believe those are objectives worthy of support.

It's also important to remember the scale of the limits proposed, as I mentioned, they are generous. This motion does not seek to confine members to five-minute contributions or impose an artificial restraint on detailed debate. A 60-minute contribution on a bill is, by any reasonable measure, a substantial opportunity to place a position on the record. Many parliamentary chambers across Australia operate effectively with significantly shorter speaking times.

The proposition before us is not that members should speak less; it is that members should be able to make their case within a period that remains generous whilst allowing the House to progress its business. Unlimited speaking rights have existed in this Chamber until now. The question is whether unlimited speaking rights remain necessary in the future.

Every parliamentary institution evolves over time. Standing Orders evolve. Sessional Orders such as this come and go. Procedures and practices evolve. They evolve because institutions must continually assess whether existing arrangements continue to serve their intended purpose.

As a House of review, I argue it's incumbent on us to seriously consider this about ourselves. The mark of a confident institution is not that it refuses to change. The mark of a confident institution is that it is willing to reflect on its own practices and make sensible improvements where appropriate. I believe the proposal before us represents precisely that kind of improvement. It is measured, balanced and proportionate.

The question before us is not whether debate matters; of course it matters. The question is whether unlimited debate is necessary to achieve the purposes of debate, and I do not believe it is. An hour provides ample opportunity to develop and deliver an argument and where exceptional circumstances justify additional time, mechanisms remain available.

The people of Tasmania are entitled to expect a parliament that is thoughtful but not cumbersome, deliberative but not paralysed, thorough but not interminable. Tasmanians benefit when this House carefully scrutinises legislation, reaches considered conclusions and gets on with the job the people elected us to do.

The public do not judge us by the length of our speeches. They judge us by the outcomes we deliver, the decisions we make and whether we improve legislation, represent our communities and strengthen Tasmania's democratic institutions and I believe this motion will assist us in doing exactly that.

Now the question has been raised as to what problem are we trying to solve here? And I work on this question. It's one that I routinely ask in scrutinising motions and legislation before us in this place.

It's been suggested that there is no problem to solve here because it is rare for speeches to exceed an hour and that might be well so, but I offer another way to look at this. The purpose of the Standing Orders and Sessional Orders is to establish a fair and orderly framework for debate, to clearly set the expectations of the House to provide for best-practice governance in accordance with contemporary standards. Rules are not only made to respond after a problem has occurred, but they are also made to set expectations, to provide for fairness and equity and to prevent problems occurring.

If as been suggested most speeches already fall within the proposed time limits, then these changes will have little practical impact on the overwhelming majority of members. What they will do is provide consistency, encourage concise debate, and ensure the business of the House is conducted efficiently.

I've said that this there is a mechanism in the motion for a member to seek an extension of time, which means genuinely complex matters or exceptional speeches can still receive the time they deserve if the House agrees. So the rule is one of reasonable expectation, not rigid restriction, and I see this as a sensible balance.

We set general rules because they promote fairness and consistency, and we provide mechanisms for the House to depart from those rules when there is good reason. The proposed speaking limits do exactly that. This proposal therefore addresses both efficiency and flexibility without materially restricting the debate.

So for me, the question isn't whether we have a problem, it's whether these are sensible rules for a modern parliament, and I believe they are. I thank the member for Launceston for her work on this motion, and I commend the motion to the house.

[9.00 p.m.]

**Ms ARMITAGE** (Launceston) - Thank you, Mr President, and I firstly would like to congratulate the member for Huon as well. It was a very enjoyable speech actually and really good to listen to and would love to hear a lot more about some of those stories that you mentioned in it. Mr President, I also would like to thank everyone for the contributions, whether they're for or against. I think it's really important that everyone has their say. And you know, I certainly take on board the comments whether people support the motion or don't.

But I do reiterate that this sessional order is a trial, it does not permanently take away any speaking rights. We've heard that once it's gone, it's hard to get back. I don't believe that to be true because we're not giving anything away. Once the order is finished, it would have to be brought back and debated again to continue for a new government.

And perhaps at that time, the Standing Orders Committee will have looked into the matter and made a decision, yes or no, with the hindsight of the trial. Now, some may say all party members have spoken, but I see that as really good, that all electorates have a voice. So, rather than saying, you know, parties have more speak times, I see that at every electorate should actually have a say. This motion is flexible and it's temporary. There may be rare and extraordinary contributions and members can request extra time. It would simply be up to the council.

It would be up to the Standing Orders Committee to look at the standing orders and make a decision accordingly as well with regard to time limits. So, I believe the sessional order provides support to the Standing Orders Committee on their review of standing orders.

As mentioned, I have no doubt that a permanent decision in changing standing orders would involve much discussion and consultation, but this sessional order is not a permanent change. I think it's really important to point out it's not a permanent change. It is simply a trial for the continuation of this session of parliament and, of course, any member at any time, if they don't feel that it's working, can actually bring another order to cease it.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

It takes considerable time to review the Standing Orders, which is obvious, given that the issue has been with the committee since 2023 and I am hopeful that this sessional order will assist the committee whether it supports the time limits or not.

**Mr PRESIDENT** - The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

**The Council divided -**

### **AYES 9**

Ms Armitage  
Mr Duigan  
Mr Edmunds  
Ms Glade-Wright  
Mr Hiscutt  
Ms Lovell (Teller)  
Ms Palmer  
Ms Thomas  
Mr Vincent

### **NOES 3**

Mr Gaffney (Teller)  
Ms O'Connor  
Ms Webb

**Motion agreed to.**

### **STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT**

#### **Sessional Order - Time Limits Motion Is Now in Place**

[9.06 p.m.]

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Honourable members - I'll just wait for all to return. The previous motion having passed in the affirmative, I wish to remind members that the Sessional Order proposed by that motion is now in effect. For the purpose of today, that means members are now limited to one hour in speaking to the remaining notices of motion, and orders of the day on today's order of business. The clerks, with the assistance of the parliamentary ICT, are exploring a technical solution that will allow members to see the time they have remaining to speak. Until that system is in place, I would ask members to take note of the time they start their contribution, though the clerks will be recording when each speech starts, and running a timer to enable me to let members know when their time has expired.

### **STATUTORY HOLIDAYS AMENDMENT BILL 2026 (No. 14)**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill presented by Mr Hiscutt and read for the first time.**

### **STATUTORY HOLIDAYS AMENDMENT BILL 2026 (No. 14)**

**Second reading**

[9.08 p.m.]

**Mr HISCUTT** (Montgomery) - Mr President, I move -

That the second reading of the bill be made in order of the day for Tuesday next.

**Motion agreed to.**

**MOTION**

**Report of the 2024-25 Independent Review of the Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008 - Consideration and Noting**

[9.09 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Hobart) - Thank you, Mr President. Well, I thought, given what we're seeing, particularly in the Northern Hemisphere at the moment, that it was a good opportunity to have a debate on the independent review of the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008*. Submissions to that review were accepted by the independent reviewers through September last year and closed in September last year. We've been presented with an independent review report, the *2024-25 Independent Review of the Climate Change (State Action) Act Report*, and what have we had from government on it? Nothing.

Nothing out of the government on what is, and because it's not going to be a particularly long contribution, I'll go into some detail on the recommendations. This is a rigorous independent review of the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008*. It took representations from climate community organisations, community members, and it absorbed what feedback it was getting into that review process about community and public perceptions of the government's response to what is unarguably a climate emergency.

In summary, what the review found about public feedback to this government's response to the climate crisis is:

There remains an absence of defined responsibilities and measurable objectives that link planned actions to demonstrable progress in reducing emissions or building resilience.

And that is a long way of saying there has been no demonstrable progress either on emissions reduction or adaptation planning.

It goes on to say:

Stakeholder confidence in the Tasmanian Government's ability to deliver meaningful climate outcomes remains low.

No surprises there. It points out that while we have been net zero since 2014:

it is driven largely by carbon sequestration from the land-use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector, rather than broadbased decarbonisation across the economy.

I'd like to focus today in my relatively brief contribution on the complete lack of adaptation planning on the part of this government.

There is a monster El Niño that has formed in the eastern Pacific that is unlike anything scientists have ever seen before or anything that is in the geological records. There was a large El Niño, a 'super El Niño' they called it, in the late 1870s, early 1880s, and because of the intensity and strength of that El Niño in the late 1800s, it's estimated that globally around 20 million people died.

The El Niño that is boiling away in the eastern Pacific is gargantuan. We have never seen the likes of anything like it.

Sea surface temperatures. I have an app on my phone - when I want to torture myself about the state of the world - that will tell you land and sea surface temperatures anywhere you put your finger on the globe. A couple of nights ago, when I was having a look at that spot over the El Niño, the sea surface temperature in the ocean right there was 27-28°C. Just to the west of the Spanish island of Majorca, they have measured in the Mediterranean a sea surface temperature of 33°C.

Europe, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, primarily, but it's moving across Europe, is just now in its fifth extreme heat wave. We are seeing overnight temperatures in European cities in the high 20s.

It's estimated that two-thirds of England is in drought.

We have seen pictures - we're not living it right here and now - but we have seen pictures of monster fires in England; in Scotland, on those beautiful Cairngorms mountains on the outskirts of Edinburgh - fires the likes of which humanity has never seen. Fires in France right up to the city of Bordeaux. Fires sweeping through Spain; the island of Sicily; Canada, those beautiful temperate boreal forests of Canada are aflame in thousands of fires, and meanwhile, there's a heat dome sitting over the United States. I don't say this to be alarmist. It's just the facts. I don't say this to depress people, but we've got to wake up, and we have a responsibility to wake this government up, because what the scientists are telling us is that while this year will be the hottest in recorded human history, what the scientists are telling us very, very clearly, is that next year will be even hotter. Summer is coming to Tasmania and we have a government that is totally asleep at the wheel, and we should all be worried about that for our communities. It's extremely serious. There are cities burning that never saw a bushfire before in the northern hemisphere. A million people have been evacuated in the city of Shanghai in China, not because of fires, but because of an intense, previously unnatural, large atmospheric river. Typhoons, the intensity of which we've never seen before, are happening more intensely and more frequently.

The reason I wanted to just remind honourable members tonight that this government, which wants to spend more than a billion dollars building a bloody stadium at Macquarie Point, has not even responded to the review of the *Climate Change (State Action) Act*, let alone do anything about the climate. The focus tonight for me is adaptation, because I am extremely

worried about the city I represent, the people who live in it, but I'm extremely worried, as we all should be, about all our communities this summer and next summer. All of us need to be pressing the government to take it seriously. It is no exaggeration to say we are in danger. We are in danger and we've got a government that is pretending business as usual is acceptable.

Have a look at the last state Budget: cuts to the climate office, starvation funding, effectively, in the environment or the climate in which we're living, for the TFES, for Parks firefighters, not enough going into the SES. I'm hearing extremely worrying stories about fire management in Kunanyi in the Wellington Park. Buck-passing: no, it's not our responsibility, says Parks, it's the Trust's responsibility; and the Trust says, 'Oh no, it's Parks'. I don't think we should care whose responsibility it is particularly, but the need for proper investment in resilience, in community fire safety, in firefighting resources, in engaging with communities, in talking to people about having a fire safety plan, they have to be our priority and they have to be our priority now.

We do not want to be standing here this time next year, after a hellfire season on this island, wishing we'd done more to press government. We've had a long debate today about holding government to account, about scrutinising government, about making sure that we meet community expectations. Well, on all of those criteria we've got a job to do. The recommendations for the *Climate Change (State Action) Act* review, all of which are being, to date, dismissed or ignored by government, are quite straightforward, and I encourage honourable members to go and read the independent review, because at least then it won't be wasted.

First recommendation: the Tasmanian Government should establish an independent body to oversee implementation of the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008* and strengthen trust, transparency and accountability in Tasmania's climate governance. Well, obviously, and we had one of them until 2014. We had one of them under the *Climate Change (State Action) Act*. It was called the Tasmanian Climate Action Council, and the first piece of legislation that the then-environment minister, Matthew Groom, brought into the House of Assembly after they won government in 2014 was to abolish the independent scientific experts to advise government on climate mitigation and adaptation.

**Ms Webb** - We tried to put it in in this place when it came through, but of course it got blocked.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Did you? Of course it got blocked.

**Ms Webb** - Yes.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Oh, thank you for trying.

Recommendation 2: amend the *Climate Change (State Action) Act* to replace the four-year review cycle with a new statutory review period set to at least every 10 years, and there's a logic that's put in there for that which is not unreasonable. Recommendation 3, and this is a huge area of government failure: establish a separate adaptation planning process in the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008* that enables adaptation actions to be developed and delivered separately to mitigation measures. The climate change action independent review notes the lack of adaptation planning in this state and strongly recommends a separate adaptation planning process to address the gaps, to prioritise adaptation actions, strengthen

accountability and improve engagement with local government and the community, because, of course, it's those community conversations that are going to be so important in the months and years ahead.

Recommendation 4: amend the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008* to increase transparency and accountability for sectoral emissions performance, and for honourable members who have not seen the latest greenhouse gas emissions accounts, I commend them to members; but what you will see in the graphs that go back to 1990 is that the only area of the Tasmanian economy which is bringing emissions down is the land use, land use change and forestry area, and emissions across all other sectors of our economy have not come down. They're static and there's no accountability for that. We've got a government that crows about being net zero, continues to log native forests and pretends that net zero has got anything to do with anything that they've done, when even the independent review makes clear it was as a result of avoided deforestation through the Tasmanian Forest Agreement, where we were able to get the loggers out of 576,000 hectares of forest.

Recommendation 5: amend the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008* to require climate change considerations to be included in major government decisions, particularly those with significant investment value and/or emissions impact; and on this, why are we building a \$1 billion-plus stadium pretty much at sea level? I think it's a good question. I don't think it's a question the government ever asked itself, just like they've probably never paid much attention to the melting of the Antarctic ice sheet, where the Thwaites Glacier is cracking off as we speak.

Recommendation 6: review and strengthen engagement practices associated with climate change action to ensure deep, inclusive and continuous participation across all stakeholder groups, and it talks about the importance of strengthened engagement practices to embed engagement and inclusion in implementation of the act and its actions, rather than doing what governments sporadically does, which is, particularly in the context of this review, for example, every four years consult on a review of the act, so they become one-off consultation processes rather than a sustained and ongoing conversation with the community about the reality, because it's negligent to sugarcoat the truth here. People need to understand what's coming and people need to be empowered to plan and to make choices; people need to know who to call in case of an emergency. People need to know who their neighbours are. Is there an older person up the street living on their own, if there is a bush fire barrelling over the top of Kunanyi? What do we know about our neighbours, for example? Who will look after the vulnerable people in a real fire emergency in our city? Because this government is not sparking those conversations, there's this huge absence of knowledge and connection, which is frightening.

Now I tell you where you will not find a climate denier, that is in the RACT in Tasmania. They understand. Again, I recommend to honourable members, go and have a chat to the CEO of the RACT and his advisers and talk to them about fire risk. Talk to them about fire risk. I mean, I had the conversation about fire risk in Greater Hobart. Go and have a chat with RACT about fire risk in in your community.

So, at least we can engage with our communities in how you keep yourself safe. And that's one of the reasons why - and everyone here is welcome to join - on the 30 September this year, my colleague Vica Bayley and I will be hosting an event at City Hall, an all-day event, which is an acclimatised event and it's an opportunity for locals to come and talk to someone

from the TFES, Red Cross, council representatives, have some information about how you need to plan.

So, I do welcome honourable members to the 30 September City Hall event, because it's that old saying, isn't it? Knowledge is power. And knowledge in this situation it might save your life, your family's life, you're elderly disabled neighbour's life. Get the information, and I'd encourage other members to have those sorts of conversations in their communities too, because the sense I get is that people are crying out for information.

When we have information, there's something calming about that. If we have a plan, if we know who to call, if we know that the emergency services will be there when we call them or need them, that is calming.

Recommendation No. 7, final recommendation:

Develop and implement a comprehensive communications and engagement strategy to improve transparency and visibility of progress under the act.

Now we've had a couple of opportunities now since the last election and since this review was brought down to talk to ministers about how they'll respond to this review. It was a very disappointing engagement with the former and now disgraced minister for climate change, Ms Ogilvie, at the Estimates table in September last year, where I was trying to engage with her on the review of the act and what the government's response would be, given that there'd been such a strong community push for strengthening of the act, and the very strong impression I was given was that there was no appetite in government to bring forward any amendments to strengthen the act in line with the recommendations of the independent review.

Then we get very unfortunate engagement with minister Abetz in last year's Estimates. We were talking about the climate review and, you know, I'm talking about ineffectual adaptation planning.

Minister, do you recognise the importance of having really contemporary climate change legislation that drives lowering emissions, because no emissions have come down in nearly 30 years, but also that drives adaptation planning because at the moment it's ad hoc and uncoordinated and it's not going to keep Tasmanian safe?

And Mr Abetz said:

What I can do, Chair, is table the breakdown of the \$250 million to which I referred previously, which I understand was a point in time in 2023, I tabled that which shows activities across a whole range of government areas totaling \$250 million.

I said:

How about addressing your mind to the question about having contemporary effective climate change legislation, which the review has suggested we don't have and that needs improving.

And he said:

I'll leave that for further consideration by the government.

I said:

You don't think it should be a priority of government to have a really contemporary piece of climate change legislation that lowers our emissions and drives proper adaptation planning?

Mr Abetz:

My answer remains.

And when I asked him about it in the Treasury portfolio in last year's Estimates, I was talking about climate change, he goes, 'That matter to which you refer,' and I said:

Can you just say the words 'climate change?'

As I said, that matter to which you refer.

We have a problem here. We have a government that doesn't take it seriously enough and in closing, I will remind honourable members of the motion that this House passed last year, September of last year, this Council agreed that it notes the growing evidence of runaway climate change, and the impact extreme weather events such as fire, flood and drought are already having on Tasmanian communities, the environment and our economy. We acknowledged the *Tasmanian Risk Assessment for Climate Change 2024*, which warns of future increases in the severity of acute extreme rain and flood conditions, acute bushfire and wind conditions, more frequent and/or intense periods of extreme heat, and declines in rainfall across the state.

We noted the *Tasmanian Government's Greenhouse Emissions Report 2025*, which confirmed carbon emissions across all sectors are not falling and that it is business as usual, despite scientists warning us of a climate in crisis. We recognise the report in a graph on page 8 of the Greenhouse Accounts, confirming the state's claim to net zero status was the result of avoided native forest logging and burning from 2012 through the Tasmanian Forest Agreement. We expressed our disappointment that the Tasmanian government is in breach of its obligations under the *Climate Change (State Action) Act* to reduce greenhouse emissions. We noted the current review of the *Climate Change State Action Act*. We agreed, this is what we did by vote, unanimously, no opposition to this.

This Council agreed: the act needs a substantial overhaul to deliver emissions reductions and prepare Tasmanians to adapt to the intensifying impacts of climate change. We collectively called on the Tasmanian government to work with scientists, the community, farmers, business and industry leaders and the parliament to ensure the act is strengthened to reflect the urgency of the times, and we all agreed that this demonstration of leadership will give more young Tasmanians hope for a safe climate future.

So, I'm absolutely certain that when the Leader for Government rises to respond to this motion, we'll have the same blah, blah, blah \$250 million blah, blah that we've been getting

since at least since the review started, but there's been complete, negligent lack of action on climate ever since the Liberals were elected 12 years ago. We'll hear more of it in the Leader for Government's response. We'll hear that the government takes this issue incredibly seriously, despite all the evidence pointing the other way, and I could almost write it, how that response will be, and I don't put this on the Leader for Government because I know these speeches are prepared for her, and in a way I don't care. I don't care who's written it; we should all care that a lot of the stuff that occupies our mind pales into insignificance relative to what is coming, and we are at this unique point in each of our lives where we have an opportunity to do something brave for the people who put us in here.

We cannot ignore this. We cannot pretend it's going to be okay. It is not going to be okay. What we need right now is for the Premier, the Treasurer, the climate minister to snap out of their torpor and their denial. I mean, some of these people who are in Cabinet now have been among the worst climate deniers in politics in this country, and what we're seeing, and we're seeing it in Europe where thousands of people have died heat-related deaths, what we know is that climate denial is deadly. So, those climate deniers, they don't deny the reality anymore. What they're trying to make us do is live with it, and we can't, we won't live with it because the fact is, the scientists will tell us this: you know when we think about 1.5 degrees? It's gone, 1.5 degrees is over, and so we start thinking about, oh, what does the three-degree world look like? It looks like extinction, Mr President, for most species on this Earth but we need to understand that what global heating actually means until we stop emitting and find some way to remove this enormous body of carbon from the atmosphere, what it actually means is it's just going to get hotter and hotter and hotter and hotter, so how did we keep our people safe in that scenario? Well, let's do the bite sized chunk and just think about the next year.

All of us should be asking the government what they're doing to keep our communities safe because the answer right now is close to nothing, and it really is close to nothing, and that is something that is deeply worrying, so my questions to the government are:

- When are you going to get serious about the science of climate?
- When will you fix this act up so it does the job that the parliament in 2008 intended it do?
- Do you accept the science?, and
- What are you doing to keep Tasmanians safe this coming summer and the next?

[9.36 p.m.]

**Mr GAFFNEY** (Mersey) - I rise to speak on the motion by the honourable Ms O'Connor regarding the 2024-25 Independent Review of the Climate Change or the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008*.

I'd like to begin by thanking the honourable member for bringing forward this motion. The proper and prudent management of Tasmania's climate is essential to our future and that of our state. Indeed, it is a fair point to make that the current generation of leaders are the custodians of our environment and are at a pivotal point in our history.

I won't go over the recommendations as outlined by the member very well. I will make a few comments though.

Tasmanians, and indeed the world are at large, are at a point of no return with regard to the climate crisis. Indeed, we're also at a point in which our knowledge about our impact on

the environment and our capacity to do something make meaningful change for the better intersecting.

Our understanding of our environment and our impact on biodiversity, the climate and ecosystems are greater than ever before. Additionally, our ability and indeed the incentives to act as high as they've ever been. Cost efficient clean energy solutions, innovative approaches to wildlife conservation and strong legal frameworks to protect our environment - it has been very disheartening to see a trend in the world order away from climate pragmatism. It's not a case that climate activism is being curbed into responsibility, rather we are seeing reduced investment and restrictive government agendas in climate management. Even those who have in past times championed the climate crisis, either find themselves reliant on fossil fuel data, fossil fuels due to global crisis and war, or silently falling in lockstep with allies who no longer wish to pursue the climate agenda.

Of course, Mr President, it's not all bad. There is progress in the right direction and Australia continues to see significant opportunities to improve its response to climate, to protect our significant biodiversity, our unique native flora and fauna and manage our contribution to the climate crisis but not enough.

Indeed, Mr President, this report represents exactly one such opportunity. It was pleasing to read, Mr President, that several interim recommendations were made in a report, alongside recommendations to improve management, culture and practice, as opposed to mere legislative updates.

I digress slightly here. Two weeks ago, I attended the Tasmanian Tourism Conference for two days. It was an excellent conference and they had some world-class speakers and I was extremely impressed by a lot of the presentations.

There was a very eloquent speaker from Spain talking about the impact in 2035 which is only eight years away and how they have sanctioned in the area that he was living in a 2.5° heat increase in eight years' time. In eight years' time, he said, how is that going to impact Tasmanian tourism?

He said a lot of those places which survived tourism at the moment won't be able to take tourists because they won't be able to cater for them.

What are we going to do here in Tasmania when you have people who are not going to be able to travel because there are floods, there are wild winds, there are fires? How are you going to compensate people who may want to book online and that sort of thing?

It was a real eye opener for me. It was a real shock because it was eight-nine years away; and a 2.5° to 3° heat increase in Spain, and that was quite scary. It was funny the reaction by some of the members, they thought, I like that speaker, and I like that speaker, I didn't like that guy from Spain, and it was quite interesting, the way that they - some of them - responded to what he was putting on the table and in front of it, and it was about how are we going to manage that heat crisis as a tourism organisation. So, when you're thinking eight, nine years, some of our younger members of the group, that's not going to make them very old at all, and they're going to have to be working with this over the next so many years. It was a real shock to me.

I think it's all too easy to sink into the weeds of legislative reform, an easier way out for governments who do not want to take action is to say the legislation is not good enough. In turn, this gives an easy out to any government that wants to shirk from its duties. They can just argue that it's too hard to get this through parliament, we are trying our best, and there are other priorities. Mr President, it's a fact that the current climate legislation, as well as other environmental management regulatory frameworks, are in need of reform. As we've just heard. However, it is also a reality that the legislative process allows, regulates, the high and perceived barrier that arises from the parliamentary processes. Internal practises, communication and process management are ground up processes that are often cost-effective, and deliver significant, and timely improvements, rather than top-down. I should take time to stress that I'm not suggesting our legislation does not need reform, that our regulatory framework should not be updated, indeed, the review itself notes that it's important that transitional interim recommendations not be conflated with long-term strategic reform. Nonetheless, iterative approaches to policy reform and improvement are a strong path forward. I also am a bit disappointed that in 2014, our climate change office was disbanded, basically.

Tasmania as a world leader, or could be a world leader, in our environmental footprint. This is in no small part due to the untouched forested Tasmanian wilderness. It is also quite easy to hide in our environmental assets as an excuse to argue that our success is due to the government policy. The ubiquity of our natural environment, make it very easy to overlook, or perceive, that we are doing more than what we really are. In this sense, is not a chicken and egg debate, our environmental assets preceded us, and it is the duty of a responsible government to protect them, to capitalise on them, sustainably. If anything, a greater onus is on Tasmania to innovate, to push forward, in strong environmental management. With our environmental assets Tasmania cannot stagnate in our practises, but rather we must ensure that the need of our environment comes at the forefront of decision making. Indeed, the Act was innovative in that way, there was a strong step in the right direction.

To continue making steps in the right direction, we must make continuous, iterative progression. Indeed, the report itself is such an example, and I go back to what the honourable member mentioned about what's happening in the Antarctic, and many of us went to the CSIRO, the Antarctic - in the reception area here, and we listened to some of the scientists that were there speaking about the ice cap, and what was happening down there, and how that was going to impact on many of the smaller islands in the Pacific, and on Tasmania, and sea-level rises. Whilst I'm not going with the stadium thing, I live in the area of Port Sorrell, and showing how much of that area estuary is going to be underwater within the next eight years is quite amazing, and how that's going to impact. We're well behind on our coastal strategies, well behind. Somewhere it's going to hit the fan, and we are going to be left wondering.

I'm not having a crack at this government, that you're the government that's in charge at the moment, but somewhere this government, and successive governments, need to get on top of this. In more than just, we've got forests, and that's where we get our, whatever.

Broadly, the recommendations arising from the review are pragmatic, rational and strong. They push for better decision-making, communication, and building a sense of trust, legitimization of the governmental decision-making processes. Recommendations towards trust, legitimacy, integration, and community participation are significant, as was mentioned. Not only do they support proper strong decision-making, but they encourage a civic democracy. They encourage active, trusting, participation by Tasmanians to engage with, and support our environment.

In a way, Mr President, I'm somewhat disappointed that our recommendations involve encouraging better policy, better decision-making, and better transparency, communication, trust-building. It is equally disappointing that these recommendations suit not just climate legislation but general governmental practice, and I think most of us can remember, probably 18 months ago, I saw something throughout the younger generation coming through our high schools and primary high schools that one of their major concerns is climate and what that impact is going to have on them and for the future. And they're quite frightened by it and with good reason, I think and so therefore, there's a lot that we have to do in this space.

This is not necessarily just a matter of increasing spend, Mr President, indeed, it is as much a matter of messaging, prioritisation, communication, engagement with Tasmanians. In closing, Mr President, I would like to thank the honourable member for her motion and her ongoing advocacy regarding climate issues and many members in this place at the forefront of leadership within our communities, and I appreciate her contribution in this space, as do many other Tasmanians from across the political spectrum. It is an ongoing matter of significance to Tasmania indeed, this government must continue to improve.

The report is an important step towards such improvement, and it's pleasing that the government has acknowledged and recognised the recommendations of the report, indeed announcing it would take some steps towards addressing the opportunities identified. However, as noted by the honourable member for Hobart, there is definite lack of action by this government. Nonetheless, I stress the importance of ongoing genuine government commitment in this area. I note the report and commend the motion. I just hope it impacts and effects some change in what's happening at a leadership level.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

**Mr PRESIDENT** - The question is the motion agreed to the honourable member for Huon.

[9.46 p.m.]

**Ms GLADE-WRIGHT** (Huon) - Mr President, I acknowledge the motion moved by the member for Hobart. It's great that we review the act regularly. I had a glance over the review last night. Look, I won't repeat all of the arguments that you've made in your contribution just for the sake of brevity, but I do want to note that the review found a strong foundation for climate action, but implementation remains too procedural and has yet to demonstrate measurable emissions reduction or resilience outcomes.

So look, I echo all of the concerns as detailed by the member for Hobart and the member for Mersey. I lend my support to the motion which asks us just to consider and note the review, and I really hope that the government will do the same.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[9.47 p.m.]

**Ms THOMAS** (Elwick) - Thank you, Mr President, I just rise briefly also to put on the record my thanks to the member for Hobart for bringing this to us for consideration this evening and put on the record my support that the government respond.

I had a meeting recently with some members of my community who have written to me. I think they might have written to all members of the Tasmanian Parliament in fact, a jointly signed letter by over 40 organisations expressing concern about Tasmanians feeling the impacts of climate change and referring to the review of the Climate Change State Action Act that is the subject of this motion and noting as it is, it's a rare opportunity for climate leadership to respond to what is an urgent reality and it's a chance for Tasmania to take meaningful action and prepare for what is coming. They are calling at a minimum for three vital and urgent priorities for amendments to the Act.

- (2) A legislated absolute emission reduction target and a process for getting there.
- (3) An independent climate body with Palawa representation.
- (4) A legislated whole of state climate adaptation plan.

The member for Hobart went into more detail about that particular item and look Mr President, I'm no expert on the environment or climate change. I really appreciate the passion and contribution of the member for Hobart and other members in this place on this topic. But I do care deeply about the environment and about climate change, I acknowledge that it is real and I, on behalf of the people I represent in my community who are concerned about this I really wanted to convey that and put that on the record and urge the government to respond and to act. It's not an easy issue to address. I acknowledge that it's not an easy issue to address and at a local government level, councils have a role to play and certainly as mayor, you know, with some funding from the state government, councils were able to take collective effort and that was really well received by the community. But there is a lot more councils can do, but they need to be resourced to do it and there needs to be a mature conversation about how that resourcing occurs. Maybe it is some funding from state government, maybe it is some sort of rates contribution as well from residents - whatever it takes, because it's necessary and there's increasing awareness in our community of how necessary it is and increasing concern - and what struck me about the members of the community that I met with about this was they said, you know, we're not climate activists, we're not environmentalists, we're parents and we're grandparents who are concerned about the future for our kids.

That really demonstrated to me that that the difference the the sort of the shift in conversation about this issue and this letter that is jointly signed by over 40 organisations is signed by organisations including TasCOSS, Grandparents Can, Unions Tasmania, Surfrider Foundation Australia, United Firefighters Union of Australia, CPSU, Parents for Climate. A whole wide range of organisations that are not just environmental organisations, that's not necessarily their primary focus.

So I'll leave my contribution at that, but I again thank the member for Hobart and look forward to the government's response.

[9.51 p.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge the honourable member for Hobart and your continued advocacy for this important issue and also acknowledge other contributions as well on again on this important issue. The Tasmanian Government welcomes the opportunity to note the report of the 2024-25 Independent Review of the Climate Change State Action Act of 2008.

The Government has carefully considered the findings and recommendations of the independent review and will release and table its formal response this week. Importantly, the review found that Tasmania's Act provides a clear and stable foundation for climate action and confirmed the legislative planning, reporting and review requirements have been delivered as intended.

The Government's focus is therefore on continuing to deliver practical climate action while strengthening its existing framework in response to the reviews recommendations, Tasmania has maintained net 0 greenhouse gas emissions since 2014 and has a legislated target of net 0 emissions or lower from 2030.

The latest official data show Tasmania's net emissions in 2024 were -4.56 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, a 123.5 per cent reduction from the 1990 baseline. Since the significant amendments to the ACT in 2022, government has delivered Tasmania's Climate Change Action Plan, the first statewide climate change risk assessment, six sector-based emissions reduction and and resilience plans and a whole of whole of economy road map.

More than \$250 million in whole of government investment supports the Climate Change Action Plan, with a further \$3.6 million committed to implementation of the sector plans. Those plans are translating policy into practical action. This includes supporting low emissions livestock initiatives on farms and carbon sequestration, climate innovation by Tasmanian businesses, community climate action and measures to reduce transport emissions.

In transport, for example, government programmes have supported seven electric delivery vans and 34 cargo e-bikes for Tasmanian small businesses. The latest charged smart round is supporting 11 new fast charging sites and an upgrade at Saint Helens, taking the number of charged smart funded public fast charging stations to 43 once current projects are completed. The government are also strongly focused on adaptation. Tasmania's first statewide climate risk assessment identified 40 climate related risks and opportunities across our natural, social, built and economic environments, and government has established a clear program to build resilience and improve preparedness. They have also committed \$1.8 million for the for the University of Tasmania's Climate Futures Group to produce new fine-scale climate projections, at a resolution of four kilometres or better, giving communities, businesses and governments better information to plan for Tasmania's future climate, and finally, the government climate capability framework is now being implemented across agencies to strengthen consideration of climate risks and opportunities in government decision making. This includes work on guidance, training and decision support tools and identifying opportunities to embed climate considerations into existing government processes and the government response this week will build on this substantial body of work and set out how it will continue strengthening practical evidence-based climate action for Tasmania.

In regard to the questions that the honourable member for Hobart posed in her contribution, and she was very direct in those questions, I don't have a direct answer for those here this evening, but I'll take on board what was those four very specific questions, but also just a reminder that there will be an independent review that the government will release their formal response this week. So, that's my offering and, of course, the government supports the member's motion.

**Ms O'Connor** - Thank you, Leader.

[9.57 p.m.]

**Ms WEBB** (Nelson) - Thank you, Mr President. I rise to make contribution in support of this motion. Absolutely. Because the world is burning. Half a decade ago, a statement such as that would have been decried as alarmist or histrionic or worse, and now, sadly, it's merely a factual observation.

The BBC has reported that UK drought officials declared on Monday this week that 71.3 per cent of England to now be officially in drought, including the entirety of Wales. In England, 45 million people are currently living in a drought and with at least 27 million facing water-use restrictions. Continental Europe is coming to terms with unprecedented wildfires, heat and dry conditions, as is Canada, and I'm just going to pause for a moment because just rattling that off sounds quite dry, and easy to dismiss, and easy just to skim over. But of course, it has a real human toll, and by that I mean a toll of human lives that we're talking about here. It doesn't take much to dig up some data on that. By all indications, and this is reports from *The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change*, that tells us that global heat related deaths have surged by over 60 per cent compared to the 1990s. Average annual global deaths have risen from 335,000 in the 1990s to roughly 546,000 in the most recent decade, from 2012 to 2021. The thing about that too is it's not dispersed evenly across our communities. The risk of death from heat, from climate change induced heat, it actually is, according to the World Health Organisation, that heat related mortality, specifically for people over the age of 65, has increased by roughly 85 per cent globally, comparing recent years to the early 2000s. That's just in the last quarter of a century, over 65 globally, you've increased your risk of death 85 per cent. My goodness me. Tasmania is an ageing population so far we seem to have felt lucky here about these impacts, but we can't be complacent about that, and we also know, apart from heat, in some cases there are areas globally and here in this country where we've seen locations subjected to equally terrifying floods and it feels over recent years that we're now ossifying our weather patterns, perhaps into mega seasons where in one half of the year we see one hemisphere in flames and vice versa for the other half of the year. The immediate and future ramifications for our planet, our communities, our biodiversity are nothing short of horrifying when we consider these facts which makes the motion before us now very, very timely.

Mr President, people may well ask how a state act of a relatively small island, 40° south could possibly impact on recent climactic events and global climate change policy. Well, I think it's apparent that the climate change crisis is contemptuous of complacency anywhere and everywhere globally. Every community, every jurisdiction must approach this global public policy of climate crisis as a collective responsibility with a mutual and shared agenda where every little bit of action which can be taken must be taken but additional to that, I think another significant consideration for Tasmanians, and particularly Tasmania's young people, is the need to inspire hope.

A 2025 Royal Australian College of General Practitioner's (RACGP) article published in the Australian Journal of General Practice stated the following, and I quote this:

Climate change, with its escalating natural disasters, ecological degradation and uncertain future, is not merely an environmental phenomenon but also a psychological one. Unlike past generations whose understanding of climate change was limited and disconnected to their daily life, the youth of today are acutely aware of the implications of climate change for their futures. Over 50 per cent of individuals report the environment as one of the most prevalent

issues in Australia today, with one quarter of those individuals reporting significant concern about climate change.

And of course, it's not just children affected by climate anxiety as the RACGP article acknowledges. However, it does emphasise that, and again I quote:

Evidence suggests that compared to adults, children experience more severe distress after climate events. Additionally, the constant exposure to alarming news of climate change can instil profound feelings of fear, eco-anxiety, and helplessness. The loss of biodiversity, extreme weather events, and the looming threat of environmental displacement cloud their formative years, shaping their worldview and sense of security.

As the Tasmanian Commission for Children and Young People also reiterates via its successful Ambassador Program, that many of us here will be familiar with, those ambassadors consistently raise climate change and the need to protect the environment as issues of concern for children and young people in this state.

Whether young or not so young, all Tasmanians, Mr President will be impacted in some way by the increasing climate crisis, either physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually as well as economically and socially.

Seeing Tasmania's parliament, government and other leaders roll up its sleeves and seek to do our utmost to mitigate and address the climate crisis in a coherent, socially just, accountable and effective manner will help turn despair into hope and the sense of being overwhelmed into a clear, focused sense of purpose for many across our community.

The fourth independent 2024-25 review of the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008* should provide a health check on our current and future to inspire that much-needed hope and focus, Mr President, as detailed by the honourable member for Hobart and I thank her for bringing this motion on for us to consider these things and to remind us to put this front and centre in most of our discussions in this place.

As detailed by the honourable member for Hobart, the Health Check identified via this review significant areas of complacency and concern. Complacency and concern, Mr President. These concerns include the over reliance on land carbon sinks rather than active decarbonisation across transport, industry and agriculture to maintain our net zero status.

Its complacency, Mr President, is resting on laurels of our wonderful forests and our decision some time ago not to log some of those areas. It's not active policy decisions by this government in those other areas that have driven our net zero and maintain it.

Emission trajectories outside forestry and land use sectors have barely declined over the 18-year life of this act and fragmented adaptation planning has been identified. The independent review's seven key recommendations seek to strengthen the Act to drive better outcomes, increase public confidence and ensure real action on climate change is delivered. I'm not going to go into particular detail on the areas of concern raised by the independent review report or its recommendations in detail, as much of that has already been well articulated by the member for Hobart and I endorse her comments on them.

However, I do want to focus on one statement made in the Final Review Report on page 21, which states this and I quote:

Public trust and confidence in Tasmania's climate governance is limited due to a lack of independence in the administration of the Act. While the activities in the Act have been delivered, there is low confidence that real progress will be made. Limited direct oversight and accountability mechanisms have also contributed to a perception that Tasmania is not doing enough particularly to address climate risks.

Mr President, I believe there is a direct correlation between public trust and hope. Public trust and confidence in our local system of good systems of good governance helps foster and are essential to building a sense of hope and security across our community. Particularly in light of the devastating global images and statistics bombarding our airwaves currently. Therefore, Mr President, implementation by the government of the Independent Reviews, recommendation number 1 is essential. That recommendation, just to reiterate it here, is to establish an independent body to oversee implementation of the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008* and strengthen trust, transparency and accountability in Tasmania's climate governance.

Not only would the other six recommendations then flow from this new independent body, it would, according to the Independent Review, increase accountability, reinforce transparency, more aligned with public expectations in progressing the objectives and what also aligning the state with best practice models in other jurisdictions.

Mr President, I find it will be interesting to see the government's response when it comes out as promised this week as mentioned by the leader in her contribution, on the government's behalf. Will they adopt and embrace recommendation number 1 in its totality, as intended in this review? It will be very interesting to see. It was blocked here by the government when we're trying to do it as it came through in 2022 in this place. In fact, every single effort on that piece of legislation in this chamber to put in more accountability, more oversight like an independent body to oversee things, like putting specific targets, the requirement for specific targets into various aspects of that Act. All of them were blocked, so it will be interesting to see if the government has changed its tune in the last four years since we considered the reiteration that went through this place. It will be interesting to see whether it accepts that it does need to have more independent oversight and accountability.

Of course, Mr President, though there is no one policy panacea, however, additional to all the other considerations and ramifications already detailed in the Independent Review report and the contributions here in this place about it so far, it's important to recognise the clear correlation between public trust and confidence that our leaders are taking meaningful action on the climate crisis, with tackling other recognised physical, mental and emotional impacts felt by our wider community.

To conclude, Mr President, this is a timely motion as we consider the still minimal green vegetation compared to what we would normally expect to see during the final month of winter when travelling around this beautiful island, the low water reserves. Many of us are also mentally preparing ourselves for summer around just around the corner, while wincing out of the corner of our eyes at the seemingly endless images of devastation occurring elsewhere on the globe. Rather than allow that to depress us, it should serve to motivate, timely and tangible action.

Critically, we need leadership from the state government demonstrating responsible and effective protection of Lutruwita Tasmania's environment, communities, lives and livelihoods. There's no one simple fix Mr President, I think we all recognise that.

All seven recommendations, if implemented in a timely manner and reflecting the full intent of the Independent Review, could ensure the state is on a genuine trajectory to truly be net zero. where the five sectors actually reduce carbon emissions rather than have them plateau where they were 20 years ago, which is what we see.

A genuine, focused government delivery of the report's recommendations could help foster and build resilience across our communities while ensuring, as the report states, the health and well-being of Tasmanians and future generations.

Mr President, there can be no good excuse for delaying it. We have less than half of a degree within which to do our bit to turn around the greatest environmental, social and economic challenge we have faced as a state, as a nation and a member of the global village. I look forward to hearing, while I was pleased to hear the government's response and to other members responses, and I thank them for their stated commitment and support for this effort.

I thank the member for Hobart for bringing this for consideration in the chamber today, we do need to have it front and centre of mind, and I hope that we all think about how to include a climate lens in our consideration quite overtly of any business we do in this place. It's a commitment that we could all make as representatives of our community here. So, I certainly support the motion.

[10.10 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Hobart) - Thank you, Mr. President, and I do want to thank all the honourable members who got to their feet and made a contribution on this notice of motion. The honourable members for Mersey, Huon, Elwick, McIntyre and Nelson. Thank you.

It's always good to have a debate where there's a whole acreage of common ground in the middle on this issue, so that is heartening. It's good. I think we're a Council that's capable of snapping into gear on this, and I'd love to work with my colleagues on this. I totally agree with the member for Elwick. It is not easy. It's not going to be easy. In fact, it's hard. It's hard. It'll take a lot of money, but we really don't have a choice as a community. It's going be hard, but we have to do it, so it's much better that we do it together. Just in terms of oversight, I want to flag again that there's a real opportunity for us to establish either a Joint Select Committee, it should be a Joint Standing Committee on Climate Mitigation and Adaptation, but even if you didn't want to focus on mitigation, it could be a Joint Select Committee on Emergency Preparedness, for example. There are things that we can be doing in here that we need to be doing. I'm just floating those ideas at the end of a long day, but I have found the collaboration on this issue at the table motivating, which in this space of public policy is something to hang on to, so thank you, honourable members, for your contributions. Thank you to the Leader of Government for saying she'll come back on those questions and we'll keep talking about this subject.

**Motion agreed to.**

# UNCORRECTED PROOF

## MESSAGES FROM HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

### Committee Appointments

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Honourable members, I have a message from the House of Assembly.

Mr President, the House of Assembly has appointed:

- (1) Mr Fares to serve on the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts in pursuance of Section 2, Subsection 2 of the *Public Accounts Committee Act 1970*.
- (2) Ms Howlett to serve on the Joint Session or Committee on Gender and Equality in the place of Mr Jaensch.
- (3) Ms Ogilvie to serve on the Joint Select Committee on Energy Matters in place of Mr Vermey.
- (4) Ms Howlett to serve on the Joint Sessional Committee on the Recommendations of the Final Report of the Commission of Inquiry in place of Mr Vermey, and;
- (5) Ms Ogilvie to serve on the Joint Sessional Committee on the Parliamentary Library in the place of Mr Shelton.

Jacque Petrusma,  
Speaker, House of Assembly  
11 August 2026

## TAXATION AND RELATED LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 2026 (No. 21)

### First Reading

**Bill received from the House of Assembly and read the first time.**

**Ms RATTRAY** - I move -

That the second reading of the bill be made an order of the day for Tuesday next.

**Motion agreed to.**

# UNCORRECTED PROOF

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (TARGETED REFORM) BILL 2026 (No. 10)

### House of Assembly Agreed to Council Amendments

The House of Assembly advised that it had agreed to amendments made to the bill by the Legislative Council.

## LAND USE PLANNING AND APPROVALS (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 2026 (No. 22)

### First Reading

Bill received from the House of Assembly and read the first time.

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That the second reading of the bill be made an order of the day for Tuesday next.

**Motion agreed to.**

### ADJOURNMENT

[10.16 p.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That at its rising the Council adjourn to 11 a.m. Wednesday 12 August 2026.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Ms RATTRAY** - Mr President, I move -

That the Council do now adjourn.

**The Council adjourned at 10.17 p.m.**