

Wednesday 16 October 2019

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

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, I draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Home Educated students. They will be here until 11 a.m. Welcome to parliament.

Members - Hear, hear.

QUESTIONS

Budget Cuts - Health Recruitment

Ms WHITE question to **MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY**

[10.03 a.m.]

It is an appalling and shameful fact that your Government is cutting \$450 million and slashing elective surgery procedures by 15 per cent. We know shifts for casual and part-time nurses have been cut. Staff have been told to expect vacancy control which means people are not being replaced when they resign. Against this backdrop an advertisement appeared in the weekend's paper seeking a new deputy secretary for capital programs in the Department of Health. This brand new position has a generous salary of \$260 000 a year. Over the life of the contract this position will cost around \$1.5 million, the equivalent of almost 200 new elective surgery procedures. How can you justify appointing a new, highly paid bureaucrat -

Mr Hodgman - How do you justify the pay rise you gave yourself last year?

Ms WHITE - when nearly 10 000 people are waiting for surgery and you are slashing the health budget and cutting jobs?

Mr Hodgman - Going to number one first and then worry about everyone else.

Madam SPEAKER - Premier, I would hate to give you the first warning.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. First of all, I refute the allegations in regard to this side of the Chamber. We are investing more in health and it was that side of the Chamber that cut ward nurses and shut wards. We heard that; we have seen that. It is this side of the House that is investing more in health, 32 per cent -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, through the Chair.

Ms COURTNEY - of our budget invested within our health system, up from 25 per cent. It is an absolute falsehood to suggest that this side of the Chamber is doing nothing more than investing in health.

I thank the member for highlighting that advertisement. The reason we are advertising for these roles is because the Government is investing in capital programs across our health system. We are delivering a K Block unlike your side that could not even lay a single brick.

Mr Ferguson interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Ferguson.

Ms COURTNEY - We are seeing investment in rural infrastructure and in ambulance infrastructure in our rural communities. We are seeing a master plan being developed for the LGH. We are seeing a new ward for children being delivered at the LGH at the moment. It is prudent for the Government to invest because this is what we are doing. We are investing in capital for our state. We are investing in capital for the future of our health system to deliver the best services to Tasmanians.

Ms Standen - Why do you need a new position to deliver that?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms Standen.

Ms COURTNEY - This is an important project: both the stage 2 of the Royal, the stage 2 of the LGH, the master plan, the colocation that we have proposed at the LGH with the private. We are making sure that we are delivering these projects, unlike the other side.

Dr Broad - You have had your chance.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad.

Ms COURTNEY - We saw, with their project on the waterfront, for their proposed hospital, \$10 million dollars wasted on consultants. We are prudently investing to make sure -

Ms O'Connor - You guys have been in government for five years.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Ms COURTNEY - that we can deliver these projects for Tasmanians.

Health - Access to Surgery

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.06 a.m.]

While you slash the health budget and splash cash on highly paid bureaucrats, the waiting list for surgery continues to grow. After Spencer Connelly had waited 12 months for vital skin graft surgery, his mother Alison McGee, contacted you, along with the Deputy Premier Jeremy Rockliff, and the former failed Health minister, Michael Ferguson. His wait continues. Tasmanians first

learned about the plight of Spencer Connelly in *The Advocate* on 12 September. By that time Spencer had already been waiting 14 months but it was not until Spencer's story made national headlines last week that you picked up the phone to attempt to resolve this unacceptable situation. Even then, your first instinct was to blame the staff. Why did it take so long for you to act and can you advise when Spencer will receive his surgery?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. With regard to Spencer's case, all Tasmanians would be very distressed about the circumstances that Spencer, his parents and family found themselves in. The events that have led up to Spencer's injuries have been well publicised. While I will not go into them in a range of forums, it is an area everybody would have enormous sympathy for Spencer, for his brother and for his mother. They were terrible circumstances.

We have been continuing to engage with Spencer and his family through clinicians, through my office and as has been highlighted, I have spoken to Spencer's mum -

Mr O'Byrne - Why didn't you ring her up after *The Advocate* article?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne. I am going to start the warnings now. You are first.

Ms COURTNEY - to discuss the circumstances and I have enormous empathy for her.

I have been advised that senior clinicians are putting in a plan with Spencer and his mum to do a review of his circumstances. This is not about blaming someone. This is about us having faith in our senior clinical leadership.

Ms O'Byrne - Yes, but under-resourcing a system so they could not support him.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne. Warning one.

Ms COURTNEY - It is challenging. We have many Tasmanians who find themselves in -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. It goes to standing order 45. The question to the minister was, when will Spencer Connelly get his surgery? I ask you to direct her to the question.

Madam SPEAKER - As you would appreciate, that is not a point of order under the restrictions I have under standing order 45. I will ask the minister to address the question.

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you, Madam Speaker. The member would know that it would be completely inappropriate for me to talk about an individual patient's case, either here or anywhere else.

I am expecting, as I have outlined, both here and in other places, that I am looking forward to hearing of the outcomes of that. I am not going to commit to update you on a person's circumstances, but I can reassure the member that my office, this Government, the leadership of the THS takes Spencer's case, as well as all the other cases that we see before us, very seriously.

When we look at how we prioritise clinical cases, I do leave it to the experts, which is completely appropriate. I am pleased to know they are going to do a review and I look forward to hearing the outcomes of that.

Coal Mines in Tasmania

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.09 a.m.]

We have an open letter calling on your Government to support a ban on new coal mines in Tasmania. It is signed by 34 Tasmanian organisations, including Doctors for the Environment, Australian Youth Climate Coalition, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, Renewable Energy Alliance and Agri-Energy Alliance, along with 35 academics and a whole range of individuals, including former Labor Premier David Bartlett, former environment minister, Paula Wriedt and former Speaker of the House, Andrew Lohrey.

These distinguished and passionate Tasmanians have joined the call for you to act for a safe climate and protect Tasmania's brand. On breakfast radio this morning even Senator Jacqui Lambie called the call.

Which side of history do you want to be on? Do you agree there is no place for new coal mines in Tasmania?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I have received a copy of that letter. My Government is determined to ensure that this matter is appropriately handled through the processes that I outlined yesterday, but with a very clear statement that we will not do anything as a government that negatively impacts on our brand or on our other key objectives, such as to ensure that we meet the strong targets of growth in our agriculture sector that we have set ourselves and that we are on track to achieve under our policy platform.

As I said yesterday, the coal exploration licences in question with Midland Energy go back some way. There has already been a lot of water under the bridge. As I said yesterday, there certainly is more to come with respect to this matter. In fact, they were granted no less by a Labor government back in 2008. They were allowed to continue to exist throughout the period of a Labor-Greens government. I do not recall hearing that the Labor-Greens government wanted to shut down these leases and exploration licences.

They are exploration licences - not licences to operate. Applications have been made by the company to extend the term of these licences, but the Government has not granted nor been asked to grant any mining leases on any area of these licences. No grant payment has been made to the company. The company has not completed a program for drilling or reported to MRT, as is expected. It has not yet happened.

As I said yesterday there is a process under which these matters should progress. We, as a government, follow good process. That includes complying with our obligations under the law, most notably in this case, the Mineral Resources Development Act, as the community and the

business community would expect us to do. That includes appropriately receiving any advice from the department on licences granted, including those granted under Labor-Greens governments.

I have also been very clear in saying we will do nothing to compromise or conflict with the state's best interest. That is also required of us under the law. Our policy position is very clear that we do not support mining on productive agricultural land; certainly, where it is not in the best interests and it conflicts with our clear and stated policy to grow the value of agriculture.

In that context I consider it an improbable proposition and very unlikely that the licences will be granted, renewed or that any mining leases in the area be approved, but appropriate processes under law must also be followed. We will strongly continue to support our mining and minerals industry. The coal mining industry has a long history in our state. It supports jobs in existing operations, particularly in the Fingal Valley and at Railton.

Ms O'Connor - Yes, but they've got no future.

Mr HODGMAN - I do not recall the Greens, when they were in government, ever wanting to ban them or shut them down.

Ms O'Connor - No new coal mines.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr HODGMAN - I recall the time when the Greens were in fact championing coal fire. We have been able to dig out an old report where coal-fired power was the 'best option' -

Tasmania's environmental lobby has expressed its preference for coal-fired thermal power generation over the construction of more hydro power dams.

The Director of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society ... Dr Bob Brown said yesterday that if there was to be a new power station then coal-fired thermal was the 'best centralised option we have'.

As is often the case, the Greens pick and choose as it suits them. If we followed their Leader where would we be on the renewable energy development that is occurring under this Government, which will have us as 100 per cent renewable by 2022?

We will continue to ensure that our state's best interests are front in mind; that we comply with process and the law as is required of us. That gives confidence to the community and should do so. Notwithstanding the hysteria that the Greens will endeavour to whip up, our position on this is very clear.

Budget Cuts - Health Frontline Services

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.16 a.m.]

The Australian Medical Association has exposed your blatant dishonesty about protecting frontline services from your savage cuts. AMA Vice President John Davis has warned that any cuts

will cause catastrophic damage to already overstretched services. This is the question that John Davis has asked -

How can you take money out of a system when there are still ambulances ramping at our major hospitals, people staying too long in the emergency departments due to the lack of in-patient beds, and patients are being left languishing on the elective surgery waiting list.

Will you provide an answer to Dr Davis and all Tasmanians who want to know why you have broken your promise not to cut frontline services?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I ask her whether she is going to provide an answer to the people of Tasmania about whether she has a health policy?

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Excuse me, could we please have a bit of decorum here? I have missed whatever went on but it did not sound very good. Please proceed.

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I want to make it very clear to the other side, and also to the people of Tasmania, that we are investing \$8.1 billion within our health system across the Estimates. We have increased funding into Health; 32 per cent of our Budget, up from 25 per cent a decade ago. This year's Health budget is more than \$100 million more than last year. It is more than \$550 million more than when Labor and the Greens delivered their last budget in 2013-14. Half a billion dollars more on this side invested into health, unlike that side.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, warning number one.

Ms COURTNEY - I want to make it very clear that this side is investing. We have seen that through what we have done and delivered within our health system. One thousand additional staff. Under our Government, 550 more nurses have been employed in Tasmania. We know there is pressure on the health system. That is not just in Tasmania. That is all around the country. If the member spoke to clinicians around Australia, she would understand that this is a broader issue that all of Australia is facing.

Mr O'Byrne interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Ms COURTNEY - We are tackling it head on this side of the Chamber. We have run a sensible budget, which means we can invest in essential services like Health, Education and child protection. This side of the Chamber will continue to deliver that.

Ms O'Byrne interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Byrne, warning number two.

Ms COURTNEY - When they think about topics like this, I question whether that side will come to the people of Tasmania with an alternative. In the five years they have been on that side of the Chamber they have failed to come up with an alternative budget. We have no idea how much they would invest in Health.

Ms Butler interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms Butler, warning one.

Ms COURTNEY - We have no idea whether they support having more paramedics in regional areas. We have no idea whether they support the proposals we have with regard to future planning at the LGH. We know this because as soon as she was able to, the member who asked the question, dropped the portfolio because she did not want it any more.

On this side of the Chamber, Health is our priority. On that side of the Chamber, they do not even have a health policy. They do not know how much they would invest.

Mr O'Byrne interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Mr O'Byrne, you are on warning two.

Ms COURTNEY - I heard Mr O'Byrne's interjection about changing our mind - it is that side of the Chamber that changes its mind. They have left a litany of policies at the side of the road. We know there is disagreement between them.

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker, and it does go to standing order 45 - relevance. The minister has been on her feet for quite some time and has failed to answer the question.

Madam SPEAKER - Actually, she has 1.17 minutes left.

Ms O'BYRNE - She has been on her feet for quite some time and she has failed yet to answer the question that Dr Davis wants an answer to, which is why we are cutting frontline services.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order, and I am going to give the minister another 30 seconds for that interruption.

Ms COURTNEY - Madam Speaker, let me be very clear. This side of the Chamber, 500 more nurses; that side of the Chamber sacked a nurse a day when they were in government. We have a stark contrast between which side of the Chamber invests in Health and frontline services.

Traffic Congestion in Hobart

Ms OGILVIE question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr FERGUSON

[10.21 a.m.]

Traffic congestion on the Southern Outlet in Davey and Macquarie streets is a continuing cause of frustration to hardworking Tasmanians. Clearly a major infrastructure solution such as a tunnel

is the best option, and I note your solid work on that. Today we see the AAMI report that Sandy Bay Road and the Brooker Highway, which also suffer bad traffic congestion, are the two worst accident hotspots in Hobart. Everybody just wants to get to work and school safely and on time. Will you commit to getting Sandy Bay Road and the Brooker Highway into your major projects pipeline with additional funding from minister Josh Frydenberg, if so needed, so that we can fix the traffic and make our roads safer for everyday Tasmanians who just want to get to work and school safely and on time?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question and her strong advocacy for the people of Hobart. I thank her for the compliment on the way through in her question, because this Government is taking action. We are taking strong action to deal with the traffic congestion that we are seeing occurring in our capital city and we are determined to deal with that. We have a plan that we are rolling out right now with a determination to do something better, and it is already working. I hasten to add that regarding the roads Ms Ogilvie has raised, there is a role for local government as well as the state government.

The Government has a comprehensive vision to bust congestion and our plan is currently being rolled out. We are extending clearways on Davey and Macquarie streets, which the state assumed into state ownership so we now have control of the couplet which has been important in taking those early first steps. We have started to employ tow trucks to deal with the crashes that Ms Ogilvie raised in her question at key locations so that we can rapidly clear vehicles that have either broken down or have been involved in a crash or, as recently occurred, a car on the Southern Outlet that had run out of petrol on the climbing lane. All of these are reasons why traffic can be blocked and lead to congestion further on in the system. Those tow trucks are now in place and being deployed. There was a recent deployment of a tow truck on the Tasman Bridge which cleared the crash within 15 minutes, which is a new record.

We are also building a fifth lane on the Southern Outlet, we are establishing a Bellerive to Hobart ferry service, we are establishing more park-and-ride facilities and a better bus interchange at Kingston, and we are rolling out the latest technology to warn motorists in real time about congestion points on their commute, allowing commuters to be able to make decisions about how they will use the highways.

Our tow trucks, which are now deployed on all the major CBD access points, have already passed with flying colours. These measures are in addition to the suite of infrastructure projects on the Tasman and Arthur highways on the eastern approach to Hobart that will service the communities of Midway Point, Sorell and the southern beaches.

I am very happy to say that the Government will continue to work with the Hobart City Council; it has a role to play. Madam Speaker, I know that you are aware, as a former lord mayor, of the important role for local government to equally partner with the state Government, and we do not lose sight of that. Sandy Bay Road is an area which I know the member has a particular focus on. I am happy to discuss it further with you, Ms Ogilvie, and if you have any further suggestions and solutions, I am more than happy for the Government to hear those and to respond in due course.

Let us be very clear that the solutions to the traffic congestion are multi-pronged; it is not just about one initiative on its own. We know the Labor Party has zero policies, no plan and no vision. Mr O'Byrne established that fact because he has promised to deliver a plan and a vision, and in fact

I think he set himself up as the one individual from the Opposition who promises that, 'Even though we have no plan today, I will deliver a plan', which is the biggest undermining of his Leader that we have yet seen.

Our plan is working and we will continue to roll it out, with or without the support of the Opposition, who continue to see this as a laughing matter.

Ms Butler - We are laughing at the minister for tow trucks.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - I will conclude on the point that the jobs growth and population growth we have seen in Hobart is a problem that has occurred as a growing economy. It is a good problem to have. We tackle it with enthusiasm and I look forward to working further with the member for Clark on this important matter.

Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries

Mrs RYLAH question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.25 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Hodgman majority Liberal Government is delivering its plan to grow advanced manufacturing and defence industries?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank my parliamentary secretary for her question. As our economy remains strong -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Excuse me, Premier, there are some very rude discussions going on. Please allow the Premier to speak.

Mr HODGMAN - Madam Speaker, as our economy remains strong there are clearly also global economic headwinds. Whilst we have the strongest performing economy in the country, it does not happen by chance. You need a plan and you need to continue to invest and support your business sector, particularly in those areas where we have great competitive advantage. That is our plan in supporting our businesses, also to innovate and access new markets for their products and services. This is backed through the Tasmanian Government's Trade Strategy. It was our Government that delivered this, the first for the state, in consultation with our business and industry leaders and also a positive business environment where Tasmania's exports have grown. In fact they are 34 per cent higher now than when we came into government.

Through our Advanced Manufacturing Action Plan - something that this Government has delivered in consultation with business and industry - we are supporting that sector which employs tens of thousands and many businesses across the state for it to be globally competitive, especially in areas where we have competitive advantage such as maritime, mining and, increasingly, defence industries.

Last week I supported what was Tasmania's largest-ever contingent to attend the Pacific 2019 International Maritime Exposition, the largest of its type in the region. Close to 17 000 participants from across the world attended, including 11 great Tasmanian advanced manufacturing, design and technology companies as well as the University of Tasmania and our excellent Australian Maritime College based in Newnham. For instance, local business, PFG, unveiled its new advanced rigid hold inflatable boat on display at the expo and made quite an impact on the floor. They said after attending the expo that:

After five years of marketing toward the defence sector, we feel that Pacific 2019 will be the game-changer for PFG that we are looking for.

Another great Tasmanian business from the north, Pivot Maritime International, generated considerable interest in their high-tech ship simulator systems. They are now in negotiations with the Indonesian defence force, Australian Navy and New Zealand Navy for lease and purchase of their simulators.

The multinational BAE Systems announced that seven Australian companies have so far secured work in their Glasgow shipyard and two of these companies come from Tasmania, CBG Systems and Liferaft Systems Australia, which further demonstrates the calibre of our advanced manufacturers.

An MOU was struck between Thales Australia and the Australian Maritime College to be part of the maritime defence innovation and design precinct. This is a proposal, a concept, that is being realised through the very strong support of the Morrison Coalition Government and part of the effort to secure more of the \$90 billion long-term national naval shipbuilding program. Another great local ICT firm, Fortifiedge, demonstrated cutting-edge devices to help defence personnel and assets be safe, and they have received the strong support of the global heavyweight Thales Australia to continue to develop the technology.

This is just a selection of the world-leading Tasmanian businesses making a powerful impact on the global market, strongly supported by my Government, through our strategies that we are delivering to increase investment and job opportunities for Tasmanians. In order to maintain the momentum of growth in this important sector, I will also support Tasmanian businesses, the University of Tasmania and the AMC, to attend the short but well-targeted trade mission to Europe and the United Kingdom in November.

Tasmania's Defence Advocate, retired Rear Admiral Steve Gilmour was appointed by this Government and is assisting immensely in our effort. He will support the mission which will include representatives from Tasmanian defence, maritime and Antarctic industries to further pursue trade export and investment opportunities. For instance, the global defence contractor, Thales, off the back of the MOU just struck with the AMC, will visit their facilities to pursue opportunities for them to develop their underwater systems here in Tasmania.

Further details of the itinerary and the mission will be released later but as our trade mission clearly identifies, a growing export sector does require constant and active engagement and the development of relationships in markets across the globe. Our economy is strong, but clearly there are strong global headwinds. We need to continue to back our Tasmanian businesses, support them to open up new markets and opportunities to give them greater capacity and greater opportunity to secure those markets interstate and overseas. That is all part of our plan to deliver for them as part of what is Australia's strongest performing economy.

Climate Action Protesters

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.31 a.m.]

Yesterday out the front of Parliament House three relatively elderly protesters were arrested for peacefully protesting for climate action. They are part of a global movement of everyday citizens who are fed up with government inaction on climate and taking their message to the streets. Clearly discomfited by such protesters and their message, in response, the Queensland and New South Wales governments are threatening to ban these peaceful protesters. Federal ministers are threatening further crackdowns to silence climate protesters in breach of our obligations under the international covenant on civil and political rights.

Will you today give a clear and unequivocal commitment that you will not lurch down the road of authoritarianism, like your state and federal colleagues from both parties, and that Tasmanian citizens taking peaceful, civil protest actions for a safe climate will continue to be able to do so under the current legal framework?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I do not want to repeat all the things this Government is doing to address climate change and to advance our bidding to be not only the nation's renewable energy factory but also to be 100 per cent renewable by 2022 and deliver support through our Climate Action 21 plan which is being delivered under this Government and supporting business, government, Tasmanians in their homes to be more energy efficient.

As we have previously acknowledged in this place, we are making great strides, to be one of the first jurisdictions in the world, and certainly the first in Australia to be net emissions free. We achieved that in 2016. It shows how much we are doing to be an important contributor to climate action and to sustainability, and importantly to supporting Tasmania's growth as a renewable energy powerhouse.

We respect the views of people who have contrary opinions, or those who may not be fully aware of these matters. I implore members in this place to ensure that those who have concerns about what the Tasmanian Government is doing to point them to our Climate Action 21 plan and those initiatives, and the progress we have made so that we can proudly say that in Tasmania we are certainly doing our bit.

Ms O'Connor - Yes, but they know you are backing in coal and logging.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr HODGMAN - We respect the rights of people to peacefully express their views and to protest as well. We have a very strong view, one not well supported by the Labor Party, who claim to be the best friends of the worker, to protect people in their place of work from being inhibited from doing that by protests which are unlawful and which are disruptive to their place of work. We have endeavoured to provide additional support to ensure our laws are strong enough to protect people and their right to go to work. We wish we had more support from the party of the workers, as they claim to be, to get that through.

Madam Speaker, how the police undertake their duties are operational and not ones that should be directed by politicians but we have no intentions to change our law in this regard.

Eco-Tourism in Tasmania

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT, PARKS and HERITAGE, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.35 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on the Hodgman Liberal Government's plan to make Tasmania the eco-tourism capital of the world?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Mr Tucker for his question and interest in this very important matter. As the Premier has correctly noted, international and national headwinds are buffeting our economy at the moment, but our economy remains strong. Our economy is leading the country, the strongest jurisdiction in this country, in terms of economic growth. One of the areas that is doing particularly well is our visitor economy. It is one of our state's great success stories. It contributes over \$3 billion to the gross state product and supports around 42 000 jobs across Tasmania.

This Government has a plan to make Tasmania the eco-tourism capital of the world -

Ms O'Connor - You do not do that by trashing wilderness so dodgy the Auditor-General is looking at it.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor, warning one.

Mr GUTWEIN - Our expression of interest process for sensible and appropriate tourism developments in our national parks, reserves and Crown lands has helped grow our reputation as an eco-tourism destination. The combined value of all projects in the EOI pipeline sits a little under \$100 million in new investments.

Ms O'Connor - These are the ones you will not publish on the website.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor, warning number two.

Mr GUTWEIN - These will create more than 250 full-time jobs when fully realised. Already around \$15 million worth of investment is being generated and more than 50 full-time jobs have been realised.

It is no secret that our spectacular natural environment is a key driver for our tourism industry. Tourism Tasmania has confirmed that the highest rate of trigger for people who visited Tasmania in the past 12 months was because they were interested in nature and the wilderness. Our door is wide open to the world. The world is clamouring for what we have and they are coming here in droves.

Dr Woodruff - The Auditor-General is walking through that door because it is so dodgy.

Mr GUTWEIN - Visitors to our national parks disperse into regions. This means that they travel further, spend more and stay longer than the average visitor to Tasmania.

Dr Woodruff - They want authentic wilderness. It has to mean something. That is what a grant is.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff. Warning number two.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I do not believe I had -

Madam SPEAKER - No, you do not get away with that two days in a row. You are definitely down for one and you are now down for two. You are interrupting.

Mr GUTWEIN - Unusual for the Greens to have a form of industrial deafness, Madam Speaker.

Wilderness, wildlife and natural scenery values are primary attractors for the travelling Australian public. Tasmania punches well above its weight on these values compared to all other jurisdictions. Despite what the Greens will try to convince people of, we recognise the need to get the balance right. We remain committed to presenting and preserving those very things that make Tasmania special in the first place.

The EOI process has delivered mountain biking, walking and eco-accommodation offerings, all of them sensitive and appropriate to their locations in the surrounding environment and all of them building our economy, transforming regions and importantly, creating jobs. Experiences are what people are after and nature tourism in Tasmania is topping the list.

Our EOI process is nation leading. It is enabling enterprising operators to bring forward new and innovative ideas, ensuring that we continue to offer a diversity of experiences to meet the challenging demographics and expectations of locals and visitors alike.

We do not subscribe to the elitist view of the Greens who believe our national parks and world heritage areas are only for those who are willing to carry a pack and hike in the wilderness for days. People want more than that. This Government has repeatedly called for Labor and the Greens to get on board, rather than try to put the handbrake on our regions that are sharing in growth, investment and importantly, jobs.

Other states are now scrambling to replicate the success of our EOI process and for a share of the market. We understand that to lock in growth for the future, we must protect what is special about Tasmania. We know where the Greens stand, but where are Labor?

Yesterday, I made the point in this place, that the new shadow treasurer has boldly declared that they do not have a plan and they do not have a vision. I call on him, as he works very hard as he has indicated he is going to, not only to unseat Ms White, but to demonstrate that they have a plan and vision to ensure that the EOI process is part of that vision. It is part of our long-term plan. Add it to list. There are not many on it at the moment, Mr O'Byrne; add it to your lists. We have a long-term plan that is working. It is a plan we took to the Tasmanian people, backed by a solid budget which remains in surplus through good -

Dr Broad interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Dr Broad, warning one.

Mr GUTWEIN - disciplined budget management. It is a plan that has lifted Tasmania to new levels with more opportunities and with the fastest-growing economy in the nation. It has created 13 500 jobs and it is keeping Tasmanians safe and protecting our way of life. Labor should get on board with it.

Launceston General Hospital - Ward 4K Opening

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.41 a.m.]

The former failed health minister promised that the first stage of Ward 4K at the Launceston General Hospital would be completed and opened this month. In March 2019 he said that the first stage would be completed in October, and I quote:

... which will mean the adolescent unit will be available, including mental health admissions.

Last week, you let a faceless departmental spokesperson front the news that the project would not be completed until at least the first quarter of next year. That is on top of your Government's repeated missed deadlines to complete the new Royal Hobart Hospital. When will the full Ward 4K redevelopment be completed and opened to take patients?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Before I get to the final part of her question, I refute your allegation about the former health minister. This is the man who delivered 1000 more people into our health system -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms COURTNEY - It is absurd that the member comes into this place and somehow -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. You are wasting valuable parliamentary time with this bickering and nonsense across the Chamber. The voters expect more of us. I ask you to reflect on your behaviour. Please allow the minister to speak in total silence. Anyone who speaks or utters or murmurs or anything else will leave the Chamber until the end of question time.

Ms COURTNEY - Madam Speaker, as I was saying, the former health minister is the health minister who delivered more than 1000 more people into our health system delivering services; 130 more beds -

Member Suspended
Member for Braddon - Dr Broad

Dr Broad interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Dr Broad, out! Thank you.

Dr Broad withdrew.

Ms COURTNEY - This is a health minister who has delivered the redevelopment of the Royal Hobart Hospital when your side of the Chamber could not lay a single brick on the development.

This side of the Chamber has demonstrable outcomes when it comes to delivering health systems for Tasmania, and one of them is the redevelopment of Ward 4K at the LGH. This exciting redevelopment is going to deliver great services for the people of northern Tasmania to make sure that we have contemporary services to deliver for our young people and adolescents.

It was a delight to visit the redevelopment last week and see firsthand how it is coming along. I know that glazing is set to be installed on level 4 over the next week or so and work is continuing on other components. As the member alluded to, I am advised that construction on stage 1 will be completed in the first quarter of 2020.

I make it clear that in the interests of minimising disruption to patient care during this time, there have been some delays. These were necessary around some demolition that was being done very close to the existing building. It is important to recognise, when we are delivering employment infrastructure projects such as this, we are delivering them on a working hospital site. We are delivering them while patient care is happening only metres away from this development. We take the lead from clinicians to make sure that patient care comes first and we make no apology for that. It is very exciting that this ward will provide 36 beds of contemporary facilities, a specialist clinic.

I see the other side shaking their heads, and particularly Ms O'Byrne, who was the failed former health minister -

Madam SPEAKER - Sorry, she is shaking her head because there was mumbling from this side and she believes it is unfair. I did say no talking on either side of the parliament. Thank you. Please proceed.

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you, Madam Speaker. She should be shaking her head because she was the health minister who saw wards closed at the LGH. She oversaw a nurse a day sacked.

Ms O'Connor - This is five years ago.

Member Suspended
Member for Clark - Ms O'Connor

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, you have just broken the rule that I have thrown Dr Broad out for. I ask you to leave the Chamber - and do not stomp.

Ms O'Connor - I am not stomping.

Madam SPEAKER - Well do not thrash things down.

Ms O'Connor withdrew.

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Can I ask that there is some equity? Dr Broad was asked to leave for speaking despite that you now gave a ruling that no conversations were allowed. Ms O'Connor has been asked to leave and yet Mr Ferguson sits there talking all the way through this answer.

Madam SPEAKER - I did not hear Mr Ferguson. I am the Speaker. I sit here and I make the rulings. Please proceed.

Ms COURTNEY - It is this side of the Chamber that will continue to invest in health. We will continue to see more services delivered to Tasmanians, particularly in rural and regional areas. When the other side shake their heads they should be shaking their heads in shame because they are yet to tell the people of Tasmania what their plan is for health. They are yet able to articulate in any alternative budget what they would do. It is embarrassing and she should be hanging her head in shame as an opposition leader that she has talked about health being a priority yet failed to deliver any kind of plan for the people of Tasmania.

Sustainable Agri-Food Plan

Mrs RYLAH question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr BARNETT

[10.46 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Hodgman Liberal Government's comprehensive plan for agriculture is delivering for farmers and rural communities and are you aware of any alternative?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question and for her strong support for agriculture particularly on the north-west coast in the Braddon electorate.

There is no bigger supporter of Tasmania's agriculture industry, our rural communities and our farmers than the Hodgman majority Liberal Government. I am pleased to have recently joined with the TFGA to release the Sustainable Agri-Food Plan. That is our four-year plan and our plan for agriculture going forward. It is a blueprint for jobs. It is a blueprint for growth. It is a blueprint

for a prosperous primary industry. We are on target to grow the annual farmgate value of the agriculture sector to \$10 billion by 2050. We are on track and the last 12 months shows us that we are now at \$1.6 billion and a 9.1 per cent growth over that period of time. That shows that we are on track.

In this year's Budget we invested \$100 million into our border security, 20 new biosecurity positions, research and innovation, farm productivity, new market development, reducing on-farm energy costs, which is very important, and the rollout of tranche 3 irrigation schemes delivering on the ground that water which is liquid gold. It has been backed up by our GMO-free status and plans for 10 years and giving certainty and confidence going forward over the next decade.

The latest Rabobank Rural Confidence Survey shows that farmers are very optimistic as they continue to grow. It says that the state's rural sector is reporting overall strong profit projections and robust investment plans for the year ahead.

Why would they not feel positive? Of course they are positive. The latest agri-food score card shows that our dairy industry set a milk production record and is the highest value agricultural industry worth \$429 million at the farm gate. Beef, our second most valuable agricultural product, is worth \$329 million at the farm gate and hit a record export value of \$210 million. We heard from the Premier earlier today the importance of our trade strategy and the importance of exports. Exports mean jobs in Tasmania, particularly in rural and regional Tasmania. The value of our fruit production has risen 27.8 per cent, \$197 million, driven importantly by berry and cherry production.

There is a lot on the go. Major vegetables crops, potatoes and salad greens are all improving. Tasmanian products are in demand around the world and China, Japan, and the United States are all key markets and, as the Premier indicated earlier, top destinations for our overseas food exports.

Unfortunately, Tasmania is a state of two halves. The east coast and south-east are subject to drought conditions and it has been tough. On Sunday afternoon I met with some farmers from Levendale for roundtable discussions. They are doing it tough and it was very important for me to listen and to learn and also to feed back on some of the Government's assistance measures. In that regard, we have a \$400 000 assistance package for those communities doing it tough and suffering drought conditions. Partnering with the federal programs and continued investment in irrigation. We are also partnering with the TFGA, Rural Business Tasmania, Rural Alive and Well, and that assistance is in terms of household and farm business expenses, fodder and agistment; outreach services. In addition, we have the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture doing research to deliver on drought grazing strategies and offering practical tools on how to adapt to their changing environment. We are targeting weed management. As I have said, it is the worst time in Tasmanian history to be a weed. We are targeting weeds across the state, particularly in those drought-affected areas.

We have a plan and it is part of our long-term plan. It is in sharp contrast to the other side that has no vision and no plan. That has been the case and it was confirmed by the shadow treasurer in his op-ed a couple of days ago where he made it very clear that he has no plan whatsoever and hopes to have a plan. As far as I am concerned, Labor is certainly all hat, no cattle. They have no plan and are just happy to scaremonger.

Let us make it very clear. What did Paul Lennon say? He said they are a city-based party. They are not interested in regional Tasmania. But there is a new splinter group in the Labor Party. Ms Butler, the member for Lyons, called Labor, for the wise use of resources to research policy, a

breath of fresh air. Farmers need more than air. Quoting from *The Australian* article a couple of days ago about the latest Labor split, it said:

The new group comes amid what some party members see as a struggle for the 'heart and soul' of the ALP between Green-left urbanites and more traditional blue-collar and regional and rural supporters. Some members see LWUR as a counter to the Labor Environment Action Network, or LEAN ...

Seriously, is it lure or lean on the Labor side? There is a split, but as far as the community is concerned, we have their back. The Hodgman Liberal Government is out there to support our agricultural industries, our primary industries. We have a plan for the future and it is working.

Royal Hobart Hospital Redevelopment - Completion Date

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.52 a.m.]

The failed former health minister declared on 12 December 2014 that the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment would be completed by the end of 2018. After a string of blunders, including mould infestations and asbestos falling on patients in the Intensive Care Unit, that time line was later changed to mid-2019. During Estimates earlier this year, Michael Ferguson moved the goalposts again, claiming the project would reach practical completion by September. September has come and gone and the hospital is still not finished. Anyone driving down Campbell Street can see that the site is still swarming with construction workers, and people on the ground say they will be amazed if practical completion is reached before the end of this year. When will the hospital actually be finished?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. As you drive past it is an exciting building and I am pleased that the Hodgman majority Liberal Government has been able to deliver such amazing infrastructure that is going to deliver a high-quality health system for Tasmanians. This is in stark contrast to the other side, who failed to lay a brick on their project. This side of the Chamber is delivering. We are delivering more beds for Tasmanians through this state-of-the-art health facility that will serve Tasmanians for generations to come.

We are on track to commission the building in February next year, which will provide more bed capacity, more operating and procedure rooms and contemporary facilities for staff and patients. It has been wonderful to be able to tour those facilities. This week I was pleased to see the fundraising for Give Me 5 for Kids, particularly what they will do to bring to life the kids' wards. I thank them for their contribution and all the people who have supported the Give Me 5 for Kids campaign for this facility.

As we know, there are pressures in our EDs at the moment all around the state, but particularly at the Royal. The 44 new beds we are opening are going to help with patient flow and help to ensure that our -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under standing order 45, relevance. The question asked when the building will be finished. The minister is now talking about what will

happen once it is finished, but not about the time frame for when it will be finished. I ask you to draw her attention to the question, please.

Madam SPEAKER - As you would know, that is not a point of order, but I have allowed it on *Hansard*. Please proceed.

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I said earlier, we are on track to commission the new building in February, and it is very exciting what this new facility will deliver for Tasmanians. I was outlining for the member, when this facility is commissioned in February, the exciting things we will see in it. As part of the 44 new beds, we are expecting to see another 2500 patients per year being treated, including 13 general medical beds, 15 surgical beds and six mental health beds as part of the new Mental Health Assessment Unit, which the whole community wants to see because we understand the pressures we are seeing with regard to that space.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker, again under standing order 45. It goes to the question I asked the minister about practical completion, which was previously stated to be in September. The minister is talking about commissioning, which is a different thing. If she does not know the answer, she can come back to the House at a later date and provide it.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you, but that is not a point of order either. I cannot put words in the minister's mouth, as you are well aware, so I will leave that up to the minister's judgment.

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you, Madam Speaker. We are on track to commission the building in February to be able to see these new services delivered to help more Tasmanians and deliver more health care across our region.

Royal Hobart Hospital Redevelopment - Bed Numbers

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.56 a.m.]

In an embarrassing press conference last month you were unable to answer questions - which is not surprising given your last answer - about how many beds are currently in the Royal Hobart Hospital and how many would be added in the new K Block. We know that ramping and long waits in the emergency department are due to a lack of beds in the hospital and the new building will not fix the problem without a significant increase in the total number of beds available. This is a very simple question: how many additional beds over and above current capacity will be staffed and fully operational on day one, when the new hospital finally opens its doors?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. As I said last month, the bed numbers we currently have at the Royal is 383. These are the current inpatient beds on site at the Royal for overnight care. As the member would no doubt understand - or at least I hope she would - there is a range of different methodologies for counting bed numbers and there are also different ways - Madam Speaker, she is laughing at this answer but I am addressing the fact that clinically there are different methodologies of counting bed numbers and whether you count beds that are actually physically at the Royal Hobart or off-site such as places as the Repat.

Going directly back to the member's question, there are 383 beds at the Royal and on the new block, 44 additional beds will be provided on site at the Royal through the commissioning process.

Infrastructure and Job Creation

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

[10.58 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Hodgman majority Liberal Government is investing in job-creating infrastructure at a record level in the 2019-20 state Budget, and is the minister aware of any alternative plans?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend and colleague, the member for Lyons, Mr Tucker, who has made a major impression on this House since his election. I thank him for his question and his great interest in job-creating infrastructure, not only in his own electorate of Lyons but right across our wonderful state of Tasmania.

This side of the House, the Hodgman majority Liberal Government, is investing in record levels of infrastructure, not only for transport but across the board for our wonderful state, and that is as a result of the fact that this Government has delivered the nation's most confident business community in the country and our building and construction, engineering and civil contracting businesses are going from strength to strength. Isn't that great news?

Two months ago, I was pleased to release on behalf of the Government Tasmania's 10-year infrastructure pipeline, which captures more than \$15 billion in known projects with a value of \$5 million each or more. The Hodgman Liberal Government is taking action by investing in this budget a record \$3.6 billion and of this figure, \$1.6 billion is to be invested in transport infrastructure.

The Budget, which I have to add, was in fact supported by the Opposition - they voted for it - will support the creation of 10 000 jobs over the next four years. The Government's infrastructure investment, as a proportion of total expenditure, has almost doubled, from around 7 per cent in 2014, now to nearly 12 per cent in the 2018-18 financial year.

Notably, the 10-year \$500 million Midland Highway Action Plan, which is the biggest ever investment in our key north-south link, is tracking ahead of schedule. It is now 63 per cent either completed or under construction. We are five years into the 10-year plan. Our action plan is seeing the largest single project on that highway, which is the \$92 million Perth Link Roads Project, completed ahead of time. We now expect that to be completed next year.

Meanwhile, the first tranche of the \$120 million Tasmanian Freight Rail Revitalisation Program was completed on time and on budget. Now we have tranche 2 underway. The successful tenderer for any people who are familiar with the Hobart Airport area - it has been a significant problem for many years - for that interchange project will be announced within weeks. Construction is to commence early in 2020. That is part of the Government's wider South East Traffic Solution.

There is so much more that I could add in terms of other individual projects in every region of our state. That is because we are investing in job-creating infrastructure at a record level. At the same time, we are planning for the infrastructure future that our children will inherit. Casting forward, we want to lock in this growth trend with long-term planning, a 30-year horizon, with the infrastructure that preserves and enhances Tasmania's wonderful quality of life.

The Government has announced, in last year's Budget, that Infrastructure Tasmania would develop an infrastructure strategy for our state that does look to that 30-year horizon. This strategy has required input from a number of parties, including government agencies and state-owned companies with infrastructure responsibilities. I am pleased to advise that a consultation draft has now been circulated by Infrastructure Tasmania to a number of stakeholders directly asking for input. It has also been publicly available since last week on the Infrastructure Tasmania website. I take this opportunity to thank Infrastructure Tasmania CEO, Allan Garcia, and his team for the work that they have done in putting this important, longer term vision document together. I encourage all of those with an interest in our state and in our future infrastructure to have a read and respond.

In the time that I have, I was asked about alternative policies. You may be surprised to hear that there is an alternative policy. We do have an alternative budget from the Greens members. There is an alternative. Although it is disappointing that the Greens wanted to take \$277 million out of roads and infrastructure funding, that is at least their attempt to do the work of opposition, to put an alternative vision across for Tasmanians.

The same cannot be said for the official opposition, not the real one, but the official opposition, which still have indicated, as Mr O'Byrne has made clear, Labor has no policies, has no vision and has no plan. But he claims that he is 'gunna' deliver one sometime in the future.

Reproductive Health Services

Ms O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[11.03 a.m.]

On 5 July the *Mercury* newspaper reported, and I quote:

Tasmania's new pro-choice Health minister, Sarah Courtney, says she is looking forward to ensuring women have a full range of services available to them should they need to terminate a pregnancy.

In that same article you were quoted as saying, and I quote again:

We've got a range of views, I would say, within our party, but I'm looking forward to being able to support women to have a range of choices available to them and a full range of choices available to them.

It has now been 22 months since the last low-cost termination clinic in Hobart closed and a full year since the failed former minister for health, Michael Ferguson, promised a new service would be operating. Currently, women in Tasmania only have limited access to low-cost terminations due to the goodwill of private clinicians who are bearing the costs and have stepped up where your

Government has failed. It is not what was promised. Earlier this year your preferred operator, Hampton Park, stated that its plans were - and I quote - 'on hold'.

Will you admit that under this conservative Liberal Government, Tasmanian women still do not have a full range of services available to them should they need to terminate a pregnancy? Will the low-cost provider, Hampton Park, ever establish services in Tasmania, that your Government promised would be in place by October last year?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I make it very clear that this Government and I want women to feel supported when they are facing challenging choices that they need to make. I want them to be fully informed. I want them to be supported to make decisions that are right for them. I also want to send a very clear message to the women of Tasmania that you are able to access termination services here in Tasmania. The unfortunate thing that happens when Ms O'Byrne and others talk about this topic is it often spreads mistruths throughout the community, and often these are to women who are in vulnerable situations.

I want women to feel safe to be able seek advice from their GP or from a prescribed health services provider so that they can feel supported to make the decisions that are right for them and know that in Tasmania it is both legal, affordable and accessible to be able to have access to these services. They have been accessible since November last year. It is very unfortunate that we have these types of questions because -

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. It is to standing order 45. It is a serious matter because it goes to a commitment that was made to this House in a notice of motion and a commitment to you personally as well, Madam Speaker, that Hampton Park would be operating in October last year. I want the minister to tell us whether Hampton Park will be operating in Tasmania.

Madam SPEAKER - As you will accept that is not a point of order. I will ask the minister to address the question if she can.

Ms COURTNEY - As I was saying, there are services available. There is patient transport assistance available for Tasmanian women to access this service both in the state, but if they would prefer, interstate. The department, through the Patient Travel Assistance Scheme, will continue to serve that.

With regards to Hampton Park, when a private specialist ended their low-cost termination service in Tasmania, as the member would be aware, the department began working to find a replacement provider. Negotiations were held with interstate provider Hampton Park, which was planning to provide terminations in Tasmania if it was able to secure an appropriate facility. To date, I am advised that Hampton Park has been unable to find such a facility, but the department stands ready to work with them if they pursue this option. In the meantime, local specialists commenced providing surgical terminations.

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker, and I really hate to do this because I am conscious I have been very well behaved in order to abide by the new rules, but previously this House has been told that the department had identified a source and there were only some minor works to be done; I believe air-conditioning to be resolved before the clinic could open. Is the

minister aware that there was no such deal now, because that significantly changed what this House has been told. If I am misunderstanding it is an opportunity for the minister to clarify.

Madam SPEAKER - Unfortunately it is not a point of order and I ask the minister to resume.

Ms COURTNEY - I want to make it clear that low-cost termination services are available in the state, right now, for Tasmanian women. They can access this service through PTAS. As I have just said, Hampton Park has been unable to find an appropriate facility. As I have said, the department stands ready to work with them and to work with other providers.

It is important, and I want to make this very clear and I want this question to be very clear for Tasmanian women that they can access this service in Tasmania. I urge them to contact their GP or the prescribed health service to get the advice to support them through what can be a very difficult time. The Government through PTAS will support women to be able to access this service.

Time expired.

PETITION

Sacred Heart Catholic School, Geeveston - Speed Limit Reduction

Mr O'Byrne presented a petition signed by approximately 286 citizens of Tasmania praying that the House reduce the speed limit from 80 kilometres per hour to 40 kilometres per hour in the area of Sacred Heart Catholic School at 4690 Huon Highway, Geeveston, Tasmania during school terms for student drop-off and pick-up hours in line with other school zones across the state.

Petition received.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

TAFE Tasmania

[11.12 a.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: TAFE Tasmania.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on the issues facing TAFE Tasmania and Tasmanians wanting to access what has been an important part of our training picture for many years. I have so much material I do not know how to get it all into my seven minutes. I am going to start with one of the questions that arose over the past few days. I am hoping that the minister, if the minister is speaking on this, will be able to address it for us very quickly before going in to the picture that is TasTAFE now and the impact it is having on students and on staff.

The Government were forced through media pressure to admit that they have made the decision to relinquish the TasTAFE site in Launceston, and that they will be moving services out and focusing everything at Alanvale. They like giving the impression that Alanvale is a new and

exciting precinct. I went to Alanvale, which makes it reasonably old for anybody who works out my age. It is a dated facility; it is a facility that has significant needs.

It is an interesting decision in the construct of the Government's overwhelming support of the university. The university says that it has to be in the middle of the city to engage, to make it accessible so that people can be part of an education journey, so that they can inspire and receive students and have that wonderful ability to picture what a university pathway might look like. Also, the university's decision to put the university college which, in fairness, is a competitor now in many of the TAFE areas in the city. The Government is saying that it is okay for TAFE to sit outside of the city, where we do know that there already some issues. There are issues with the age of the site and the 'purpose nature' of the site. There are issues with parking and there are issues with access for students who live locally. I know that my colleague will speak to some of those issues in a few moments.

What was not said yesterday when the Government was forced to admit that they were doing this was what the Government plans to do with the site on the corner of Paterson and Wellington streets. It is a significant site for those who do not know it. It is a big part of Tasmania's education history; it has been there for a very long time.

We know that the Government has form on TAFE buildings. The Government has looked to get rid of TAFE buildings in the past in order to pay off some of its other obligations. In fact, Mr Groom, when he was state growth minister, got himself into a bit of trouble for misleading parliament when he told the House that the Government was not looking at selling or giving away the Hobart TasTAFE building. It turned out that the TasTAFE building in Campbell Street, Hobart, was actually on the list for the Government to get rid of. Not just was it on a list, not only was there a plan that the minister denied but there was in fact a non-binding memorandum of understanding that had been signed about transferring the title of that site to UTas.

At a time when TAFE is not getting additional funding, the minister will say they are the best supporters of TAFE and we tried to kill TAFE 100 years ago. He has not increased the core funding for TAFE. TAFE has had to increase their fees by 3 per cent. TAFE are being forced to find ways to make money to survive. That is what is going on here. When the Government says they have given additional money it is for new additional things that are happening elsewhere. It is not to support the core responsibilities and the core engagement that TAFE has been providing.

The question that the minister needs to answer is: when they are saying that next year they plan to sell the building, what conversations have they already had? It is not believable that they have not had a plan going for a while. If you go to the tender site you can see that the work that they are now talking about doing at Alanvale has been planned for some time. This has been a plan that the Tasmanian public have not been told about for some time. TasTAFE has let out a contract around planning, design and project management for the redevelopment of facilities at Alanvale. They did that earlier this year. Clearly, this has been a plan that they have had sitting there for some time.

It beggars belief that they have not also done exactly what they have done with every other public building and have a plan for what they are going to do with it. What the minister needs to answer when he stands is: have there been conversations with anyone about procuring that site? Have there been discussions with alternative education providers? Have there been conversations with the university, as there were in Hobart? Have there been conversations with developers? Is this about a cash grab which has been masked into 'Won't it be great to have a centralised TAFE

facility outside of the centre of Launceston even though every other facility should be in the middle of Launceston according to the Government?'

The minister needs to say what conversations have been undertaken, who they have been had with. We need to know what the plans are for the future of that site. Frankly, I would like to see that site developed. I would like to see the ability to keep that education precinct alive. It has Launceston College, the Steam Engine Unit, and it has the university moving into town. The ability to create an education focus in Launceston by investing in that site is huge but the Government is choosing not to do that. There must be reasons they are choosing not to do that. It must be because they think they can make more money in another way.

It is clear that TAFE has become about making money. TAFE has become about its basic survival. Neither this Government nor their federal counterparts have been honest and truthful about their support of TAFE.

I have only a very short time to continue. I want to talk about the implications of that chronic underfunding: TAFE fees have had to increase; there are not enough staff to do the work; there have been problems in particular courses. We had trades people who were having their year one training not provided a year two if at all which means that their apprenticeship times have blown out. That is a significant impact.

We have had ongoing issues with nursing. If you go to the site now you still cannot find out when the nursing course is going to be. You have to ring to get a date. It used to advertise when the next intake would be. It does not, so I am assuming the Government still has significant issues in providing the nursing course in Launceston. Those staff are under so much pressure. Students were not having their work marked. The Government has had to pay out a lot of overtime in order to get the work marked so that these kids can get their qualifications so they can go into the workforce. There are workforce shortages. Not supporting nursing has been an underfunding issue by the Government.

We have had issues with other areas in TAFE. The Premier I believe, when we asked a question and also the CEO of TAFE, said that the IT course had not been cancelled. I do not know what you call it when a course is supposed to run all year, the first half is done, the second half is not done and it will be offered again next year. That is a cancellation in anyone's area. It has had a significant impact on students. I have spoken to many of them who are very distressed.

Then we had the issue of 100 Tasmanians who applied for Cert II in construction: 57 were interviewed but they only had enough teachers to cope with 12. TAFE is not meeting the training needs as it currently stands. It is not being supported by this Government. The Government will get up and say they are the best friend that TAFE has ever had, but what is very clear is that the Government is more interested in making money out of TAFE and not supporting those students. We have even had some courses which are not supposed to have a fee applied charge fees and people dropping out as a result.

Time expired.

[11.19 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Education and Training) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on the matter of public importance. TasTAFE, our public vocational education and training provider, is an institution in Tasmania and one that the

Government is very proud of and the one that this Government has demonstrated that we are supporting and rebuilding. It is very clear that under the previous majority Labor government that TasTAFE, or TAFE Tasmania, had no future. The public training provider had no future in Tasmania. There was no tomorrow for TAFE in Tasmania, in fact. We had the Tas Tomorrow experiment, which cost tens of millions of dollars. We inherited some considerable challenges as a result of that Tas Tomorrow process -

Ms O'Connor - Minister McKim saved TasTAFE; he fixed it up. They take credit for anything, unless it is a bad thing - then it was us.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I congratulate the 800 employees of TasTAFE, our public training provider, for the very fine work they have done in supporting vocational education and training in Tasmania. It is very important that we have a strong, robust, responsive public training provider when it comes to TasTAFE. Tasmania is one of the most decentralised states so it is important in areas where there is not the critical mass to support a private market training provider that the public training provider steps in.

I was congratulating the management and all the employees of TasTAFE for securing seven years accreditation from the national regulator, ASQA - no mean feat, an outstanding achievement. It was a critical exercise for TasTAFE requiring months of preparation. You do not receive seven years' worth of reaccreditation, the maximum possible term, unless you are performing at the top of the national regulation standards. We should be hearing congratulations from those opposite rather than criticism of those in TasTAFE.

Let us also get some other facts straight. TasTAFE's Launceston city campus, which has been the subject of some discussion, is an outdated facility. The cost to update those buildings would be enormous and it would never eventuate in a contemporary learning environment. As TasTAFE CEO Jenny Dodd said yesterday, the Launceston city campus is not fit for purpose for a 2020 learning facility. There is no space to increase capacity within the city. I have recently toured Alanvale and do not share the very dim view of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. In fact, I thought the campus had a very good feel to it. Yes, it is a facility that I imagine was built in around the mid-1970s because it was a college at one point.

Ms O'Byrne - You're trying to work out how old I am.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am assuming you attended Alanvale College, Ms O'Byrne. Is that correct?

Ms O'Byrne - It was at TAFE at the same time.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is no doubt it needs refurbishment and that is where that \$4 million investment is coming in. The redevelopment will include extensive classroom refurbishments, new student amenities, upgraded library facilities and new fit-for-purpose prac rooms for nursing courses. I felt the atmosphere around the TAFE campus at Alanvale was very positive and would be really value-added with more critical mass and more students creating more vibrancy. I was pretty impressed, to be honest. Another \$4 million in investment will value-add that even further.

Ms O'Byrne - Who is funding stage 2? That is only stage 1.

Ms O'Connor - What is happening to the CBD building?

Ms O'Byrne - What are you doing with the Launceston site?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Speaker, since 2015 -

Ms O'Byrne - Want to run a book on it?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Since 2015 we have increased recurrent funding to TasTAFE from \$73.5 million to \$76.5 million in the 2018-19 financial year. This represents approximately 80 per cent of the state's training budget. We committed at the last election for 70 per cent of the state's training budget to support our public training provider, TasTAFE, and it is around 80 per cent, so we are delivering on that. We are investing in critical infrastructure some \$15.5 million. This year we provided an additional \$2.9 million for more teachers and more training places in priority industries.

For the first time TasTAFE is cash-positive and will generate a small cash surplus. Again, I commend the work of all those in TasTAFE for wiping the debt it inherited of some \$2.5 million when it was formed, Madam Speaker.

Ms O'Byrne - Actually it's Mr Deputy Speaker - he just called you 'Madam' Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, warning number one.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Another fact reported recently is that Tas TAFE saw 10 teacher resignations across 2017-19. Across the same period there were 91 teachers employed for a workforce of 800, which I believe is a very reasonable number.

When it comes to our performance in the vocational training area, Tasmania is once again punching above our weight. The most recent data demonstrates that despite a five-year decline in apprentice and training activity for Australia, Tasmania continues to perform better than the Australian average across most key indicators. In the 12 months to March 2019, trade apprenticeship commencements in Tasmania increased by 10.4 per cent compared to the previous year, while trade commencements to Australia decreased by 0.6 per cent over the same period. In the 12 months to March 2019 the total number of apprenticeship and traineeship commencements in Tasmania increased by 5.7 per cent, compared to the previous 12 months, and nationally total commencements increased by 2.7 per cent over the same period. We are punching well above our weight in this area.

Time expired.

[11.26 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, this is a very interesting and significant debate, particularly for young Tasmanians who are looking for affordable public vocational training options. It also needs to be seen through the prism, or context, of this Government's previous attempt to privatise the Hobart TAFE building, its current attempt to sell

off the iconic Treasury buildings, its move to privatise areas of our national parks and Wilderness World Heritage Areas and the basic truth that this is a government that believes public assets are there to sell off to privatise to long-term lease. This is a government that knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

If the move from the city building - which I acknowledge is old - out to the Alanvale campus leads to a substantially better TAFE offering with modern state-of-the-art facilities, that is one thing, but we do not have any reassurance that is going to be the case. We have had concerns raised about the current state of the Alanvale campus. The Australian Education Union's TAFE vice-president, Damien von Samorzewski, has said that moving to Alanvale raises some serious questions. There are concerns about the time line. There have been teacher recruitment issues which have plagued the vocational education and training provider for the past 12 months, have caused issues amongst teaching staff and students, and Mr von Samorzewski says the Alanvale campus already had existing challenges with ageing classrooms and infrastructure along with a lack adequate parking.

The reason there is a level of cynicism about this Government's approach to TasTAFE is because the federal coalition government has gutted public vocational training. This Government has sought to sell off the publicly owned TAFE building in Hobart, and for the first three years at least of this Government in it state budgets, there was no new money for TAFE. There was no extra investment into public vocational training. When you talk to young people who want to go to one of those course offerings, the price of a TAFE course is prohibitive for young people.

We have seen, ever since Tony Abbott first became prime minister, this corrosion of public vocational training and propping up a whole lot of private training providers who have really, in some cases, very dubious governance, poor course offerings at very high prices, and there is a lack of regulation around those private training providers. As a small island state with high youth unemployment, as Ms O'Byrne has pointed out, about 13.7 per cent youth unemployment, and it is higher in the south of the state, as that sort of a state, we need to be making sure that we are properly funding our public vocational training.

Mr Rockliff - I agree with you. The 2012 Labor reforms were the ones that really damaged the vocational education and training systems.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, it was the previous Labor government that split up TasTAFE and created enormous problems.

Mr Rockliff - I am talking federally.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you because it was then Education minister, Nick McKim, who restored TasTAFE after an experiment that failed.

Mr Shelton - Because of pressure from the opposition.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, Mr Shelton, you are quite wrong. It was not because of that. He was briefed, he understood the situation, and he recognised that TasTAFE needed to be restored. I was there, you were not. I was in government, in Cabinet. Mr Shelton was not.

We will always be proud supporters of public vocational education and training and we strongly believe there do need to be centres of excellence in TasTAFE in Tasmania and we should be focusing on those areas of jobs growth in the future.

The aged and disability sectors over the next 10 years will need about 10 000 new skilled workers in the caring industries. There is not enough being done to attract young people into those sectors, to make studying to go into age and disability care affordable. It is a fact that those sectors are having to import workers from overseas because there simply are not the people here with the skills and the training to go straight into those areas of employment growth.

We definitely need a centre of excellence in landscape restoration and reforestation. The significant areas where we will need expertise, skills and a large labour force in the future, will be in repairing some of the damage that has been caused over the course of the 20th century, making sure that we are planting carbon in the ground, that we are drawing down carbon and methane out of the atmosphere and that we are protecting biodiversity and restoring habitats. Tasmania is uniquely placed to have a centre of excellence in landscape restoration.

I hope that the minister for Education sees that as a potential path forward in Tasmania, where we can be skilling people up, to invest their energy back into the earth and to repair some of the damage that has been done. Also, to be teaching other states and territories and businesses how to repair the damage of the 20th century which is still ongoing to this day. We have a government at the moment that apparently is committed to logging 356 000 hectares of high conservation value carbon sink forest from 8 April next year, which is morally inexcusable and economically completely stupid.

We will not stand by and let that happen. In an age of climate emergency, that is a crime against nature and future generations. The carbon that is in the ground needs to stay in the ground.

Time expired.

[11.33 a.m.]

Mrs RYLAH (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to respond to today's MPI. TasTAFE is once again a great institution. Those opposite should let it get on with its job and support TAFE. We support TAFE because we believe in affordable, accessible TAFE-based training for our young people.

They have achieved seven years' registration from the national regulator. That does not happen by accident, does it? This accomplishment highlights that TasTAFE is a smart operator, delivering quality training and education, to be given the maximum term of operating.

Those opposite have little to shout about when it comes to supporting training. In Tasmania the rot well and truly set in under the previous Labor-Greens government. The Tasmania 'no tomorrow' reforms were a disgrace and those opposite should hang their heads in shame. Under Labor and the Greens, the number of people commencing apprenticeships actually declined by 40 per cent as revealed in the Skills Institute 2013 report. What a calamity. Lost opportunity for Tasmanians and nearly destroyed the institution, its employees and its prospective students.

I note the recent commentary on the Launceston campus move from those opposite. It is unsurprising that they fail to support good ideas for our public training provider. Do they really think that forcing students to stay in those buildings is a better option than what is at Alanvale?

What a joke. The lack of strategic thinking is astounding and we see it time and time again from those opposite. This move is supported by the Launceston Chamber of Commerce, Neil Grose, who says, 'The move is the right one, because Alanvale offers more room to expand'. The TasTAFE Executive Master Plan is helping to drive the transformation agenda for TasTAFE facilities.

I note the minister for Education quoted some facts about Tasmania's training system as it relates to TasTAFE and I would like to add a couple more to those. In the 12 months to March 2019, non-trade commencements in Tasmania increased by 2.8 per cent compared to the previous year that is to 3085, while non-trade commencements declined nationally by 4.5 per cent over the same period. We increased; they decreased nationally. In the 12 months to March 2019 female apprentices and trainee commencements increased by 3.7 per cent compared to the previous 12 months.

Statistics demonstrate our plan for TasTAFE and our training system is working. As we also heard, those opposite lost more than 4000 traineeships and apprenticeship positions statewide and did nothing to reverse this concerning trend: 4000 apprenticeships and traineeships gone; 4000 young people had the rug ripped out from underneath them.

The truth is, while claiming to be a friend of young Tasmanians, Labor's track record of job and opportunity destruction speaks for itself. They have zero credibility on this issue. In stark contrast the Hodgman Liberal Government has taken pragmatic steps to support learners, apprentices and trainees. We see positive signs on the back of a strong economy.

The Tasmanian Government has implemented a number of specific initiatives supporting continued growth in the number of trainees and apprentices. In fact, \$5 million was provided through 2017-18 Budget for grants to small businesses who have taken on apprentices and trainees. This program is now fully allocated. An additional \$7.5 million over three years was committed in 2018-19 to provide grants for small businesses to take on apprentices and trainees in targeted sectors of the economy. This program has so far supported 1151 apprentice and trainee commencements from 738 employers.

The Growing Apprenticeship and Traineeships Industry and Regionally-Led Solutions Program is designed to increase the number of apprentices and trainees employed in industries and regions. The program aims to identify barriers that limit the employment of apprentices and trainees and trial targeted solutions to resolve those barriers. Two rounds of this program have been released since February 2019.

These grants programs complement the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme available to larger employers through the State Revenue Office. The Government has also extended this scheme until 30 June 2021 with a focus on targeting identified skill shortages in the economy. In the 2018-19 financial year, the Payroll Tax Relief Scheme has supported 2096 apprentices and trainees and 212 youth employees at the cost of \$5.8 million.

Let us not forget we have committed \$15.5 million to support TasTAFE to establish centres of excellence as purpose-built training workshops for industry, for trades and agriculture. This year we have invested an extra \$2.9 million in TasTAFE, which will see 8.5 new teachers in allied trades and seven new teachers in nursing.

All we hear from those opposite is scaremongering and empty policies like fee-free TasTAFE. Again, an absolute joke. It is completely uncoded and you know it.

Ms O'Byrne - It is working in Victoria.

Mrs RYLAH - Runs for just one year and there is no actual detail or planning on about how many teachers or extra support staff will be needed.

Ms O'Byrne - So you do not support free TAFE? Thank you for that.

Mrs RYLAH - What a mess we saw in Labor in Victoria with the same policy. They had to bail out their TAFEs. This is what would happen here.

Ms O'Byrne - They did not bail out the TAFEs. The Liberal Government closed them. She is misleading the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mrs RYLAH -Mr Deputy Speaker, this Government has overseen a huge positive change to the Tasmanian economy and we are directing significant investments into skills development. We are the only party that can be trusted with TasTAFE.

[11.40 a.m.]

Ms HOUSTON (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the reality is that under the Liberals, TAFE is broken. Course fees are going up quickly, making it unaffordable for some Tasmanians. Our free TAFE policy was about accessibility. This is no laughing matter; it is nothing minor. It actually cuts people off from the education they require, the skills they need and the training they should be able to access to work themselves into the jobs of the future, for young people to have a future, for those trapped in poverty to be able to get the skills and the training and the education they need to get jobs to work their way out. They are being denied that by price hikes and inaccessibility, and moving the campus from the centre of Launceston out to Alanvale, with the transport challenges that involves, is only going to make that accessibility worse.

If you had to rely on the public transport system that runs between the CBD and Alanvale or Newnham, you would know that the buses do not run nearly often enough to make that practical. They will run less often when the university campus is moved from its current location in Newnham to the one in Inveresk. It will make it even harder for people who are coming into the CBD from out of town, now having to move again and transport themselves by public transport out to Alanvale. If they have their own transport, they will then find themselves parking streets away and walking in unless something drastic can be done about the parking facilities.

While the infrastructure is dated in the CBD campus, it is also dated at Alanvale. TAFE itself said it is unclear how much will be invested in Alanvale after it was revealed that TasTAFE considered the bulk of its infrastructure to be below standards for modern vocational education and training, so not even TasTAFE themselves know how much funding there is to redesign, re-establish, expand and upgrade. That begs the question - what is being done with the historical TAFE building in Launceston? Is the upgrade of the Alanvale campus dependent on the sale of that TAFE building in the CBD? If so, then there is going to be a delay in selling one building and then spending on infrastructure for another, if that is even what they are doing.

Other than that, there is no funding; there is no money to complete the upgrade that would make the facilities at Alanvale an expansion, so that means it is a downsize. It means that there is less rooms for students, less room to teach different courses and less capacity to move people

through and give them the skills and the training that they need in order to fully participate in the economy and in society and build lives for themselves here in Tasmania, which means we lose young people again.

Already this year, plumbing and electro-technical apprentices have had their courses deferred. There is a cloud over nursing qualifications and, despite our growing tourism sector, there is a record low intake for hospitality courses at Drysdale. TasTAFE is struggling to recruit and retain teachers due to the toxic work environment and the low wages compared to the mainland. We should be competitive here. We could have a competitive edge and we should be able to do that, but unless there is real, long-term investment, not just in the infrastructure but in teachers and having adequate teaching staff that stay here and finish the courses they are teaching, we will not ever have that.

Labor wanted to rebuild the broken TAFE system by offering free TAFE, and that allows for accessibility to people who currently cannot access TAFE courses not just because of distance but because of the costs involved. We wanted to work with industry and develop opportunities for young people but what is happening now is downsizing. There is no explanation, no plan, and no information on how all this is going to work. We are simply supposed to accept that somehow this is going to be better, but it very seldom is.

TAFE is clearly failing young people who are trying to get a job. Persistent budget cuts imposed by the Government, low morale and staff shortages mean that course cancellations have been the norm. Students in the Information Technology Certificate IV course in Launceston were told that the course would be postponed from completion until next year. That has left students in limbo. They are literally unable to progress their studies and obtain a qualification that will see them get into the workforce.

We desperately need apprenticeships for young people so we can have tradesmen because there is definitely a shortage of tradesmen. If you have ever tried to get one, you will know that. This year, 100 Tasmanians applied to study for the Certificate II in Construction at TasTAFE and 57 were interviewed. However, due to staff shortages, only 12 could be accepted. The unsuccessful applicants were sent letters to apply for courses in other areas such as electro-technology and plumbing, but they were not running either. Neither of these courses will be offered this year. That means that nearly 90 per cent of those young people who wanted to study construction have been left without a pathway to a job and at the same time the construction industry is crying out for skilled workers. How is a downsize going to help that?

We already have a situation where TAFE does not have the capacity to take on all the young people who want to study and where there is not enough room for people looking to gain skills and training and build themselves a future in Tasmania. We are seeing what can only be described as a down-size and we are still not clear how that is going to be funded or how the facilities are going to be upgraded to the point where they can be functional and used.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

PLACE NAMES BILL 2019 (No. 38)

Second Reading

Resumed from 15 October 2019 (page 88)

[11.47 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, as I was saying yesterday, the Place Names Bill corrects some issues with the Nomenclature Board, the process and it modernises the bill, but also keeps in place largely the structure of the former nomenclature bill and that is spelled out in the legislation.

However there are some issues with this bill and that was definitely discussed in the briefing I had. The main objection is around section 13, putting the penalties in place. I am sure the minister received a number of representations from the community, other parliamentarians and so on, specifically about the penalty provisions.

The minister, in his second reading speech, outlined a proposed amendment to clause 13, which after subclause (4) makes the following addition -

For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this section prevents the use of a traditional, colloquial or comedic name for a place if such a name is used in good faith in circumstances where the use of the name is unlikely to mislead or deceive another person.

There is no doubt that is an improvement in terms of the way the bill is set out. The bill as it stands currently, is a very blunt instrument with the power for government to become de facto name police. This does clarify some of the intent; however, we still have some reservations. The minister, in his second reading speech, covered off on some circumstances that these penalty provisions have been put in place to try to address. It talks about circumstances such as a real estate firm advertising that a property is in one location when technically it is in another. The example that has been discussed is the issue of an area of Rokeby attempted to be renamed by property developers as Howrah Gardens, or something similar. That became an issue especially when people who had bought that property were asked by the banks what postcode it had.

We know that postcodes and place names can have an impact on property values. That is why at places like Turners Beach, when you live across the other side of the highway nowhere near the beach, you still like the idea of being called Turners Beach because the place has 'beach' in its name.

There are other remedies. The minister alluded to civil remedies in his second reading speech. People cannot undertake deceptive and misleading conduct; that is against the law. Selling anything without providing the correct information is against the law. There are remedies in place already. In terms of selling property, there is the real estate code, and there are other remedies that people can take. At this stage, I do not think the case has been made for introducing penalties. There has to be a reason for introducing penalties. There has to be very good justification. I would like the minister to give some further details and justifications as to why penalty provisions are required.

Another issue raised was people putting up signs saying their street had a different name, which could lead to issues with delivery of post, or ambulance services arriving, and so on. I would like

to see some details. These penalty provisions are like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. What is the justification?

Without proposed section 13, this bill is something that definitely warrants support. It is well constructed, it brings in the guidelines to naming, it gets rid of some red tape, and importantly brings in the dual naming policy via the guidelines.

Ms O'Connor - The dual naming policy is already in place.

Dr BROAD - It is in place, you are right. It is operational but this makes it more formal. It specifically references it. It specifically brings that into a formal structure.

Proposed section 13 is our issue. Further justification would be very handy. The insertion of the amendment is an improvement. It prevents issues like somebody calling it Tassie, or Valley of Love, those sorts of examples. Of course, that was never the intent. However, the penalties as they are written are quite blunt.

The minister's second reading speech gives some indication of the process if somebody was to have these penalties applied. It seems the named policeman as was set out in the second reading speech will be the Surveyor-General, or the chairperson, to issue infringement notices:

... if the Surveyor-General or the chairperson reasonably believes that a person has committed an infringement offence against the Act or regulations made under the act ...

That creates a task for the Surveyor-General and the chair of this new committee to become the de facto name police. The last thing I would want is for the Surveyor-General to be in the middle of debates around issues such as conflict over dual naming. The way that this is set out it could have the Surveyor-General or the chair of the committee having to argue whether a name is traditional or not.

We know that there is quite often conflict in what a name should be and what a traditional name actually is. We know that there were a number of indigenous languages in Tasmania. There is obviously no recorded history of their own. They are relying on verbal, on traditions and also on the written records made by the colonists or invaders. That is what the community has to rely on. The last thing we would want is for a mountain or a place, which can be argued has different names, because of different sides of it. Ms Houston is probably one to speak on this with more authority, but there are different places that have different names depending on which side you are. One face of a mountain could have one name, whereas another face of a mountain could have another name. The last thing that we would want is for the Surveyor-General or the chair of the committee to be stuck in the middle of this, if somebody raises an issue saying that somebody is using an inappropriate name that is not traditional. This would be something that could potentially be set up.

We know in the past there have been conflicts over names. It is not just about traditional names of places. We know the whole debate about the so-called Tarkine. Mr Brooks, the former member for Braddon, made merry hell with the whole issue of the so-called Tarkine. Now the Circular Head Progress Association has changed its name to the Tarkine Coast Progress Group. When you drive into Smithton, it says, 'Welcome to the Tarkine Coast'. In the past it was argued that 'Tarkine' was a made-up name and was not traditional. If this bill is set out as it is it could have resulted in people

being fined for a number of years for every day that they used another name. That is not the role of the Surveyor-General or the committee to be caught in.

Weighing that up with the benefits of having the penalties in place, which is about, as the minister set out, street signs being inappropriate or somebody putting up their own street sign, or real estate flogging off land and trying to say that it is in an area that it is not. I would like to see some justification for having these penalties when this bill works perfectly fine without those penalties being in place. That is the major issue that -

Ms O'Connor - Are you going to move an amendment?

Dr BROAD - In Committee.

Mr Barnett - I have two amendments and I foreshadowed that in the second reading.

Ms O'Connor - I am talking about the concerns Dr Broad has raised about the penalties.

Dr BROAD - We do not have to propose an amendment; we could just vote against the clause.

Mr Barnett - I will respond in my summary and then we will go into Committee.

Dr BROAD - Yes, that is right and then we go into Committee. We would really like to see justification for putting in place what is, in effect, a name police and additional roles for the Surveyor-General and the committee to be policing names and handing out fines. That is a role that they currently do not have. That is our concern. We do not want the Surveyor-General to be burdened with having to police these things. We could vote against that particular clause. We do not have to propose an amendment, but as it stands we are not supportive of proposed section 13.

The other issue is about the penalties themselves. The penalties for a person are not necessarily significant, so even if someone was doing the wrong thing it could end up being that the penalties are outweighed by the potential profit. I am unaware of a number of circumstances that warrant having these penalties and having that increased role for the Surveyor-General and the committee. They are the issues we have.

The structure of the committee is relatively the same; that is good. The definition of 'place', as is highlighted in the second reading speech, has been cleaned up and modernised. The bill itself in terms of the way things are registered, as I discussed yesterday, clearing up the roles, removing from the minister the ability to vary a name if there has been an objection has been removed, speeding up the process. These are good things. The bill as it is constructed, apart from proposed section 13, is very worthwhile. Proposed section 13 is our issue. We would like to see further justification. We do not want to see the Surveyor-General become the name police. I am not convinced that the problem that is trying to be solved requires this when you do have civil penalties.

Maybe there are other contributions that will delve into this as well but that is the issue we have so we retain the option of voting against that clause when we are in Committee.

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, the House and the minister will be well aware that when this bill was first tabled we raised a number of concerns about its content, the justification for it and particularly in relation to the proposed section 13, which is the heavy-handed section.

Since that point, the minister and his office have been quite keen to secure broad support in the parliament for this legislation. I thank the Surveyor-General, Mr Giudici and his team for the briefing that was provided to us a couple of weeks ago. I also thank the minister for doing something which was unheard of in the past term of the parliament and that is listen to concerns or criticisms that have been raised both inside parliament and in a broader community and respond to those concerns in a meaningful way.

I acknowledge the advocacy of people like Theresa Sainty and Heather Sculthorpe from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre in relation to their concerns, which we also articulated, about the potential for this bill to capture Aboriginal people who use traditional names for a place which have not been formally approved by the Nomenclature Board. Also, our concern was that the bill would potentially capture people who had a slang name for a place, or a well-known colloquial name for a place, who may have been captured and faced a heavy penalty.

The issue within the clause is that through the misuse of a name there needs to be an intent to mislead or deceive. Now we have two amendments from the minister, in response to the concerns that have been raised and the advocacy, and particularly the amendment to clause 13, which is a doubts removal clause. I believe this deals with the concerns that have been raised.

I have cross checked this with some people in the Aboriginal community. There are enduring concerns in the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre particularly about this Government's approach to the dual naming policy but recognise that this amendment has responded to the issues that were raised and so the amendment is to clause 13 for the avoidance of doubt. Nothing in this section prevents the use of a traditional colloquial or comedic name for a place. If such a name is used in good faith and circumstances where the use of such a name is unlikely to mislead or deceive another person.

I noted before what Dr Broad said about Aboriginal place names and he gave a nod to the fragmentation of language and disputes within the broader Aboriginal community about the correct name for a particular place, the correct traditional name. I look forward very much to hearing what Ms Houston has to say about this issue, as a member of the pakana people.

I recommend to Dr Broad and to anyone else in this House who has not been briefed on the evolution of the reclaiming of Aboriginal language to develop palawa kani to see if you can get your hands on one of these very rare and precious books, which I treasure. I would lend it out but it would have to come back straight away, that is the mina tunapri nina kani, the palawa kani dictionary. It makes it very clear that the process of reclaiming language in Tasmania has been a hard one. It has been persistent and rigorous in its academic application.

I want to read a little bit from the palawa kani dictionary, in the introduction. The introduction starts with nina tunapri mina kani 'do you understand what I am saying'? The response is mina tunapri nina kani, 'I understand what you say'. The dictionary, through its introduction, says:

Back in 1909 and 1910, Aborigines living on the islands and others living on mainland Tasmania told an interviewer some words and sentences they still remembered from our original language.

On Flinders Island, these people were Harry Armstrong, Henry Beeton and his daughter, Amelia, and John Maynard and one of his daughters; and on Cape Barren Island, Phillip Thomas and his sister, Nancy Mansell. On the Tasmanian mainland many of the same sentences and words and some different ones, were

still known by seven of Fanny Cochrane Smith's children - William, Mary Jane, Flora Amelia, Joseph, Sarah, Tasman and Frederick and Fanny's grandson, Gus, who lived with her as a child.

All the language remembered by these families was to do with everyday life and activities such as hunting and getting wood for fires and natural resources such as shells, food, plants and animals.

An interviewer, Ernest Westlake, went out into communities and recorded much of the same language from within the community, and from white people too, who had known or had contact with Aborigines. These contacts had been spread right across the state, some in the early days of settlement, many at Wybalenna and putalina/Oyster Cove.

All those words and phrases remembered into the early 20th century match with older records of Aboriginal languages. The older records were written down by more than 20 Europeans, starting with the visit by Captain Cook to Adventure Bay in 1777, throughout the invasion, theft and colonisation of Aboriginal lands from the early 1800s and up to, and during, the prison camps at Wybalenna and putalina/Oyster Cove from the 1830s to 1860s. Aboriginal people were driven off their lands to Wybalenna on Flinders Island, later banished to Oyster Cove, where, as we know, depression, disease and death came with them. With the death of every Aboriginal person through that period came a fragment of language that died and a capacity for that language to be spoken and shared also died.

Culture and language are intimately connected. Some language survived. George Augustus Robinson and others kept writing down bits of language they heard Aboriginal people continuing to speak. As we know, on Wybalenna, Aboriginal people were made to learn English.

For a long time Aboriginal people thought the language was lost to them but we know that was not true. Through this painstaking process of retrieval, Aboriginal Tasmanians were able to compile about 200 words, phrases and song fragments from the memories of over 30 Aboriginal people throughout the 20th century. These treasured pieces of remembered language were only fragments.

The greater reclamation and academic work to reclaim the greater part of *palawa kani* from other sources began. There were books and many unpublished archival documents containing written records made by early Europeans of many nationalities who wrote down what they heard said by Aborigines and attempted to capture unfamiliar Aboriginal sounds in their own European spellings. Those spellings of words written by the recorders and since published by Plomley, Ryan, and other historians and writers, are not in themselves authentic Aboriginal words. But we use them as a starting point for bringing the words they represent back to as close to their original sounds and correct meanings as possible. The *palawa kani* Language Program was among the first in the country in which Aboriginal people themselves learnt the necessary linguistic methods which have since enabled them to do all the language retrieval work on their own languages.

Madam Speaker, this 2013 dictionary I am holding in my hand is the culmination of decades of painstaking work and represents about two-thirds of all the vocabulary that exists. The second addition includes over 300 more words revived since then and many of these are names of places, so the work continues.

Let us look, for example, at a one of the first dual names that went through the process. Under a Labor-Greens government and a Greens minister for aboriginal affairs the Parliament of

Tasmania, the people of Tasmania through their parliament, finally enacted Aboriginal dual naming. We were the only Australian state or territory that did not have an Aboriginal dual naming policy. One of the first places that was dual named was kunanyi/Mt Wellington, but when you go back and have a look at some of the different spellings of kunanyi which is spelt in palawa kani as kunanyi, it is pronounced in some spellings I have seen with a hard 'g' at the front - gunanyi.

Obviously there will be differences about places and the spelling of names but I did want to restate that a lot of work has gone into palawa kani and the dual names which are now in place as a result of the Aboriginal Dual Naming Policy which came into effect in 2012 are just beautiful words, and I want to put them on the parliamentary *Hansard*: truwana is Cape Barren Island; yingina is Great Lake; taypalaka is Green Point; kunanyi is our mountain; kanamaluka is the River Tamar; pinmatik is Rocky Cape; laraturunawn is Sundown Point; titima is Trefoil Island; nungu is West Point; and there are two unbounded localities, larapuna, the Bay of Fires and putalina, Oyster Cove; and of course wukalina, Mt William on the north-east coast of Tasmania.

Many of us, including me, never call the mountain Mt Wellington anymore. I do not even call it kunanyi/Mt Wellington; I just call it kunanyi. I think in the minds of many people who live in and around the mountain it has taken on an older and deeper identity and most people I talk to when we talk about the mountain we talk about kunanyi. It is important that we understand there is a human history and connection to that mountain that goes back tens of thousands of years and dual naming pays respect to that human history. It acknowledges that the history of Tasmania did not start with the arrival of the first Europeans, and by extending dual naming across the community I strongly believe we deepen the broader community's understanding of that deep, deep human history on this island. It is an important part of that long and difficult journey towards genuine reconciliation.

The concerns that have been raised in relation to this bill - beyond proposed section 13 and its potential application until we had this amendment - are about uncertainty within some sections of the Aboriginal community about the ongoing integrity of the dual naming process. I understand that this is not a matter that falls specifically within the portfolio responsibility of Mr Barnett and that Mr Jaensch as the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs will have primary responsibility for the Aboriginal Dual Naming Policy, but we need some clarity on the *Hansard* record about the future of the Aboriginal Dual Naming Policy and ensuring that there is an integrity about the place names that are accepted by the panel that will be in place and ultimately approved by the minister. That is an important reassurance that needs to go out to the wider Aboriginal communities.

The most beautiful of all the dual names which has not been formally adopted yet is the name for this island itself, which is lutruwita - lutruwita/Tasmania - and it would do us all good to think about this island's true old name when we talk about Tasmania because, again, in my mind, Tasmania has become lutruwita/Tasmania.

I recognise that this bill establishes a place names advisory panel comprised of government and community members, chaired by the Surveyor-General. The place names advisory panel is somewhat different from the original panel that was set up under the Survey Coordination Act 1944, the provisions of which relating to nomenclature will be replaced by this legislation. One of the issues we have is that the makeup of that panel is quite different from the panel that has been proposed through this legislation. One of the saddest things about this bill is that it will remove from the statutes the word 'nomenclature', which I think is a marvellous word.

Ms Courtney - Nobody can pronounce it.

Ms O'CONNOR - I know; you spend your life trying to get it right and finally nail it and then it is removed from the statutes.

Mr Barnett - Well noted.

Ms O'CONNOR - The Survey Coordination Act established the Nomenclature Board in 1944, and there were 10 members on that board - the Surveyor-General, the chairman of the board, a senior mapping officer in the department, a senior mapping officer of the Forestry Corporation, a person nominated by the Tasmanian Planning Commission appointed by the Governor, six to be appointed by the Governor, one senior officer in Mineral Resources Tasmania, I gather, one senior officer of the Hydro-Electric Commission nominated by the commissioner; and four persons nominated by the minister who was appointed for a term of three years. The new panel is quite different in its makeup. It will consist of the Surveyor-General; a State Service employee responsible for spatial data mapping of the state, so that is similar; one person nominated by the Director of National Parks and Wildlife appointed under section 6 of the National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002; one person nominated by the Local Government Association of Tasmania, continued as a body corporate by section 326 of the Local Government Act 1993, and one person with knowledge and experience in outdoor recreation.

I find this a most peculiar provision to have on a panel and I wonder if this is the minister's own suggestion, given his enthusiasm for the great outdoors and taking part in the Pollie Pedal and the like. Where did this particular provision come from, particularly in light of the fact that there is no provision for an Aboriginal person to be on the panel as it stands now? We think that is a missed opportunity and disrespectful to Aboriginal people. Instead we have 'a person with knowledge and experience in outdoor recreation', so we could have someone who is the national bungee-jumping champion who, because of that, is able to nominate and be selected to be represented on the panel that decides place names in Tasmania, but we have not made provision for an Aboriginal person to be on that panel, and that is highly regrettable.

The panel would also include up to two persons with knowledge and experience in one or more of the following: heritage or historical matters, orthography, linguistics and other members may be appointed by the minister as may be prescribed. That is a different board make up. It is more contemporary arguably but it is also a bit weird in its potential insertion of the national bungee jumping champion and ignoring the Aboriginal people of Tasmania, particularly as until 1803 this was their country. It was taken away from them at the point of a musket. There was banishment to Wybalena and putalina and, as I said earlier depression, dispossession and death. This is Aboriginal land. Sure, we have been here since 1803 but there has been stalling on the return of lands. There is no apparent enthusiasm from government on negotiating a treaty with the First People of Tasmania.

There is no apparent enthusiasm from government for having our national day on any other day than the day the English arrived at Botany Cove. That is the day that Aboriginal Australians lost their country. It is not a day that we should be celebrating as our national day. Our national day should be a day which brings people together. We need to change the date.

It is very disappointing not to hear the Premier take on his federal colleagues who basically forced the Launceston City Council to conduct its Australia Day awards ceremony on 26 January. This is supposed to be a government that is 'liberal'. I use that term quite loosely, a Liberal government which out of one side of its face says it is a big backer of free speech and then out of

the other, with a heavy hand, clamps down on the Launceston City Council because it wants to show respect to Aboriginal people by not having their awards day on 26 January. It is disgraceful.

We recognise that this new legislation clarifies the meaning of place; that it establishes guidelines to be endorsed by the minister. There was a copy of the Tasmanian Place Naming Guidelines. We found one from May-June this year. There is an updated Place Naming Guidelines from August. This is obviously in preparedness for the act. I found another word that I bet not many members of this place know what it means. I certainly did not until now. Place names or 'toponyms' are names of places or geographic entities and are critically important reference points for all members of the community. From natural features, such as rivers and mountains to city streets and reserves, place names are the most common way that people identify locations. Perhaps the minister could let the House know whether the Place Naming Guidelines will be updated. By interjection, is that the case?

Mr Barnett - I will let you know.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you.

The rules and in some cases their guidelines surrounding place naming in Tasmania are clear. There is reference within the place naming policy to dual naming which reinstates the original intent of the dual naming policy which is that 'it apply to natural geographic and topographic features where an Aboriginal name is applied to a feature within the same extent or area as the feature that already has an existing approved name of non-indigenous origin'.

The bill also establishes processes for the submission and approval of place names. We have no issue with those processes as outlined in the bill and explained to us in some detail in the briefing. The legislation that we are debating establishes who is the relevant responsible authority for the naming of roads, streets and state highways. This is the section that Dr Broad is concerned about. We share some of those concerns.

The bill introduces penalty provisions for the deliberate misrepresentation of place names. We looked at what other states and territories do in relation to the misuse of place names. It is worth noting as a comparison.

In South Australia, the Geographical Names Act 1991 establishes an offence where -

- (a) a geographical name has been assigned or approved in respect to a place under this Act; or
- (b) a name for a place has been approved pursuant to an application made under section 12,

a person must not produce or cause to be produced, or display or cause to be displayed, a document or advertisement in which another name is represented, specifically or by implication, as being the name of that place unless the geographical name or the approved name is also prominently represented.

That has a maximum penalty attached to it of \$5000, which is a fairly hefty whack. That applies to the publication in books, brochures, et cetera.

In New South Wales, the Geographical Names Act 1966 also establishes an offence -

- (1) No person shall publish, or cause to be published ... any name purporting to be the name of any place which has a geographical name unless the name so published is the geographical name of that place ...
- (2) Every person who acts in contravention of the provisions of this section shall be guilty of an offence against this section and shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding 5 penalty units.

In Queensland, hefty penalties are in place for people who knowingly and with the intent to deceive, use a name which is not the recognised name. Under the Queensland Place Names Act 1994, publishing unapproved place name -

- (1) A person must not, in trade or commerce -
 - (a) publish a document, or
 - (b) authorise the publication in a document of an advertisement or statement;in which a name that is not an approved name of a place is represented as the place's name.

The maximum penalty under the Queensland legislation is 100 penalty units. Again, that is a fairly hefty fine. We would like to hear the minister explain some of the thinking about how the penalty provisions were determined.

In the briefing, we came to understand that there are a number of steps in place that the Surveyor-General's office can take in response to an entity or an individual who knowingly misuses a name in relation to a place. I trust and am sure that there will be a reasonably light touch, if you like, on an entity or a person who knowingly misuses a name, at least the first time.

Mr Barnett - I will outline that process for you. It is a graduated process.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, minister.

We were somewhat comforted by the explanation that was made to us by Mr Guidici about how the office would respond to the misuse of names. We recognise that this legislation allows the minister to make regulations and that it repeals the multiple sections of the Survey Co-ordination Act 1944 that relate to the establishment and operation of the Nomenclature Board of Tasmania.

We are not going to oppose this bill because the concerns that have been raised have largely been addressed. We acknowledge the unease of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, particularly in relation to changes to the Dual Naming Policy for Tasmania. We also acknowledge that, despite the Premier's commitment on 26 January 2015 to reset the relationship with Aboriginal Tasmanians, there has not been a reset of the relationship. What has happened is that there has been a dividing and conquering of Aboriginal people and a marginalisation of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre which for decades has represented Aboriginal people. Yes, from time to time the relationship between the TAC and government has been testy and difficult, but that is not a reason to play favourites in your dealings with Aboriginal people. I acknowledge that there were frustrations within the broader Aboriginal communities about things that have happened in the past and a feeling

amongst some people within the community that they were not being heard and I want to acknowledge that TRACA, the Tasmanian regional Aboriginal groups, have formed, are strong and are working also to advance outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Time expired.

[12.31 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) - Madam Speaker, I take the opportunity to speak on this bill as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in particular and I will focus my comments on related aspects of the bill.

I congratulate the minister, his department and his office for the work they have put in, the consultation they have done and the sensitive, I think, responses they have made to key issues in my area of particular interest to improve this bill and make it fit for purpose and acceptable to a broad range of people.

Certainly our Place Names Bill strengthens and improves our place-naming system. Place names are critically important reference points for all members of our community because they reflect our diverse identity, history and heritage and sense of ourself as a place. This bill highlights the importance of getting that right and having rigorous processes to assign appropriate and authoritative names.

As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs it is very important for me to reiterate on the record, as others have, that the Place Names Bill does not replace or change the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy that this Government has most recently revised in June this year. Rather, the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy will continue to be accommodated by the new bill through the accompanying guidelines and in this way the bill empowers the Tasmanian community, including all Tasmanian Aboriginal communities, to participate in the naming of our places, and it is very welcome.

As I said, the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy which has been revised by our Government will continue to be accommodated by the bill through the Tasmanian place-naming guidelines. The new guidelines provide detail in relation to proposing names and the consultation requirements that apply and also specify how the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy is to be applied. The guidelines are being prepared to ensure consistency with other jurisdictions and provide suitable flexibility to guide the range of place-naming scenarios. For confidence about the integrity of the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy as it was proposed, refers to a reference group with expertise in Aboriginal languages to be established by the Nomenclature Board for this purpose and in terms of the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy that function is now done by the Place Names Advisory Panel which performs the equivalent role.

Under the revised Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy the Place Names Advisory Panel established through this bill is required to form a reference group with expertise in Aboriginal languages to provide advice to the council on naming proposals.

In picking up on a point that Ms O'Connor made in her contribution regarding the make-up of the Place Names Advisory Panel and the absence of a requirement for there to be an Aboriginal representative there, I note that the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Reference Group is the only specialist reference group created under this bill to advise the Place Names Advisory Panel. That is an appropriate thing to recognise in that whilst there may be a range of areas of specialist knowledge and advice required, the reference group to advise on Aboriginal place names is the only

one anticipated under this bill. That underscores the confidence in and commitment to the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy which should give people with particular interest in Aboriginal place names some confidence that we remain committed to ensuring the integrity of that process.

Whilst it is not a part of this bill directly, I will take the opportunity to speak briefly to the intended structure of that reference group and some of the issues it would be expected to provide advice on. The reference group with expertise in Aboriginal languages and place names would be a skills-based group, including members with expertise in Aboriginal languages and linguistics, expertise in the delivery of intellectually rigorous processes and awareness of particular cultural sensitivities applying to those names. The intention is that that reference group will have up to five members, the majority of which will be Aboriginal people. That group may also second members from time to time if they are required to assist with its deliberations, for example in relation to specific geographic locations or other technical matters. A skills-based group with a majority Aboriginal membership is the only specialist reference group providing advice to the Place Names Advisory Panel and I think -

Ms O'Connor - Are there palawa kani specialists on that group?

Mr JAENSCH - The bill says expertise in Aboriginal languages and linguistics, recognising that there are many languages.

Ms O'Connor - Were you listening to what I said before about the reconstruction of palawa kani?

Mr JAESCH - I am very sensitive to that and I am sure that there would be an expectation that expertise in relation to palawa kani would be included in that group and that the five-member skills-based membership of that group allows for there to be expertise on palawa kani and other languages included in that group. This is a really important matter and Ms O'Connor did spend time on it. I note also that there had been some work undertaken with regard to setting up that reference group but that process has been paused while the development, discussion and consultation debate on this bill has been undertaken, just so that there has not been confusion of one with the other. Once this bill is finalised we will recommence that process so we can get on with the job of appointing that reference group.

I will talk briefly about the consultation process and some of the key matters raised. I note that in consultation there was an issues paper released to stakeholders in late 2016; this is on the Place Names Bill. Responses were collated to prepare a preferred position. The paper with that preferred position was released in late 2017 for further input and that resulted in a final preferred position paper being created. There was strong support, particularly from local government. The draft bill was released to stakeholders from 19 August to 3 September 2019.

A small number of issues were identified during that period. Personal briefings were made to particular stakeholders during that consultation of the bill, including to the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT), and to members of the Tasmanian Regional Aboriginal Communities Alliance (TRACA) and they made their input. Importantly, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation (TAC) provided detailed submissions during the first stage of stakeholder consultation and that is very welcome. All Aboriginal groups and communities have had the opportunity to make submissions at various stages through the consultation program, and TRACA was briefed in person at their August 2019 meeting on the draft bill and the guidelines and provided their feedback there. I believe the TAC was also offered a briefing on the matter.

Regarding the issues that arose in relation to Aboriginal place names in the context of this bill, I understand that some of those related to matters that were probably more bound up with the Aboriginal dual naming policy itself, and so it is somewhat separate, but it carries over into the discussion and I think that is what Ms O'Connor was referring to as well. That goes in principle to the fact that the Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation is the custodian of the palawa kani reconstructed language, which was the only language able to be proposed for geographical features under the original Aboriginal dual naming policy. Although palawa kani is still able to be used under the revised policy, the revised policy provides for other Aboriginal languages and words and terms and names to be proposed, provided proponents can substantiate their submissions to the satisfaction of the board.

In saying that, I note my respect and sensitivity to the position of the TAC regarding palawa kani and its status as a language. I also reflect our Government's intent to recognise that other languages, other communities, other viewpoints and opportunities to participate and to uphold traditional place names as well through this process as a more plural approach to recognition of cultural heritage and identity amongst our Tasmanian Aboriginal communities. That is worth noting.

There is a broader issue then which was raised directly with me by a number of people, including Ms Houston and I thank her very much for bringing it forward, regarding the less formal and traditional, more colloquial and community-owned names that people have had for places and the concern that they may have triggered penalty processes under this bill. I thank the minister, his office, and his department, for picking up on that and dealing with it thoroughly and sensitively in their response. The proof of the pudding will be in the eating but the people who have advocated, who have given their support to those amendments, recognise that their concerns have been heard and I think that that will be valued and give great confidence.

On the overall support and response from Aboriginal communities who have had their say publicly, I note again the TAC's position regarding the legitimacy of naming and our Government's intent to ensure that we are hearing from all Aboriginal communities and recognising that the very excellent work done and continuing to be done on palawa kani is to be commended and respected. That language is very important to Tasmania, that there are words and traditions, memories and heritage that others seek to sustain and promote and have recognised around Tasmania and we are open to that.

I make quick reference to a release that Tasmania's Regional Aboriginal Communities Alliance made in relation to Aboriginal and dual naming on this issue which reflects that matter so that I am not putting words in other people's mouths.

On 12 September, TRACA made a media release, which reads as follows:

TRACA members represent Aboriginal people from all over Tasmania and bring together voices from regional communities.

Colonisation and associated policies made by white people have robbed us of our local languages. The previous dual naming policy was dated and unjust to the rights of many Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

The Liberal Government, unlike the Greens, heard our voices when TRACA said we do not want you to keep dismantling our traditional structures, roles and mores in society.

Co-chair Patsy Cameron said the new Place Name Bill does not give this huge responsibility to one Aboriginal organisation as it has in the past. It should be shouldered by all.

TRACA members have been building and reclaiming these societies and strengthening our communities in a modern world. Members are adamant, we are not a homogeneous community and there are more than one Aboriginal language groups in this state.

Co-chair Rodney Dillon says, through TRACA we are respecting each other and those territorial agreements by appreciating our differences and our shared history.

I put that into the record because, I do not want to be, as the new Aboriginal Affairs minister, believing that I can faithfully paraphrase the voices of these different groups. I need to put their own words into the record as well, when commenting on these matters of great cultural sensitivity and their heritage.

Our job as a government is to hear, to listen and to respond sensitively and with great respect, particularly to those who are custodians of ancient cultures and heritage, which we all now have a responsibility to protect and be good custodians of, and to share and learn about.

I thank the minister for the time he has taken to ensure we are doing that well, in a way that will enable people, whether they agree on aspects of naming or not, at least to see that we have attempted to provide for sensitive recognition of different groups in this process.

Regarding penalties, I have covered the amendments made there and I have covered the points I wanted to raise.

I thank the minister, his office, his department and the Surveyor-General for their efforts in getting this right and I thank all of the organisations and individuals who have made submissions that have added to the value and the effectiveness of this bill.

I look forward to seeing many more Aboriginal names. I understand that there is an in-tray of applications and proposals for Aboriginal and dual naming that have been held over pending the completion of this bill and it becoming legislation, the reference group being established under the Place Names Panel. I look forward to those applications being dealt with through this new process.

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Madam Speaker, I will make a start but, obviously, we will have to recommence after the break.

I want to talk about the legal aspects of the proposed bill and to put it into a broader context around how we regulate things such as words, name, brand and intellectual property rights, those sorts of things. I will also talk about the Trade Practices Act and how I see the proposed section 13 fitting in with the legislative regime that we have in place already. Straight up, it does fill a gap. I

do think there is a gap. As to whether we have it exactly right in its drafting is something we would like to discuss during the Committee phase.

It is worthwhile opening with some comments on the fun that has been had in the use of colloquial names. It is part of the DNA of how we do things here. The sensitivity people have shows a true love of the place where we live and the nicknames we give people and things and how we roll with that as Tasmanians. The *Mercury* had had some great commentary on this: some high dudgeon about 'do not come near our nicknames' and 'stay away from our colloquial names', and 'sense of humours now are outlawed'. Some good rhetoric around it but, in truth, at the heart of it, there are serious legal issues that concern free speech, how we regulate speech and words and language. The process that we go through to look at what could be seen as a very small incursion at a local level ought to be subject to a great deal of conversation and scrutiny. I think that has occurred.

I think it was Ms O'Connor who said that the minister has listened. I believe he has listened - kudos. I have worked in the past with the minister on a parliamentary inquiry into the constitutional amendment, which was successful, to recognise Tasmanian Aboriginals and to publicly identify and agree that unbroken linkage between what has happened in the past and where we are now. That was very positive. I believe it was unanimously supported in the House so kudos to everybody for that.

I would also like to give Dr Broad some credit. His analysis of the challenges of proposed section 13 are fulsome and quite accurate.

At the end of the day we will need to strike the balance between consumer protection and clipping the wings of what might happen when people want to crack some jokes. My long-suffering staffers have put together a list of some of the nicknames that we like. I will set them down on *Hansard* for the fun of it. Let us hope I do not get captured by section 13 at a later date, but I can assure you, it is for no commercial interest and for colloquial use only.

We have Hobart Town; Slobart; River City; No Town and Go Town; Mona City, which I like. People sometimes talk about being beyond, within, around the 'flannelette curtain'; the latte line in reverse, depending on which way you are driving; Moonah Heights; the Taroona Enclave, I like the concept of that; the 'mont, for Claremont, a great football club out there. Soho, Noho and Woho, are more recent names that have developed over the last 20 years.

My sailing friends talk about the 'Bridgewater Jerry'. I do not know where that name came from, but that is what the fog that settles on our beautiful River Derwent is called. The 'Valley of Love' which somebody has already mentioned today. 'Boot Stadium', for the Blundstone Arena. I am not sure they would be extremely happy with that, but maybe they are. You go there and there are boots all through, not just the changerooms, but also for sale in reception area.

The Huon, which we like to mostly pronounce with a silent 'h'. The daily paper, the Muckury, the exaggerated Advocaat; these are fun names that people like to use.

On the big northern island, we call them the mainlanders. They are the enemy to be resisted at all times, particularly when they are trying to legislate across our island state. We are Taswegians. We can be Tasmanians or Taswegians.

So there is a bit of fun to it. We like the way we are able to engage with a sense of humour in our small island state. Nobody is particularly excited about what, at first blush, seemed to have been at first blush an over-regulatory approach.

I will say that the minister who took the meetings listened and took some heat on it. He has proposed a very sensible solution which I understand has come from Parliamentary Counsel, so that is very helpful. Thank you, minister, for bringing the bill on and for doing the process of consulting. I thank everybody who has worked on this matter. These things take years to develop, so to the team, well done on bringing that through.

I appreciate the challenges around the Aboriginal naming issues. I appreciate that they are in separate portfolios for you. It is good that you are both able to be here today to make those particular contributions.

The law that we are dealing with, broadly speaking, is around the issue of free speech but it is important to note that there are many areas in which we regulate the use of language and words, particularly in advertising, trademarks and copyright, patents and those sorts of things. We do that in the written word, in books, in publishing when it comes to the laws of defamation, so there is a regime around which we do this.

Under the Tasmanian Police Offences Act, you can get into trouble if you say some particularly rude words to the wrong people at the wrong time. Language matters. How we use language really matters. We want to strike that balance between use of language and fun terms or even incorrect terms that are used, unknowingly or unwillingly, but not in a commercial context and certainly not with the aim of misleading or deceiving anybody.

That goes to the heart of it - that intent to mislead or deceive or dud someone commercially is what proposed section 13 is trying to address. It is about consumer rights and it is about filling a gap.

I have read the Consumer Law, particularly section 29 which deals with false and misleading representation. The gap is a practical thing. If you are convinced to purchase land and you go through the process thinking you are buying a plot of land with a particular postcode or a particular address which is more valuable, the vendor is getting more money from you, getting your mortgages in place, doing your banking, paying your lawyer, paying your conveyancer, only to find that you get to the bank and you have not been buying that particular block of land in that particular location at all. The block of land is right but the name is incorrect. You have not bought in West Moonah, you have actually bought in Derwent Park. It might make a difference.

The difficulty with the Trade Practices Act remedy which is section 29 remedy. This is me being a lawyer who would have to sit with a client and tell them you can mount litigation once the event has happened as a defensive move or to try to claim back some damages of wrongdoing. You are going to pay your lawyer upfront, take a year out of your life to pursue it. Even then, litigation is time-consuming, risky and uncertain. You never know exactly what will happen.

That will work for people who are building a hotel. If somebody wants to build a hotel, they have been sold a particular block of land and they think they are going to be able to say 'fantastic hotel on the shores of wherever' and they are duded on that, they have deep pockets. They will have access to lawyers and, as developers, they will know what to do. They are able to deal with that section 29 process, but if it is just me, or my friends or my kids wanting to buy something and

it happens to them we could be tens of thousands of dollars out of pocket by the time they get to the next stage.

Debate adjourned.

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

MOTION

Coal Exploration and Global Climate

[2.30 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I move:

That the House -

- (1) Acknowledges thermal coal combustion is a key driver of increasing greenhouse gas emissions and rising global temperatures.
- (2) Recognises the impact just 1.1 degrees of warming is having on Tasmania, including extreme floods, East Coast drought and marine heatwave, increased dry lightning storms and destructive bushfires, coastal erosion, biosecurity threats and ecosystem stress.
- (3) Accepts the scientific consensus that burning fossil fuels - such as coal - must end in order to limit warming and prevent climate breakdown.
- (4) Agrees it is in Tasmania's best interest to be a climate positive, clean energy island.
- (5) Notes Tasmania's natural, clean energy powered brand would be damaged by any new coal mines, and this brand damage would flow on to the agricultural and tourism sectors of the economy.
- (6) Commits to a prohibition on new thermal coal mines in Tasmania.

The announcement by the Government to entice and encourage coal exploration and \$50 000 towards Midlands Energy, which was announced only a few short weeks ago, has brought a breathtaking collaboration of people across the Tasmanian community. There has been an extraordinary speed of response and a depth of concern has welled up.

In the House today, we have many people and I believe there are people downstairs as well, and I welcome everyone to parliament. In the Speaker's Reserve we have Mr Headlam from Woodbury, an area affected by this licence. There are many other people in Tasmania who are watching us online as we debate this motion, and others who will be looking at social media afterwards. It has tapped into a depth of concern about what is happening in the global climate, a recognition of the urgent need for action and a real eye-watering sort of outrage, I suppose, at the

ludicrous prospect of handing out thermal coalmining leases in this time, in this place, on planet Earth.

The genesis of this global movement which is underway, and that we see expressed here today and also that we saw expressed yesterday - and I acknowledge the three women activists from Extinction Rebellion who were arrested outside parliament, bringing to the attention of all politicians in this Chamber the importance of listening to climate scientists, understanding the breakdown that is happening in the climate and acting.

This has been bubbling away for six decades or more. Climate scientists, physical scientists have been documenting changes that are happening to the global climate system. The Greens as a party that listens to science has always reflected this in our policies. For decades we have been reflecting what the scientists are saying, evolving policies and comments as the times change.

The impetus for what is happening here today, the response that we are seeing across Tasmania to this proposal, came in only the last year: the global movement that is now blooming across 150 countries where 4500 events were held for the global climate strike only a few weeks ago around planet Earth. It was estimated that 6 million to 7 million people turned out on the streets to talk about what scientists are telling us is really happening to the global climate.

This knowledge has only percolated to the surface in the last year. We have to acknowledge that we stand on the shoulders of a then 15-year-old girl who took it upon herself with her super powers of attention to detail, listening to scientists, to recognise that we have to stand up against a situation which is continuing to proceed as though it is business as usual. Greta Thunberg who sat Friday after Friday by herself in Sweden holding her own placard in Swedish, 'School strike for climate', has been a catalyst for a global climate movement. We saw the result of that a couple of weeks ago on 20 September. It has only been one year this month since the United Nations, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change handed down a report, a clarion call, from scientists worldwide about the state of the global climate system. Their deadline to us as a planet is that we have until 2030. Last year it was 12 years, now it is 11 years. The clock is ticking. The United Nations told us that we must act immediately and urgently to keep the global climate down to 1.5 degrees or dramatically risk escalating carbon emissions causing further climate breakdown and tipping points for collapse to natural systems.

In response to that, Extinction Rebellion launched themselves with a public letter signed by 100 academics in October last year in the United Kingdom. From that time there has been a resurgence of non-violent civil disobedience around the planet from people who understand that when governments fail to act, when the system fails to respond, we have to do everything we can on a personal level to force the political system to listen to the truth of what is happening. Their demand 'Tell the truth, act now' is something that we saw reflected yesterday and we will continue to see until we take the actions that we must take.

I seek the indulgence of the other members to table the open letter that was circulated as a result of the announcement a few weeks ago from the community groups.

Leave granted.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will read from it and then provide it to the Clerk. This letter has been circulated to the Premier and to the Leader of the Opposition, and also to Ms Ogilvie.

The open letter is in support of the motion before us today and it has been signed by a huge number of organisations and individuals. I do not have time to read them all but it is important for people who are listening and watching, and for members in the Chamber, to understand the breadth of people who have signed this open letter in support of the motion that we are debating today.

They include these organisations: the Wilderness Society, Doctors for the Environment Australia, Fossil Free UTAS, Climate Action Hobart, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, South Hobart Sustainable Community, IMPACT UTAS, Teros Australia, Clarence Climate Action, Tasmanian Refugee Rights Action Group, AYCC Tasmania, Animal Liberation Tasmania, UTAS Justice Society, the ACF Tasmania South, Extinction Rebellion Tasmania, Frack Free Tas, Bob Brown Foundation, the School Strike 4 Climate, Australian Parents for Climate Action, Climate Justice Initiative, Rebel Food Tasmania, The Australia Institute, Surfrider Tasmania, Goodlife Permaculture, Unionists for Climate Action, Seed Indigenous Youth Climate Network, Climate Tasmania, Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary, Friend of the East Coast, Tasmanian Conservation Trust, Tasmanian Renewable Energy Alliance, Tasmanian National Parks Association, Student Environment and Animal Law Society, the North East Bioregional Network, the Tassie Nannas, Agri Energy Alliance, and Environment Tasmania.

Prominent individuals who have signed this include David Bartlett, the former Labor premier; Paula Wriedt, the former minister for the environment, Labor; Andrew Lohrey, the former Labor Speaker of the House of Assembly; Greens senator, Peter Whish-Wilson; Greens senator, Nick McKim; and Andrew Wilkie, federal MP for Clark.

There are pages of academics from the University of Tasmania who have also signed up and this is a move that we have seen worldwide. Scientists who have been cautious for decades, who have been restrained, who have stayed within the ivory tower have increasingly come out to make strong statements about the reality of the evidence they are finding, the modelling they are doing, and the understanding of the changes to the natural system.

In Tasmania, in support of the motion today we have signatures from - I will not have time to go through their disciplines -

Chris Johnson
David Bowman
Nick Cooling
Fay Johnston
Dr Hamish Maxwell-Stewart
Aiden Davison
Caroline Smith
John Hunter
Corey Petersen
Dr Catherine Elliott
Jamie Kirkpatrick
Dr Chloe Lucas
Dr Kate Booth
Dr Emma Pharo
Dr Alastair Richardson
Dr Chia-Chin Amy Lin
Dr SB
Professor Matt King

Dr Karen Johnson
Dr Jo Ingram
Dr Phillipa Watson
Dr Kim Beasy
Dr Vishnu Prahalad
Dr Russell Warman
Dr Danielle Wood
Dr Louise Richardson-Self
Dr Kaz Ross
Dr Lucy Tatman
Associate Professor Dr Penny Edmonds
Anna Seth
Jack Cain
Kate Bendall
Clare Smith

A huge number of general practitioners, medical students, economists and Bonnie Sveen, the actress, Andy Townsend, a nature photographer -

Ms O'Connor - Heather Rose.

Dr WOODRUFF - Heather Rose, a world-renowned novelist from Tasmania. PhD students, marketing managers, environmentalists, advocates, agronomists, Amanda Lohrey, also an author, and Anna Pafitis from organisations around Tasmania.

We will make this available online. It will be tabled to the Clerk. It shows us that people understand just in the last year, with three global climate strikes in March, May and again in September, where millions of people turned out onto the streets that there is a movement underway across the planet.

The question is: why listen to this movement? Other more concerning and nefarious movements are underway on the planet. There are movements that trade in fear, which create walls within and between people who trade in religious and race-based hatred. We do not support or listen to those movements.

This movement is based in science. It is life affirming. It is positive. It is future looking. It is telling us the truth of what is happening. It understands that there is a threat to all of life on Earth and we must act with urgency to avert it. The demands of the school strike for climate, which has now become the global climate strike movement, and the extinction rebellion combined are about telling the truth. Fundamentally, they are about three demands.

The first one is, no coal, gas or oil mining any longer. The second one, 100 per cent renewable energy. The third one is a just transition. Transition means moving on from where we are now, not staying where we are and doing a little bit less of it. It means changing our state. In that context, Scott Morrison said, only recently, 'I don't want our children to have anxieties about this issue'. He would prefer to appeal to calm and contentment as though calm and contentment is the right response in this situation.

It is deeply disturbing to have a prime minister who is denying the reality of the science. The scientists, and many of the people who signed this letter are some of those people, tell us that we

have eight-and-a-half years at the current rates of rising carbon dioxide from the mining of coal, gas and oil. By that time, we will have reached the limit of what the planet can absorb of carbon dioxide to be able to stay at the maximum increase of 1.5 degrees that the UN IPCC recommends we stay under. Beyond that extra level of heat we would trigger ongoing cascades of climate interactions that will make the planet uninhabitable for most people and bring waves of refugees and other changes.

These words are really hard to say. I find myself in a space where, in such a short amount of time we are and we must have public conversations about things like the habitability of the planet, not only for furry mammals but for human beings. We have for too long thought of ourselves in a different category but the science is making it abundantly clear that we are all in this together. We all face some pretty serious threats and an irretrievable crisis unless we act within this very short window of time.

The expectations would be that hundreds of millions of people will be displaced in the near future because of land that can no longer support them, because of depleted water sources after fires, floods, typhoons and landslides. That will bring problems of xenophobia which are already obvious across the world and are particularly severe. We will be addressing the endless mobility of people who will be desperate and dispossessed. Think of how badly we already deal with a tiny number of people on boats who are fleeing warfare in the Middle East and in Central Asia and imagine that number magnified by enormous amounts.

The impacts now at 1.1 degree of heating on the planet, which is where we are at the moment, is already too late for many people: people in the Arctic, the Inuit, people from Tuvalu and other Pacific Islands, and people in parts of Africa and Asia as well as our own farming communities in western New South Wales, which are becoming more desert-like and uninhabitable today as we speak. We still have towns at risk of losing their water supply altogether in western New South Wales - large towns like Dubbo. We are not talking about a few campgrounds out in the desert. We are talking about substantial towns with 30 000 people in them.

In Tasmania we had massive bushfires in 2016 and 2019. We had the longest and largest ever recorded marine heatwave off the east coast of Tasmania in 2016. These things are not decreasing in number, they are increasing. Biosecurity threats from new insects, from marine life, invertebrates and birds that are trying to move to areas as their own environments to the north heat up, are having big effects on our ecosystem. Added to events like dry lightning storms, which we have never experienced before, we are seeing a truly changing environment in Tasmania.

In the context of that avalanche of global people movement concern and the scientific evidence, we had an announcement for a new export-oriented thermal coalmine in Tasmania's Midlands. It was ludicrous and totally unbelievable.

There was an exploration licence and a gift of \$50 000 handed to the Government by Midland Energy to hunt for coal. That licence covers 15 000 hectares of privately owned land at Melton Mowbray, Jericho, Oatlands and Woodbury, some of the land that Mr Hedland, who is sitting behind me, owns part of and is custodian of and farms there.

It is land that is serviced by the recently established Midlands Irrigation Scheme, prime agricultural land. Hundreds of landowners who spent their lives and hard-earned incomes improving their properties would have no right to refuse exploration drilling. They would have no legal way to prevent losing their land to open-cut coalmining if coal was found there. How would

open-cut coalmines, in the centre of an island at the bottom of Australia, ever compete with mega-coalmines to the north in Queensland? There is obviously just one answer to that. It would be public subsidies, which is the way we like to do things in Tasmania with extractive dinosaur industries - just hand out a bit of public money to keep them going.

Behind that \$50 000 handout to Midland Energy for an exploration licence, when we did some digging we found a raft of other thermal coal ventures. By our count, there are currently seven exploration licences for coal, a number of which are currently up for renewal. There is another series of potential mining leases over tenements near Cornwall and south of St Marys, and HardRock Coal Mining states that it aims to be the first company to export thermal coal from Tasmania.

Under this Liberal Government there has been 186 square kilometres of land which has been handed over to coal exploration. The Premier said this morning that under a Labor-Greens government these coal licences existed or were handed out, but that was five-and-a-half years ago and the Greens did not support that. I have just listed the things that have happened on the planet in the last year. In the last year, the science is showing us that the world is changing rapidly and that the mode of business development that was appropriate, if it ever were appropriate, five, 10 or 20 years ago, can no longer be considered anything like an opportunity that we should look to today.

There are clearly many other issues than the ones I have talked about in terms of building new coalmines in Tasmania. There are the rights of local Aboriginal communities to consider, who have been custodians of that land for more than 40 000 years. They get no say at all under Tasmania's coalmining exploration licencing system.

We have a state plan which is based on clean, green, environmental and niche products. It is based on renewable energy, it is based on a healthy lifestyle and it encourages tourists to come to a place which is different and beautiful and pristine in the real meaning of the term. Open-cut coal mining would be the antithesis to every single one of those things.

There is no moral or economic reason to explore for coal, let alone to hand out public money to encourage coalmining. We have a moral obligation to all Tasmanians, young and old, to keep carbon in the ground and fight the climate emergency. None of us in this room can say that we no longer understand that emissions from mining and burning thermal coal will add to the already dangerous level of global heating that is occurring. Maybe we could have said that two years ago, maybe even one year ago, but that is no longer an excuse. The action that we take in the next eight years, at national, state and local levels, and personally, will make a difference. It has to make a difference. We cannot do everything personally in Tasmania, or even in Australia, but each one of us, on every level personally, and at the state level, can do something. We can do our bit, because every bit added together makes a difference.

Greta Thunberg has shown to all of us the power of collective action, and the point of collective action is that it does not exist unless you do it, and everyone has to do it. We all felt the power, those of us who were there, of walking in that crowded group of people along the streets on 20 September. It was an amazing sensation that I will never forget, standing with people, and I am sure everyone who is here in the gallery today was at that rally. It was driven by young people, children who were standing up showing us the way, showing us what can happen if a 15-year-old girl and all of her school friends across the planet put their hands up and tell us it is time to do something different, it is time to change business as usual. We can all do it. If we do not show what action looks like, if we do not do it here in the Tasmanian parliament, what hope do we have

for young people to think about the future? We want to walk together into the future with them with genuine hope.

I hope that every member here from the Labor and Liberal parties will support this motion because this is a motion about thermal coal. It is not about coking coal. It is not about what is happening in the Fingal Valley. This is a motion of intent. It is a statement of belief. It is not a bill. It is about intention, so there is no way to weasel out of this because of being concerned about Fingal or coking coal. That is not what this is about. This is about new thermal coalmining in Tasmania and doing everything we can to avert the worst impacts of climate change, keeping fossil fuels in the ground and prohibiting the construction of new thermal coalmines. I hope members will support it.

[2.56 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Resources) - Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Government to this motion moved by the Greens, which is part of a concerted and long-running campaign to undermine not just the mining and mineral processing industry in Tasmania and preventing the development of new mines, but also to undermine our productive industries.

I can foreshadow at this stage that the motion put before this House is unacceptable and I will be moving an amendment. I will be doing that shortly.

Mining and mineral processing supports more than 5700 jobs across this great state of Tasmania, as well as delivering more than half of our exports. In terms of undermining the mining and mineral processing industry that is behind this motion, motivated no doubt by the Greens and their allies, let us be clear on what is behind this motion that the Greens have moved. In the past they have moved to have the Tarkine declared a national park and therefore off limits to miners, forestry, recreational users. Despite a mining history of some 150 years, they have proposed to lock up another 10 per cent of Tasmania through a 680 000-hectare World Heritage Area expansion in Tasmania - 10 per cent of the state of Tasmania. That is their proposal and it is on the public record.

Ms O'Connor - Why do you think people come here, to see coalmines?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr BARNETT - They have proposed to rescind the legislated strategic prospectivity zones, making it much easier for opponents to prevent mining developments on crown land. This is all part of their strategy. Advice from the Department of State Growth about their World Heritage claims is that it would ban mining in one of the most prospective mining regions of Tasmania, including more than 1000 mineral deposits, eight current mining leases. Based on past expenditure the Department of State Growth estimates that the cost is upwards of \$150 million in mining revenues over the next 20 years.

The mining industry has warned that the Greens' motion would be the thin end of the wedge, and that is from the Tasmanian Minerals and Energy Council. What is the view of Cement Australia? The general manager of operations, Warren Waples, has made it crystal clear what a prohibition on new thermal coalmines would mean for his company and his workers, and this is advice that has just been received earlier today. He says a ban on new coalmines, from his perspective, from Cement Australia, would mean an increase in CO₂ emissions from the freight requirement to substitute local coal with imports. Second, the near-term closure of Cornwall Coal

Company which has served Tasmania's coal needs for over 100 years. Third, the eventual closure of the Railton cement operation which has been operating in northern Tasmania for 100 years with the loss of 200 direct jobs in regional locations. This impacts many hundreds of contractors and suppliers in the local communities we operate in.

Ms O'Connor - Silly scaremongering.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, please.

Mr BARNETT - Finally, increased rail costs for all industry, commercial and transport users with the loss of the largest customer to the state-owned TasRail network. The motion was sent to Cement Australia to get their feedback because they are a key stakeholder, not only at Railton but at Cornwall Coal. This is their exact response I am reading into the *Hansard* so that you can listen to the number of jobs that you will impact. Mr Waples also stated -

Coal is an integral raw material for the manufacturer of clinker, the main ingredient in cement which is produced from locally sourced limestone and limestone players and processed in heated kilns. The Railton plant is one of the few remaining integrated cement production facility in Australia and competes with the Australian markets with imported materials, primarily from Asia. The Railton limestone mine is a significant reserve with decades of proven resource and ideally situated for continued long-term operation of the clinker kiln. To ensure a secure supply of quality coal to the Railton cement kiln continued operation of the Cornwall Coal mine is essential. This will include the continued development of the current mine workings and the future opening of an identified additional new thermal coal resources.

As I said, the Tasmanian Minerals and Energy Council has warned that the damage could be even more extensive. What did they say in a media release put out yesterday, on the public record? The council advised firstly TMS is concerned with the proposed motion to prohibit prospective coalmining applications in Tasmania before any potential project is afforded the due processes -

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor I am going to give you a warning. Please, I know this is very important to you. You have brought in a lot of guests so I would like to keep you in the room.

Mr BARNETT - So they say any potential project is afforded the due processes of being taken through the authorised and legislated -

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Sorry, what was that?

Ms O'Connor - Nothing.

Madam SPEAKER - I suggest you control yourself, Ms O'Connor.

Mr BARNETT - As I was saying, Raymond Mostogl, CEO of Tas Minerals Manufacturing and Energy Council said -

Tasmania disadvantages itself in its attempts to attract investments from both new investors and existing businesses while ever politics is permitted override our robust and defensible standards. It is these investments and subsequent wealth-creation opportunities which provide the next generation of Tasmanians with aspirations for a bright future with employment. How can shutting these opportunities down be good for Tasmania?

That is a very good question. Let me say that as a government we are a strong supporter of the mining and mineral processing sector and we are an equally strong supporter of agriculture. We have the runs on the board to prove it and we will always act in the state's best interest.

Dr Woodruff interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr BARNETT - The mining industry can be assured that we will follow the legislated statutory process in the assessment of exploration and mining applications. Our farmers can also be assured that we will protect their interests. We have already given the commitment to the Tasmanian Farmers & Graziers Association that we will not support mining developments on productive agricultural land where it is not in the state's best interest.

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, warning number one.

Mr BARNETT - I have made that perfectly clear in the past few weeks despite the cacophony from the Greens. They are not listening to the position of the Government and noting our strong support for both mining and agriculture.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The minister has entirely misrepresented our position. We are listening very carefully. We also note that in the public gallery and in the reception room, which is overflowing with people, people are listening very carefully to what he says.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, you know that is not a point of order but I have indulged you by allowing it to go on *Hansard*. Please proceed, minister.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Madam Speaker. As has been noted, in terms of the statutory process, it is really important to get this right. The Mineral Resources Development Act lays down a very clear statutory process for the assessment of applications for mineral exploration licences and mining leases. All proposals are considered on their merits and the focus is on ensuring that Tasmania's best interests are represented in the decision-making process. There are two coal exploration licences in the southern Midlands held by companies associated with Midland Energy. The licences were granted under Labor in 2008, and continued to exist throughout the period of the disastrous Labor-Greens coalition government. Both of these exploration licences are currently pending renewal.

As Minister for Resources - I want to state this very clearly - I have a statutory decision-making role under the Mineral Resources Development Act in the determination of applications for an extension of term of exploration licences. Assessments of the applications for extension of term

are expected imminently from the department in relation to these exploration licences. These assessments will inform my decision-making as required under the act. The Government has not granted, nor has been asked to grant, any mining lease on any area of these licences. Any application -

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of clarification, Madam Speaker. If you would not mind if -

Mr Barnett - Where is that in the standing orders? I have never heard of - I am speaking.

Dr WOODRUFF - If the minister would clarify whether it is in fact he who signs off those licences. My understanding is that you are empowered to do that, which means you are also empowered not to do that.

Madam SPEAKER - Okay. You have been indulged and I will let the minister continue.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a very important statutory responsibility in accordance with the law and you cannot willy-nilly change the law at your whim without passing legislation through both Houses of this parliament. Any application for a mining lease that might be made would be subject to the required statutory assessment and must be in the state's best interest to be approved. I have made that very clear.

Even with a mine lease, no operation can commence without the requisite land use permit from the relevant council as well. That is part of the process. There is a lot of water that is required to proceed under the bridge.

The Greens are clearly trying to paint a picture that we are doing nothing to address climate change. That is not true. In fact, it is a load of rubbish. Tasmania is leading in responding to climate change. We are doing our bit to ensure Australia meets its obligations. I will give you some examples. In 2018, Australia was a world leader in renewables with over \$12 billion in investments, and followed that up by surpassing the nation's 2020 renewable energy target thanks to Tasmania - the Cattle Hill Wind Farm, which is now under construction and proceeding very positively. We have very encouraging news. Tasmania was the first jurisdiction in Australia to reach zero net emissions in 2016 and is one step away from full self-sufficiency in renewable energy by 2022.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I cannot let the minister mislead the House and take credit for Tasmania being a carbon sink. That is the work of conservationists over decades, including The Greens, saving forests.

Madam SPEAKER - As you know, that is not a point of order. Proceed, minister.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Speaker, it would be really appreciated to get credit where credit is due. The Hodgman Liberal Government has delivered, and we are heading towards 2022 with 100 per cent fully clean, fully self-sufficient renewable energy in the state of Tasmania. If we were a country we would be up there with Norway -

Dr Woodruff - You have ripped up the forestry agreement. You are going to log 356 000 hectares.

Madam SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, warning one.

Mr BARNETT - We would be up there with Iceland. We have a great track record and this will indeed deliver benefits for investment into Tasmania - \$6.5 billion of investment coming out of our plans under the Tassie First Energy policy. Thousands of jobs under our plans for Battery of the Nation. By 2022 we will be at that 100 per cent, that is our target. We are on track. That is very encouraging. We are focusing on getting the balance to deliver jobs and that long-term sustainable growth. We are delivering.

In terms of the warnings from Cement Australia, the Minerals Council and what I have said already, I will not be supporting this motion, but I will be moving an amendment which I will now table and ask for circulation to the relevant members in the House. I will read that:

All words after 'House' be deleted and the following be inserted -

- (1) Does not support mining developments on productive agricultural land where it is not in the State's best interests.
- (2) Continues to support the existing coalmining operations in Tasmania, which employ more than 200 people directly and indirectly and supports the local Fingal Valley and Railton communities.
- (3) Notes the Government has not granted, nor has been asked to grant, any coalmining leases in the Southern Midlands.
- (4) Notes the rigorous statutory assessment process set out under the Minerals Resource Development Act 1995 which is a legal requirement before either exploration or mining can proceed.

Ms O'Connor - Shame.

Mr BARNETT - I hear the word 'shame' from the member for Clark, who presumably will be disagreeing with that amendment.

Ms O'Connor - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - Clearly, that is part of the Greens approach, and I am not surprised by that at all. I guess the big question is, what will Labor do? Will they be standing together, shoulder to shoulder or tied at the hip with their Green counterparts as they did for four sad years under the Labor-Greens coalition, or will they see the light? The question will no doubt be answered very soon.

Dr Woodruff - They are snuggling up to your armpit at the moment.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr BARNETT - In terms of this Greens new deal, and we have heard about this at the Greens state council, we have heard about their plans of a Greens new deal. This is on the back of the Labor-Greens killing off the forest industry, two out of three jobs during that time. What a dreadful state of affairs, with rural and regional communities brought to their knees. We have questions for a Greens new deal and the question is, at what cost to jobs? Today we are seeing that the Greens are quite happy to sacrifice those jobs.

What did Bob Brown say about coalmining? It was brought up by the Premier this morning, and I have the *Mercury* here. The headline is 'Coal-fired power is the best option', quote:

Tasmania's environmental lobby has expressed its preference for coal-fired thermal power generation over the construction of more hydro dams. The director of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society, Dr Bob Brown ... said yesterday that if there was to be a new power station then coal-fired thermal was the 'best centralised option we have'.

20 October 1981.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Standing order 151, tedious repetition. Your Premier tried this, this morning. That is from something Dr Bob Brown said in 1980 before we fully understood the climate science. You really are clutching at straws. It is pathetic.

Madam SPEAKER - I can draw your attention to this.

Mr BARNETT - That is fine, Madam Speaker. The member does not like to hear the facts and the truth of 1981. I have said that it was in the *Mercury*. That was then, this is now; but that is what was said by Dr Bob Brown.

Dr Woodruff - It was 39 years ago.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr BARNETT - There you go, your leader, Dr Bob Brown. What is his response? There is a fair bit of embarrassment there.

We want to hear from the Labor Party and perhaps other members in this place. I will conclude on Extinction Rebellion that has been referred to by the member for Franklin. This organisation arose as a British-inspired group which appears to have a deep loathing for western democracy and western values -

Ms O'Connor - What a load of garbage.

Dr Woodruff - Come off it.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - and democratic election results.

Dr Woodruff - He is inciting us.

Madam SPEAKER - He might be inciting you, but you are grown-ups and you do not have to bite.

Mr BARNETT - I am trying to share a view with respect to Extinction Rebellion. When they cannot get their way at the ballot box, many of them act as anarchists, resort to standover tactics and they are drawing support from the Greens. I have had people contact me, particularly in recent times, saying they were embarrassed for and on behalf of the Greens because that group is

demeaning the views of those in the Green movement. Nevertheless, I am making the point that Extinction Rebellion is not some benign, peaceful protest organisation as the Greens would have people believe. It is an organisation that is prepared to disrupt the lives of huge numbers of people and put those people in danger, in some cases to try to ram home a message that Australians have overwhelmingly rejected -

Dr Woodruff - With their knitting needles.

Madam SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, refrain.

Mr BARNETT - at the ballot box, listened to the views of the Tasmanian people at the ballot box and the views of the Australian people. On that note I move the amendment. I look forward to a vote on that amendment.

[3.15 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, if I closed my eyes it was almost like listening to Bob Santamaria there for a period, the communist socialist threat. That was a contribution around people's right and their ability to protest publicly was appalling and a poor reflection on yourself as a member of parliament, who should be engaged in public discourse and not afraid of people who have a different opinion from you. That sort of diatribe is unbecoming of a parliamentarian in this state.

Dr Woodruff - Hello, the Labor Party who has brought in the worst anti-protest legislation in Queensland.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff, warning number two.

Mr O'BYRNE - We only have a few minutes. Unfortunately, we will not have time to go through some of the things I wanted to touch on. I will make a number of points. Let us be clear, the context to this motion and this debate around the proposal in the Midlands is in context of the issue and the debate around climate change.

There is no doubt we are in a period of climate emergency. We know that human-induced climate change and carbon in our environment is out of control. We, as governments, and we as a community, need to respond. The science is unequivocal. Ecosystems, species are all under threat. We are seeing a high example of natural disasters, fire and floods, sea level rise. As a state that relies very heavily on our agricultural industries and our tourism industry, these impacts of climate change will not only have a significant environmental impact, but it will potentially take billions of dollars off our economy.

When you talk about climate change, it is not purely an environmental issue. It is an economic and social issue as well. This is something that all governments need to confront. Regarding the issue of the protesters, I will refer to the reflection on those protesters, I think it is wonderful that so many people now are criticised for being dislocated from the political process, or are so apathetic that politics means nothing to them. To have thousands of people standing up on issues which are political in nature and having a voice heard should be encouraged, whether we agree with them or not.

I am from a union family, a union background; we would constantly march. One of my first memories as a child is complaining to my nan on my dad's side, Nan O'Byrne, in Launceston,

complaining about something. She said, well go and do something about it. We said, there is nothing you can do about it. She said, yes you can, you can march. I think it is fantastic that people are marching. To call the nannas out the front who were knitting a communist and socialist insurrection is ridiculous.

Mr BARNETT - Point of order, Madam Speaker.

Ms O'Connor - It is also very similar to the Queensland Labor Premier's language.

Madam SPEAKER - Stop. Ms O'Connor, warning number two.

Mr BARNETT - I totally reject that accusation. I have been misrepresented. I was referring to Extinction Rebellion, the organisation.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you.

Mr O'BYRNE - Peaceful protest, which is what we are seeing here in Tasmania, should be encouraged and allowed. It is people getting involved in political discourse. I reject the references. If there is a view that protests are unwelcome, women would not have the vote, Blacks would not be able to exist in our community and have jobs, and a range of other protest movements over hundreds and thousands of years. It is a fundamental tenet of democracy.

Mr BARNETT - Point of order again, Madam Speaker. You are again misrepresenting my position. I strongly support peaceful protests. The views of Extinction Rebellion was a view that I made. I do not like to be misrepresented by the honourable member.

Mr O'BYRNE - The characterisations that you made of those protesters and protesters in Tasmania, I believe -

Mr Barnett interjecting.

Mr O'BYRNE - Well, it is a direct reflection that you made on those people.

Ms O'Connor - Peaceful protest.

Mr O'BYRNE - Peaceful protest is what I am saying.

In terms of the motion, I know I am running out of time, like many Tasmanians, we were surprised by the announcement of the exploration on that piece of land and that announcement. We are very concerned about the proposal of a coalmine - that is what it is - a coalmine on prime agricultural land. Tasmanian governments, over many years, have invested in irrigation and in a whole range of productivity-lifting investment that would support prime agricultural land, and we do not support coalmines being proposed for prime agricultural land, We are very concerned about that proposal in the Midlands.

You cannot talk about coal in Tasmania in isolation of one proposal. As the minister has said, and people have been made aware, we have coalmines existing in Tasmania and they are very important for our jobs and the economy. We know they support activities at Norske Skog and Goliath.

The point I want to make is about the politics of climate change and the impact on communities. We have seen, particularly in the last federal election, the polarisation of this issue which has led to massive swings for and against either major party on the basis of climate and the politics of it in inner-city Sydney in one extreme, and in Melbourne and other capital cities. We have seen the other extreme in mining communities in the Hunter Valley and in Queensland, and this has polarised and divided our community.

We need to talk about a just transition for those communities not in words, but in deeds. In Germany they have achieved consensus among all stakeholders as to the way forward that meets emission targets while looking at those communities and industries that have historically relied on mining and particularly coalmining. They have a plan to phase out brown coal power generation in, I think, 2038. They have done that by negotiating with unions and communities in a period of time where there was general community consensus. The polarised debate about how you are either with us or against us and how you build an economic -

Mr Barnett - You are straddling the fence. You do not have a position.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, minister.

Mr O'BYRNE - It is not about the fence. Look at places like Germany where they have worked through a just transition. They are not using a blunt instrument of all coal or no coal. They have worked through a process where it is a just transition -

Mr Barnett interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Minister, warning number one.

Mr O'BYRNE - for those communities so they have an economic and social future whilst dealing with the issues of climate change and meeting emissions targets, which are crucial. A just transition looks like the proposal we are talking about, minister, in terms of the hydrogen proposal in Bell Bay. You are giving \$50 000 to a coalmining lease potential in the Midlands which you have said publicly that you probably do not even support because it is on agricultural land, but you will give them \$50 000. We have an opportunity to create hundreds of working-class jobs and a billion-dollar export industry with green hydrogen to assist Japan, South Korea, Singapore and countries around the world to decarbonise their economies, yet you will not give a cracker, you will not give a cent to get the business case up. When you talk about a just transition, you have to put your money where your mouth is. Assist working-class communities, do not play the politics like you get up here - and I must admit, on the Greens side there is a whole lot of politics with this as well. You accuse us of sitting on the fence -

Ms O'Connor - Hello? We tell the truth in here.

Mr O'BYRNE - You need to work on a just transition. We need to ensure that when you talk about dealing with emissions and talk about coal, you need to paint a picture for the community, give them hope that a just transition is real and it is not just words. That is what Labor stands for.

Look at the German experience in terms of how you deal with those industries that issue high emissions into the environment. They are dealing with these matters in a consensus way. We had an opportunity with Kevin Rudd as prime minister in 2008 over a carbon pollution reduction scheme

and that fell and was dashed on the rocks of climate change politics. What we are calling for is assistance to build consensus.

Mr BARNETT - Point of order, Madam Speaker. This has been going on for 15 minutes now. The Labor Party will not declare their position. It is a disgrace. You need to declare your position.

Madam SPEAKER - Minister, could I have your point of order? Which standing order is it?

Mr O'BYRNE - He doesn't have one. Sit down.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Speaker, he is not being parliamentary. He is not acting in accordance with parliamentary rules.

Madam SPEAKER - You have to state the standing order.

Mr O'BYRNE - We do not support the amendments put forward. We have a series of amendments to the original motion that we would seek to propose.

Madam Speaker, I move -

That the motion be amended in paragraph 3 after the words 'Accepts the scientific consensus that burning fossil fuel such as coal must end in order to limit warming and prevent climate change' by inserting the words -

'while ensuring a just transition for workers and communities'.

This picks up on my point around green hydrogen and wind and solar.

I also move that -

Paragraph 4 be amended after the words 'clean energy island' by inserting the words:

'with investments in wind energy and clean fuels like green hydrogen.'

I also move -

That paragraphs 5 and 6 be removed and replaced with the following:

- (5) Acknowledges that existing coalmines in Tasmania have supported regional jobs for decades and still supply material to Goliath Cement at Railton and Norske Skog at Boyer.
- (6) Commits to invest in new renewable energy technology including Hydrogen to create jobs in Tasmania and grow our economy.
- (7) Agrees that no new coalmines should be permitted in productive agricultural land in Tasmania.

Dr Woodruff - That's not the same thing. That's the situation we've got.

Mr O'BYRNE - I did not yell or talk over the top of you. The subtext of this is that governments and parties need to come together to have conversations. We do not start with a clean slate. We have existing industries and communities that rely heavily on the jobs. We need to build a just transition. This motion, sadly, does not build a just transition. It says nothing about supporting regional jobs. It does nothing to support about alternative -

Ms COURTNEY - Point of order, Madam Speaker, for clarification. Does the member have copies for circulation?

Mr O'BYRNE - I have just circulated it here.

Madam SPEAKER - You need to give copies to each of the parties as well. We have had this statement before.

Mr O'BYRNE - Sorry, I did what the minister did. I circulated it to the Clerk.

Madam SPEAKER - Yes, but we need more copies in future.

Dr Woodruff - It's just total rubbish. We asked you if you had an amendment.

Ms O'Connor - This is so Labor.

Dr Woodruff - This is disgraceful.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr O'BYRNE - There is a climate emergency, right? Okay, we agree with that. We agree we need to act. We do not start on a clean slate. We need to talk about just transition. The politics of climate change has delivered Tony Abbott. The politics of climate change has delivered a conservative government federally. What we are seeking to do is to build a consensus about a just transition. We support a just transition and in the short period of time that we have been able to debate this I have made some key points. It is not all the points I would have preferred to have put on the debate and on the *Hansard* at this time, but we believe in the points we have made in terms of building a just transition for those communities that have historically relied on it. We want to try to build consensus across the community on the way forward and to build a sustainable future, not only environmentally, but economically for those communities.

[3.28 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, in the short amount of time I have left I want to respond to both attempts by the Liberals, the minister and Mr O'Byrne to not support a ban on new thermal coalmines in Tasmania. Mr O'Byrne, we agree with you completely about the importance of a just transition. That is why in my public statements last week I acknowledged the Fingal coalmine, a longstanding coalmine, and the contribution that coalmine makes to that community. But I also said this parliament needs to send a signal that we are not going to contribute towards global heating.

Mr O'Byrne - An amended motion will do that.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, your amendment is typically Labor and specific to the proposed Midland coalmines.

Mr O'Byrne - You're just perpetuating the polarisation.

Dr Broad - You divide everybody - dividing the community into us and them.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'CONNOR - You can say that, but it is because you people wobble-wobble on this issue all of the time.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Ms O'Connor, I am standing. It would be fantastic if this parliament could work together and get something that everyone can agree on on such an important issue. Please resume.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is deeply disappointing. It was an opportunity for parliament today to send a clear signal to the community, to young people who are striking for climate, and to industry, to our agricultural sector, our tourism sector, our exporters, all of whom are dependent on a clean, green brand, that means we cannot open new thermal coalmines in Tasmania. That was the intent of our motion.

I want to say to all of those wonderful people who have come into parliament today that this is your House too. I know you know that and I hope you appreciate that. We recognise that you are in the reception room and the public gallery and spilling out. You are concerned about the future of the climate and we stand with you. We will not let you down and we will give this parliament another opportunity to do the right thing and make sure that there are no new thermal coal mines in Tasmania. That is not this island's future and it is not the future of our young people and this parliament can do so much better than the woeful amendments that have been put forward by both parties today.

Time expired.

Question - That the amendments proposed by Mr O'Byrne be agreed to -

The House divided -

AYES 9

Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow (Teller)
Ms Houston
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Ms Standen
Ms White

NOES 13

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Ms Courtney
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Mr Hodgman
Ms Jaensch
Ms O'Connor
Mr Rockliff
Mrs Rylah (Teller)
Mr Shelton
Mr Tucker
Dr Woodruff

PAIR

Ms Haddad

Mrs Petrusma

Amendments negatived.

Question - That the amendment proposed by the Minister for Resources be agreed to -

The House divided -

AYES 21

NOES 2

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Courtney
Ms Dow
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Ms Haddad
Mr Hodgman
Ms Houston
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff
Mrs Rylah (Teller)
Mr Shelton
Ms Standen
Mr Tucker
Ms White

Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

Amendment agreed to.

[3.43 p.m.]

Question - That the motion, as amended, be agreed to -

The House divided

AYES 21

NOES 2

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Courtney
Ms Dow
Mr Ferguson

Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

Mr Gutwein
Ms Haddad
Mr Hodgman
Ms Houston
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff
Mrs Rylah (Teller)
Mr Shelton
Ms Standen
Mr Tucker
Ms White

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION

Northern Region Prison Site

[3.45 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Notes the concern of Westbury residents about the decision of the Hodgman Liberal Government to build a new maximum-security prison on their doorstep.
- (2) Laments the secrecy and lack of consultation with the community prior to the announcement.
- (3) Calls on the Hodgman Liberal Government to detail how much it has paid a public relations firm to outsource the consultation process.
- (4) Further calls on the Hodgman Liberal Government to reveal the other nine shortlisted sites to fully inform debate about the best location for the northern prison.

This motion concerns the recent announcement that Westbury is a preferred site for the Government to build their northern prison - the jewel in their crown, as they would have us believe of their law and order agenda. I am not going to speak for a long time on this motion but I am going to put some of my sincere concerns on the record and then hand to my colleague, the member for Lyons, Jen Butler, who has been consulting widely in the community of Westbury and the surrounding towns about what has gone on.

We know that the Government plans to build a northern prison at a cost of \$270 million. Labor recognises the inappropriateness of the Launceston Remand Centre and indeed committed in the

state election to improve its conditions. We are committed to improving conditions for workers and inmates across Tasmania's prison system. The way that this Government has been running the existing large prison, Risdon, has been nothing but a disaster for many years now. There have been incorrect releases in the prison system, which confirms that the Hodgman Government is failing to do its most important job, which is keeping Tasmanians safe. They have a tough-on-crime agenda which we have said, and we will say again - it can be exposed really as nothing more than a bluff-on-crime again.

Five prisoners have been incorrectly released since November. Meanwhile, the Government is cutting significant amounts of money from the budgets across the State Service, including the Justice Department. We were very happy to support the Government's recent bill to implement the Justice Connect Gateway Project. I know that stakeholders in the community were very happy to see bipartisan support for that bill, which will improve the way that the court system operates, including how it interacts with prisons.

How much of that budget cut will come out of that project? How much of that budget cut will just continue to add to the disastrous conditions that we see at Risdon right now?

Recently there were some high-profile escapes and attempted escapes. It almost started to feel like something out of a *Monty Python* episode. The stories I have heard from family members of other inmates living at Risdon said that it has been going on for some time. They sent these stories to me anonymously so as not cause any damage to their incarcerated family members. One family member told me that prior to the recent escape there were two hours of bashing with a metal roof pin that had been wrenched off a table to try to make an escape. The noise was sufficiently loud that inmates at the other end of the cell block were having difficulty sleeping, but during that time nothing was investigated. As the Government has confirmed, the actual escape occurred due to scaffolding being left in a place that it should not have been. We know that occurred.

The Government has announced a review as the result of Labor's questioning in parliament about how it was that a dangerous criminal was classified as a minimum-security prisoner. Our suspicion is that because the medium and maximum divisions of the Risdon Prison are so overcrowded it meant that inmates who arguably should not have been classified as minimum security were moved to the minimum-security facility. The minister's response to that was to review the classification system. I assumed that would mean reviewing some of the reasons how a criminal of that kind was able to be classified as minimum and moved to the minimum security. In fact, it has been a very blunt tool, a very blunt edged review which has seen a whole of prison policy in place where we have now seen the minimum security Ron Barwick facility reclassified as medium security.

People who were well on their way to rehabilitation are now being prevented from work programs and other programs within the prison. They were able to be exposed to these as a result of good behaviour across the time they have been serving. That is a shame because it damages those people's ability to continue their rehabilitative efforts. This should be one of the key factors that government should be aiming to provide while people are incarcerated, the opportunity to rehabilitate themselves and reduce the likelihood of recidivism upon release.

I raise these serious concerns because we can see right now how the prison system is being run by this Government. We can see right now that it is a pressure-cooker at Risdon Prison. There are people in cells that were built for one inmate that now have two inmates housed in there; cells that were built for two now have three. In some instances, new bunks have been put into those cells,

and in other instances there are mattresses on the floor. That is because the prison is at capacity. It is a pressure-cooker of an environment that is not only dangerous to inmates, but is also dangerous to workers across the prison system.

During Estimates this year we uncovered and exposed some of the horror stories of how prison correctional officers have had to endure some very disturbing working conditions at Risdon. We raise these concerns today on this notice of motion because we can see how difficult it is working in the prison system right now from the stories we are hearing, from workers across the prison system, as well as from inmates themselves and from the families of inmates.

The Government will argue, no doubt, that building a new prison will alleviate those concerns because there will be 270 more beds available to incarcerate people across Tasmania. We support the fact that one positive of having a facility in the north will mean that families will be closer to their family members who are incarcerated in prison.

We put on the record again those concerns about how the current system is being run because it does not show a particularly good record, or fill us with a lot of hope about how a future facility might be run by this Government. We know there is no budget across the forward Estimates to staff a northern prison. That is causing genuine concern in the community around the fact that there is not the budget to do that. Correctional officers take time to train. They do not get trained and are magically able to do all of the functions that are essential across the prison system. It takes a mix of staff and a mix of skills to be able to run a prison. I am worried about how that northern prison might be run.

On to the announcement of Westbury being the preferred site. My colleague will speak more about the community consultation that she has undertaken so far in Westbury, but we are already hearing major concerns about the process around consultation. Disappointing is not the right word to describe it.

I thought for the interest of the House I would speak a little bit about a piece of work that was done in the Department of Premier and Cabinet in December 2013 for the Tasmanian Government Framework for Community Engagement. I will be corrected by the Government, I hope, in my understanding that that piece of work was binned by the Government when they came to office in 2014. Hopefully I am wrong about that. But if I am, as I suspect, right, it is a real shame that this piece of work that many people contributed to across the community, as well as across all agencies of government, has potentially been binned. Had it not been binned, the Government would know about the different levels of community engagement and community consultation that exist and are nationally and internationally recognised as best practice. There is not time on the notice of motion to go into the detail, but I recommend people having a look at that document. It is easy to find, it is still there. But I do not believe that it is actually part of current practice.

Basically, it explains the benefits of a genuine community consultation and genuine community engagement. There are 10 standards including that community engagement must be well planned; it must be inclusive; it must be coordinated; it must be connected to decision-making, genuinely connected to decision-making. It must be genuine, that it is actually designed to seek the views of the community, listen to and respond to those concerns. It must be premised on there being adequate feedback available. There must be sufficient time dedicated to community consultation, sufficient resources and skills dedicated to community consultation and community engagement. There needs to be an open mind to learning and development, as well as monitoring and evaluation so that we

can always continue to learn from the community engagement. But this Government has failed to do this on this particular case.

The document tells us the importance of deciding on the purpose of your engagement as this tells you how to engage. There is a spectrum. At the very best practice end it is called empowerment, where you are actually working with communities about what suits them best, what is going to work best for them. Come down a peg and it is called collaboration and partnership. Down a peg further it is called involvement. Down a peg further it is consultation. It is not to be derided, but the very base minimum available in terms of community engagement, according to this best practice evidence-based work, is information sharing.

I argue that what the Government has engaged in, in this project, is information sharing. They have decided, through their EOI process, that Westbury is the preferred site for the northern prison. They have informed the community of that fact. I, for one, am not convinced that there will not be genuine consultation, collaboration or empowerment of the community to have their voices heard, and to have their views genuinely taken on board with a view to potentially even changing that government decision about the preferred site.

I would say a government, when they are engaging in community consultation and community engagement, needs to be willing to hear the views of the community with a view to potentially changing that view. Better still, do not come to the community with a decision already made. Come to the community with a series of ideas, or a series of things that you want to get feedback on, and be willing and genuinely interested in hearing the views of the community.

I will finish my contribution by noting the fact that we know through the media that there were nine other sites. There were 10 sites identified, but the minister, to this date, has not disclosed those nine other potential sites. That would be something the people of Tasmania would be interested to know and have the right to know. Indeed, under the Government's own EOI documentation, the minister has the right to publish those sites. The wording in the EOI documentation is that the minister reserves the right to publish the names of each proponent and the location of a proposed site put forward in an EOI submission. We know that there were at least 10 put forward in the EOI process. We believe there were nine other sites considered.

If the Government is interested in providing a northern prison that actually services the community, does what the Government wants it to do, but also takes on board genuinely the views and needs of the Tasmanian community, then they will release those other nine sites. They will also maybe put my mind at ease about the genuineness of their attempted community consultation.

As I went through, in the brief time available to me, there are all sorts of ways to collaborate and to engage your community. It is my belief that the Government has taken the lightest option of basically sharing information with the community that Westbury is the preferred site. I do not believe that there is going to be sufficient time available to the community and sufficient will from the Government to listen to those concerns of the community with a view to taking them on board and potentially looking at one of the other nine preferred sites.

This notice of motion calls on the Government to reveal those other nine short-listed sites, to fully inform the debate about the best location for a northern prison. It laments the secrecy and lack of consultation with the community prior to the announcement. It is this information sharing that the Government has engaged in, not genuine consultation. We also call on the Hodgman Government to detail how much it has paid public relations firms to outsource community

consultation. If I were a member for Lyons, I would want to be involved in that community consultation process. It is the fabric of government that they do have people in their departments and in the parliament available and capable of conducting that kind of community consultation. At a time when the Government tells us that they are trying to find \$450 million in budget savings, primarily through reducing the use of consultants, the Tasmanian public has a right to know how much has been spent, if anything, on consultants external to government, public relations firms or any other private businesses outside of government, to conduct any kind of consultation process on this project.

I hope that the parliament will support this motion. I encourage the parliament and the Government to engage in a genuine conversation with the Tasmanian community as to where a northern prison would best be situated. I will leave the rest to my colleague, the member for Lyons, who has been conducting -

Ms Archer - So, you are all going to speak but I don't get to speak because she is ready to jump. That is an interesting strategy.

Ms HADDAD - I am not the Speaker. I cannot give you the call. I am sure everybody will have the opportunity to speak. Of course, you are allowed to speak. I am not giving her the call -

Madam SPEAKER - Order, through the Chair, please.

Ms HADDAD - I will finish my contribution with genuine hopes that people will support this motion in an effort to engage in genuine consultation with the community about the best site.

[4.02 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice) - Madam Speaker, I was concerned there would be very little time left for me to speak, and I would like to move an amendment. In fairness to the other side, it is appropriate that I speak second on this motion.

I am disappointed but I am not surprised at the approach taken by the Opposition on this matter. I understand they do not like to take positions on things and they keep changing their policies. No better example can be provided than on the northern prison. At one stage they said they could build a northern prison for \$40 million. Our projections to do all of this work is \$270 million. They are not cheap to build but the benefits of having that facility, which I will outline in detail in my contribution, are significant. Unfortunately, we have been left with ageing infrastructure. There has not been a new development of this nature on a greenfield site since the 1960s. I can understand community fear -

Mr O'Byrne - Risdon RPC.

Ms ARCHER - A greenfield site, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr O'Byrne - It was a new building.

Ms ARCHER - Every development that has occurred on that Risdon Prison Complex is on an existing -

Mr O'Byrne - They are brand new facilities. You are misleading the House.

Madam SPEAKER - Mr O'Byrne, warning one.

Ms ARCHER - I am not misleading the House. If you would listen to what I am saying; there has not been a stand-alone prison since they built the original prison we used to affectionately call the 'pink palace' in the 1960s. All we have done is build on that site, on an existing prison.

I can understand community unrest. We were fully prepared for the expected reaction to an infrastructure project of this size, with its nature being a correction centre.

I want to correct some of the mistruths from Ms Haddad. Some offence has been taken by some members in this House, who regularly use the term. It is a well-accepted principle in this House that if we believe someone has lied, it is quite alright to say they have been spreading lies. It is quite a distinct and different matter to call someone a liar, which you should do by way of a substantive motion. I am going to correct the record of some of the things that have been spread, unfortunately, to put the facts on the record, and I understand that people can then decide whether they support a project of this nature.

In relation to the issue of incorrect releases, the member for Clark, Ms Haddad, knows that I cannot comment on individual prisoners, or at least I am taking it for granted that she knows that. I can assure the House that I and our Government take the issue extremely seriously and strong actions have been taken to minimise the risk of incorrect releases occurring.

Incorrect releases occurred most recently in terms of previous governments, such as the Labor-Greens government. They occurred in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013. There was nothing done to fix this system. It took us until May 2016 to carry out an audit, engaging KPMG, with that final report being received in February 2017. Members know that there has been a suite of recommendations for reforms which the department is now implementing, backed up, of course, by the funding of technology, which I have mentioned in this House on numerous occasions, and the significant investment of \$24.5 million in Justice Connect.

We also have been trialling the Sentence Management Division, or SMD, since March this year. This unit has assumed overall management of a number of pre-existing areas of the GPS, including the Sentencing Management Unit which was formerly the Sentencing Administration Unit. All phases of the SMD will be fully implemented by mid-next year, so there is significant action that is occurring and incorrect releases have been rare under our Government. To say that there has been a continuous stream - I cannot remember the exact phrase Ms Haddad used, my apologies, but that was the essence of it - is completely incorrect.

In relation to the classification review that was called for after the escape, that was done in immediate response to the actual escape. It did not take until I was in parliament or Labor called for anything; that was an immediate review that was called for following that escape, which was completely unacceptable, and I said so at the time. I want to be very clear, because there has been media commentary from a number of sources: prisoner classifications are an operational matter. All I did was call for a review of classifications obviously within that facility, and regularly these classifications get reviewed across the entire prison in any event. Operational decisions are not something that I, as minister, can make direction on or intervene in, and I have not.

Following the escape on 23 September, in line with standard protocols following such an event, the Director of Prisons also reviewed all section 33 and section 42 leave absences. They were the absences Ms Haddad referred to in relation to rehabilitation and reintegration prospects, so that

included day leave with family members for prisoners who are looking to successfully reintegrate back into the community, those who go out for education and training purposes, and those who go out for work purposes, but in line with standard protocols after an incident, that review occurred also, so some of these things had to cease for a period.

I am advised that those have recommenced today, or very close to, particularly the ones I am referring to in our community centres. I know that a nearby community centre uses a prisoner for some requirements. I know that there are other gardening duties elsewhere and these have been a common work feature provided by the prison, and that will continue. I want to be very clear that they are being reinstated in order for inmates to be able to continue this important rehabilitation and reintegration aspect of their sentence. It is important. I have noted and highlighted that in numerous contributions in this House, and indeed publicly, and one of the great benefits of building a new facility, not only in the northern part of our state, but also the Southern Remand Centre, is that you can have greater opportunity for those types of programs as well.

In relation to the northern regional prison, it is a \$270 million project that is critical for Tasmania in terms of our prison infrastructure, which is ageing. It was good to hear Ms Haddad's acknowledgement that the Launceston Reception Centre is grossly inadequate. I seem to recall in the election campaign they abandoned any support for a northern prison only in terms of upgrading that centre, which barely houses any prisoners at all. I really do not know what their policy or plan for the future would be. I do not know how much they think it will cost in terms of whether they are ever going to support a northern prison project, or even where they would put it. They shirk away from the responsibility of noting that the Government has had to come up with a preferred site. You cannot consult on a number of different sites all over Tasmania.

We targeted the north because we want it in the north. We targeted various criteria which I am going to go through in a minute in relation to access to various services and the like, because that criteria is critical to a project of this nature. Not all proponents that submitted in the EOI process will have land - indeed, they did not have land that satisfied that criteria - so why any minister would exercise a discretion to disclose the identity of those sites unnecessarily is beyond me. In my view, if there is a site that is not suitable at all, why would you consult on something like that? What I am indicating, Madam Speaker, is that there is a set of criteria - let's call it ticking boxes, if you like, to be overly simplistic - there are a number of features that this prison site needs to ensure that it is a viable working prison for all concerned. I will go through them.

It is vital to ensure that our correction facilities are fit for purpose as well as meeting the demand of future prison populations. This project is of high benefit because it creates hundreds of jobs and will provide an enormous economic boost across northern Tasmania. We all have concerns in relation to ensuring that northern Tasmania benefits as much as southern Tasmania in terms of the increase in economic and building activity, and this will do just that. It is part of our broader \$350 million prison infrastructure investment and as part of that there is also \$70 million for the Southern Remand Centre and approximately \$9.3 million in relation to shared facilities on the Risdon Prison site.

Following the recent announcement of the preferred site for the northern regional prison, there has been considerable discussion about the choice of location and, again, the unfortunate fearmongering. We recognise that people may initially feel concerned about such a large new project in their backyard, particularly a correctional centre. That is to be expected. That is why, on 30 September, when announcing the preferred site nearby to the existing Valley Central Industrial precinct at Westbury, we began a comprehensive planned community consultation program.

Ms Haddad went through a list of features, all of which were taken into consideration. Significant planning has gone into this. It is not feasible to go to a different number of communities and say, 'We might put it there' or 'We might put it there'. We had to go through a proper assessment process to come up with what we think is the best possible site so that we can then consult extensively with the community.

I will go through the process now. Everyone thinks there is some big rush to this; that we are rushing the community. There are a number of steps to go through. Indeed, there are a number of steps to secure a site of this nature, dependent on getting through all of those processes.

Community consultation is now in full swing, so to speak. It has already consisted of doorknocking, visiting local businesses, the posting of project information and one-on-one community drop-in sessions. There will be further close consultations over coming weeks. It has been disappointing that a small number of individuals, notably representatives of the Labor Party, have at the same time sought to run a scare campaign, but are not willing at the same time to state what their own policy is, or where they would put it. It is clear that the scare campaign is attempting to sow misconceptions in the minds of local residents. Playing on fears is really unfortunate.

Ms Butler - You are the one who scared them.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms Butler, please refrain from interrupting.

Ms ARCHER - I would like to use today's debate to address some of the concerns that have been expressed by community members. An issue that has been raised is that prisoners will escape and threaten Westbury. I wish to assure members of the community that community safety is the Government's number one priority in building the new facility. That is first and foremost the obvious major priority that needs to be a feature of this project. While the escape of a prisoner from custody is, of course, a community concern, it is in reality, an extremely rare occurrence.

Members interjecting.

Ms ARCHER - I am sorry if members are not talking on this motion. I encourage you to go outside because it is quite distracting. We have had the debate on the previous motion, Dr Woodruff.

Nationally in 2017-18, the rate of escapes from all classification levels of secure prisons was less than 0.03 per 100 prisoners. Importantly, no prisoner has escaped from maximum/medium security Risdon Prison complex since it was constructed in 2006. The proposed northern regional prison will be even more secure than the Risdon complex due to modern facilities and advanced state-of-the-art security surrounding the entire prison complex, which will be of the highest maximum security.

The new prison complex in its entirety, will be a maximum-security facility, but it will also accommodate within it, all of the classifications of sentenced prisoners including medium and minimum, as well as those on remand. Picture if you will, a complex that is surrounded by the maximum features and it sits within it. That is to ensure that we have the highest maximum-security rating to prevent escapes from the entire complex.

There is a big misconception in that many people in the community think that it is going to only house maximum-security prisoners. That is incorrect. Any suggestion that all maximum

prisoners will be sent north when the new prison is built is false. This type of misleading information can unnecessarily scare the community. The use of the term 'maximum' is in relation to the security of the entire prison complex, as I just explained, with all the classifications being accommodated within it.

Considerable effort during the design and construction phase will be put into the highest security measures. For Ms Haddad's benefit, we have not gone through the design and construction phase. That will be informed by a lot of the feedback we get from the community. We aim to respond to the community as much as possible and feasible.

In the design and construction, we will be putting in considerable effort for high security measures. This includes a continuous six-metre concrete wall topped by anti-climb features. Again, this is a common feature of modern complexes. I have seen these complexes. They do not look out of place because in the lead up to such a complex you can have plantings around it to ensure that it is not a visual horror in the landscape but in fact integrates well.

A second misconception is that undesirable people will move into Westbury to be close to family members in the prison. I do not subscribe to the assumption that family members or friends of someone who is incarcerated are also of that nature themselves. It is unfortunate that people in the community have that view. Be that as it may, it has been an issue that has been expressed. Real-life experience interstate has found that this is not the case at all. People visiting do not move to the area. Based on experience of similar correctional centre developments in other states there is unlikely to be a significant number of people moving to the local area to be closer to an inmate. One of the key reasons for selecting the preferred location is its accessibility to larger population centres in the north of the state so that visitors can have better access.

Research in correctional centres in other states found the relocation rate to be very low. Reasons identified include that as a new resident in a small community, families did not want to be identified as being related to an inmate and preferred the anonymity of larger towns. Also, correctional centres have limited and restricted visiting hours. Regional correctional centres are planned to be readily accessible by road or public transport. Economic and social difficulties often prevent relocation. This has been the experience in Tasmania as well. People have not relocated to the south of the state just because they have loved ones in the Risdon Prison complex. Families of inmates typically need assistance from established social networks and often prefer to remain in a familiar environment.

To help assure members of the community, we will be undertaking a detailed study of the social and economic impacts of the proposed prison to evaluate possible effects of the prison on the community. This study will be undertaken over coming months.

Another misconception is that visitors to the centre will cause crime rates to increase in and around Westbury. Studies undertaken in New South Wales do not support this concern. The majority of visitors to correctional centres are law-abiding citizens. In addition, visits to inmates will be tightly controlled and require advance appointments, photo identification and screening for drugs and other contraband. Analysis of crime statistics during the eight years after the opening of the Lithgow Correctional Centre in New South Wales indicated that crime decreased in Lithgow over the period by 5 per cent whilst at the same time it increased by 25 per cent across New South Wales in the same period. Further, crime rates in relation to the Cessnock Correctional Centre have remained stable in Cessnock over the last 10 years even with the addition of the 250-bed maximum-security centre in 2009.

Another misconception is that the new prison will attach a stigma to the town. It is very easy to say that, but again I want to look to the evidence. There is little evidence to back this suggestion. Studies show that following the establishment of a prison facility there has not been an impact on the image of the region and surrounding areas. In fact, it is more likely to have a positive effect through increased social and economic opportunities. That is certainly the experience in a lot of regional towns in other states.

While the issue of stigma is an issue first raised in communities, and that admittedly is something you think of first and foremost, but where correctional centres are proposed, findings from previous studies indicate such perceptions did not represent the wider community view and there is little evidence to support these perceptions.

Studies after the establishment of the Junee and Lithgow correctional centres in New South Wales both found that the presence of the centres had not attached a stigma to the town. In the case of the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre, contrary to expectations of the community initially, research indicated that the centre may have led to a more positive image of the town amongst its residents as a result of the direct and indirect employment opportunities and economic development within the town.

In addition, media reports from places such as Maldon, Castlemaine and Ararat in country Victoria, show that once prisons are in operation, concerns amongst many in the community around stigmatisation of the town are alleviated as economic and social benefits come to fruition.

In terms of economic benefits, the Northern Tasmania Development Corporation stated on 11 October, and I quote:

The construction of stage one alone over the next five years will deliver about \$160M in economic output for Meander Valley and provide 733 jobs.

A similar additional economic value in jobs will be produced for construction of stage two.

At stage one, if we assume that 140 people are employed - that will generate an additional 27 jobs in the community to service those jobs. The total value to Meander Valley is an additional \$35M per year from the first year of operation, increasing to \$62M per year by the time it is fully operational.

Another misconception is that the new prison will cause property prices to decrease. We have looked into this extensively and evidence in other parts of Australia has demonstrated the opposite. Past experience in New South Wales is showing concerns about the effects on property values were not realised and property prices in the surrounding areas experienced an increase in value. Prices reflect a range of factors including the quality of housing stock, access to jobs and services and broader market conditions.

The increase of employees, service providers and others coming to work, provide services or visit the region, may have a positive impact on property prices if they decide to live near their workplace.

Findings from a 2007 post-occupancy evaluation for the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre in New South Wales, which had been in operation for three years at the time, were broadly positive.

None of the real estate agents consulted could recall any prospective tenants or buyers raising concerns about the proximity of their property, either current or prospective, to the correctional centre.

On the contrary, anecdotal evidence from real estate agents in the area indicated that the correctional centre may have contributed to the increased level of interest in the property market, likely due to demand from staff.

Overall, the findings of the evaluation study were that it was unlikely that the presence of a correctional centre has a negative impact on property values in the nearby area.

Another misconception is that staff will not move to Westbury; they will stay living in the larger cities. The Tasmanian Government is investing \$270 million in this significant infrastructure project which is expected to create hundreds of jobs during construction and will permanently employ around 250 people once in full operation.

The Government expects many working at the prison will enjoy the convenience and lifestyle of living in Westbury if they wish. The Government will support the local economy through the use of local contractors, suppliers and staff, wherever possible. It is the Government's expectation that eligible people from the north and north-west region will have priority for employment opportunities within the new facility. Many local businesses such as cafes, supermarkets, petrol stations and other service-based businesses are expected to be enormous beneficiaries while the prison is being built and then further when it becomes operational. We will also be working on transport services to and from the area in the planning of the project so that we address those aspects of community concerns.

I turn to the issue of the EOI process raised by Ms Haddad because it is important. Members opposite have raised several unfounded criticisms about the selection process for the preferred site so I want to take this opportunity to set the record straight on the process.

A targeted expression of interest process calling for the nomination of potential sites for a northern prison closed in November 2018. The department undertook a desktop infrastructure planning and environmental investigation to inform the siting panel assessment process. Informed by the outcomes of the assessment, the department provided the Government with a recommended shortlist of potentially suitable sites for the development of a northern regional prison, having considered their suitability against an extensive list of siting principles.

The siting principles included access to services. There needed to be good access to services, including community-based legal, welfare, education, health and training supporting the onsite programs with a broad range of the services essential to the operation of an adequate correctional facility. It needed to have good access to and from the north and north-west courts with a prison transport journey time of approximately two hours. The site should have good access to state roads. There should also be good access for the police for law enforcement purposes within the facility and in relation to ongoing investigations, as well as good access for partners, children, relatives and friends, particularly in relation to travelling distances from major centres of population and the availability of public transport. Also, access for staff. This relates to the access for staff from a range of established residential areas or communities within reasonable commuting distance of the facility and access to staff resources, the likely availability of those in the area.

Access to educational, vocational training, therapeutic and other support services; that is access by designated inmates to education, training establishments, therapeutic and other support services outside the facility. Also, a consideration of the ease of access for education and other required support services to the facility and the potential of the area to support viable prison industries within the facility and provide readily accessible opportunities for work-release prisoners outside the facilities.

Access for emergency services - good access for emergency, medical and fire services and access to major hospital facilities. That is a key as well because you do not have hospital facilities on site and ambulance transport. As we have seen on occasions, this transport needs to occur from our Risdon site and it is close enough to a hospital.

Access to service contractors and suppliers needs to be good. There needed to be convenient access by maintenance contractors, suppliers of food, industry suppliers and consumables and local utility providers, particularly waste removal.

Taking all of that into account, the preferred site located on Birrallee Road in Valley Central outside of Westbury and adjacent to the industrial precinct was selected as it best meets all key selection criteria identified. If you visit the site, as I have done, and you look at all of that and you look at all the siting principles, you can see why it ticks those boxes. It is a very rare site, unfortunately, that ticks all those boxes. This site has very good connectivity to major population centres in the north and north-west of the state, importantly. It is highly suitable land for a project of this scale.

One thing I have not covered is that it is flat. A prison needs to be on a flat site. The Risdon site is not flat so we were grossly restricted by that and you can also see in the Risdon prison complex from the Risdon Dam and it is not ideal. This one is planned so that you will not be able to see - both for the protection of prisoners and the protection of the community. It need not be that you even know that it is there, and that is what we want.

It is highly suitable land for a project for this scale. It was not easy to find for such a large project and it has very good access to services such as electricity, gas and water. I also take this opportunity to say that the prison will take up 13 hectares of a 41-hectare site, so there is a significant buffer between the prison itself and the outside world, if you like.

The Government has followed all required procurement processes for this preferred site. This standard process has included commercial-in-confidence negotiations with private landowners to ensure we obtain the best outcome for taxpayers.

There have been calls for the Government, and obviously during this debate, to release details of other sites submitted to the expression of interest process. All submissions made by the targeted EOI processes were appropriately subject to commercial-in-confidence assessment and negotiations and, as such, confidentiality must be maintained.

While negotiations are ongoing, the process has not concluded; none of the process has concluded. We have not even got through any of the different planning phases that are required by the community consultation and confidentiality must be maintained. All documents and information provided by a proponent as part of its EOI submission was provided on the basis it be recognised as being provided commercial-in-confidence and will accordingly be stored securely and held in confidence, except to the extent that disclosure is appropriately required for audit and

legal purposes, and that is there for very good reason for compliance with audit and legal purposes. This is the type of agreement that is common practice in dealing with property negotiations, both private and commercial, and has long been standard practice within all governments, previous governments included, so the hypocrisy on this issue, I will note very quickly, is galling.

As to the issue of a consultant, it is amazing that Labor has raised this issue, because in the last year of the Labor-Greens government in 2013-14, \$28 million was spent on consultants, which is \$4 million more than we spent in 2017-18.

Ms Haddad - You're the ones saying you're trying to save money on consultants - that is why that was raised. You identified consultants as one of the areas you want to save money on.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms Haddad, warning one.

Ms ARCHER - In fact, over the first term of our Government, 30 per cent less was spent on consultants than in the Labor government's last term. Of course, while we will always aim -

Ms Haddad - You have announced the savings by spending -

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms Haddad.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I want some clarity here. It has long been the practice in this House that there is a healthy level of dialogue across the Chamber and exchange between the member on their feet and other members in this place. It is an important part of the way this place operates. There has been a disturbing trend, this year particularly, of shutting people down just because they interject. I am hoping you will not fall into that trap too.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - That is not a point of order.

Ms ARCHER - I will try not to incite debate on this because I am conscious that people want to make a contribution, but it is really important for me to get these things on the record and these sorts of exchanges waste that time, I am sure all members would agree. I did sit in silence, Ms O'Connor; I sat in silence.

Ms O'Connor - You people are such control freaks.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Minister, I remind you, if you are going to move an amendment, you only have three minutes left.

Ms ARCHER - Thank you. I will move an amendment and hand that around. I might need some assistance with doing that. I will read it out. I move -

That the motion be amended by removing all the words after 'That the House' and insert instead -

- (1) Notes the Government's announcement on 30 September of a preferred site nearby to the Valley Central Industrial Precinct at Westbury for the new \$270 million Northern Regional Prison and the important community consultation that began on that day.

- (2) Notes the enormous economic benefits and jobs this vital project will provide to Westbury and Northern and North West Tasmania.
- (3) Notes the importance of the Government's consultation program with local residents, businesses, the Meander Valley Council and other key stakeholders to ensure community feedback can be taken into consideration to help inform future decisions about the project.

I hope that type of language can be supported.

I want to go back quickly to the issue of consultation because while we will always aim to reduce the expenditure on external consultants, there are situations where departments do not have particular expertise so a consultant is engaged for a specific period of time. Technically, Corporate Communications is classed as a consultant. They have been engaged to assist with the vital community consultation and presentation materials and what those types of companies are typically involved in. The consultancy has been declared, as per usual processes, on the Government's tenders website. The cost is \$115 111 for an entire 12-month period. That is an open and transparent disclosure. It has not been hidden.

There will be two stages of the statutory assessment of the proposed northern regional prison. It is expected that these two processes may require up to two years to complete and will be subject to consultation. First we have to rezone the site to allow a development application to be submitted. The preferred site is currently zoned as 'general industrial' and 'rural resource'. Neither of these zones provide for the development of a custodial facility, so the site would need to be rezoned amending the Meander Valley Interim Planning Scheme to introduce a particular purpose zone specifically for the prison and associated uses.

I am talking here of community consultation, which my amendment refers to. Such a scheme amendment must be initiated by the Meander Valley Council, which would exhibit the amendment for public representation for 28 days and then compile a report to the independent Tasmanian Planning Commission. The commission must conduct an assessment of the proposed amendment and invite anyone who made a submission to a hearing. The commission is bound to consider the amendment against the criteria in the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993, including consistency with the relevant regional land use strategy and state policies. The amendment may seek to make a future development permitted or discretionary and the commission will determine what is appropriate. The commission's decision is final and there is no power for the minister to intervene.

Stage 2 is the assessment of a development application. If the site is rezoned, a development application must be submitted to the council. The development of the prison buildings would be assessed against the provisions of the new zoning and it may be either permitted or discretionary, depending on what the amendment provides for. If the development is discretionary it will require a 14-day public notification period, during which representations can again be made by the community. Council acting as the planning authority is required to consider all representations in its assessment process.

The planning authority decision on the development application must be based on compliance with new planning rules introduced by the amendment and where the development is discretionary, those who made representations will be able to appeal the council's decision to the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal.

I have gone through that process to assure members of this House that it is a preferred site. It is not the final site. We are conducting community consultation. There is a lot of fear out in that community, partly because of fearmongering and partly because of people's natural reaction to a project of this site, which I totally understand, acknowledge and appreciate.

I want community members to be assured that during this process we are listening to them. I will make a final point. You cannot put the cart before the horse. A preferred site had to be named before we could consult on it and to consult on sites that were not realistic prospects would have been ridiculous and a complete farce of process.

[4.44 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the Greens will not be supporting the amendment to this motion. We support the motion that it seeks to amend and I will make some comments about that. I am aware that Ms Butler would also like to speak so I will make some time for her to do that and make a shorter contribution.

The point which speaks most strongly to me in the Labor motion is paragraph 2 - 'That we lament the secrecy and lack of consultation with the community prior to the announcement'.

I have been approached by numerous people in the surrounding area with concerns about the consultation process. Frankly, I am never surprised to hear people's concerns in the community about this Liberal Government's failure to consult in good faith. On every issue that I have had to represent people in the community, every single time, time and again, this Government hides what they are doing. They work out what they want to do behind closed doors and proceed to go ahead. They do a show of community consultation so they can tick that box and proceed straight to the media spin department. Off they go from there.

I am not surprised when I get comments from local residents feeling that everything has been shut and decided under the radio silence from the Liberal members that they have contacted and their lack of engagement. They have contacted our members for Lyons. They have named Mr Barnett being one of them - what a surprise.

Members interjecting.

Dr WOODRUFF - This is the point. You can pretend to be listening to people but listening to people is taking on board what they are doing. It is being prepared to engage in a conversation that is a dialogue that has a possibility of having a third approach. Another way.

Although we will be supporting the Labor Party's motion we fundamentally disagree with its basic premise, which is that there needs to be a second northern prison. When we know so much about what works in justice rehabilitation, when we know what works is restorative justice, to put \$270 million, a starting number, towards building a northern prison, both the Labor and the Liberal parties are manifestly crazy to go down this path at this point in time.

What a disaster. What an appalling use of public money. It will do exactly the opposite of what they are trying to do. Both parties are failing big time on this. It is signalling to people in the community in whipping up fear about crime and putting the spectre of tough-on-crime as being something that is going to protect people. It is not.

I do not have time now. I will give Ms Butler a chance to make her contribution. The evidence is there from countries around the world that have had the approach that we have taken. Little old Port Arthur was Van Diemen's convict land Tasmania. We still cannot get away from locking up people and throwing away the key with a bit of cruel punishment while we are at it. Other countries that have gone down this path know how expensive it is and how unsafe it makes the community. Under this Liberal Government, under this term of government, we have had a complete reversal of what the Greens correction minister did. Mr McKim, as minister, made a massive effort at turning around the *Titanic* of the Tasmanian correction system and succeeded on all the measures that really matter. Prisoner recidivism rates were down; prisoner-on-prisoner violence rates were down; prisoner-on-staff rates of assault were down.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I see you are smiling. Maybe you do not understand whether this is true or not. There is a level of scepticism on your face that surely cannot be matched with what I am telling you. I do not understand it. These are facts; they are there in the public record.

What we had in front of us at the last Budget Estimates was reoffending rates going up under this Liberal minister. The rates of serious assaults from prisoner to prisoner are going up. The rate from serious assaults from prisoner to staff - going up. The number of sick and stressed security staff going up. These are all the measures that are going in the wrong way. But the most important measure is the measure of what is happening in the community on the ground. Is our community safer? No, it is not. Property theft is going up under this Liberal Government. People are not getting support, they are not getting the money put into drug rehabilitation, into treatment or into education. Prisoners come into the Risdon Prison or a northern prison and are reclassified by a minister who no longer lets them go the Botanical Gardens like they used to. Everyone gets locked up and put up a level regardless of whether or not they should be at that level of security classification.

People go in; they might have a sentence of six months, they might have a sentence of five years, but what they do not get is a literacy assessment. Here we have a perfect opportunity to work with people to help them turn their lives around. What we know is the first thing they need is to be able to read and write in English. So many people who go into that prison cannot do that. How would we even know what the true numbers are? We do not bother to assess that. We do not do literacy assessments; we do not help them with reading and writing and so we are wasting this incredible opportunity.

All the resources we put into building a prison - hundreds of millions of dollars - that will not even be keeping it open, that will just be building the concrete and steel box to put them in with razor wire. I am not surprised the residents of Westbury are outraged. I would be too. I would be outraged not only at a concrete, razor-wired box being built in this day and age but because countries like Scandinavia are moving people into essentially hotels. They have their way of working with rehabilitation to such a sophisticated level that they have a totally different system.

Guess what, Mr Jaensch? The reoffending in those countries is far lower than Tasmania. It is not like Club Med as Mr Barnett used to say when he was minister. It is not like giving people a good time. It is giving people what they need so that they change their behaviour. Is not the bottom line to keep us safer as a community? Why is this Liberal Government doing everything, supported by the Labor, if it was in power, doing everything to turn the clock back to where it was in 2017-18 in Tasmania? What a joke.

It is terrible to see that the Labor Party and the Liberal Party both support a northern prison. As for the Government amendment, I cannot support the so-called enormous economic benefits and jobs. If that is why we are doing it, what a crazy idea. Why not put it into something which is good for the planet, good for the community and is actually going to keep us safer and not going to make it more dangerous and unsafe?

I am with local residents. It is a noxious idea. We will continue to support them in their efforts to have true consultation. We will continue to support everybody who wants to have a say about what happens in our wilderness areas, parks and reserves and all the dodgy deals that the Liberals are doing with private developers. We would all like a say, not just about where the prison is or is not but about the authentic nature of our brand. That is the sort of stuff that is going to keep us going into the future, not a prison in northern Tasmania.

[4.54 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend, Ella Haddad, member for Clark and shadow minister for corrections, for raising the proposed Westbury prison site and the complete lack of consultation with the community.

I also remind the Minister for Corrections that I am still waiting for an apology for her outburst yesterday when she accused me of spreading complete and utter lies. May I remind the Government that this is not high school and personal insults are not parliamentary. It is childish. As I am beginning to learn, the only defence the Government has when -

Ms ARCHER - Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is a long-standing convention of this House that if a member is personally aggrieved by a comment at the time it is made, they would have to ask for it to be withdrawn with an apology at the time. If they do not do so, they come in on the adjournment. Ms Butler has done that last night. I will not be apologising for Ms Butler spreading mistruths which I have put straight on the record during my contribution. Quite frankly, I hear her say that about a lot of my members, frequently, every day in question time so we do not want to go there and break convention and make it that nobody can ever make that type of suggestion in this House.

Ms BUTLER - As a member for Lyons and a responsible local member I will not back down and I will not be intimidated by you guys. As I said yesterday, I will not be intimidated by the Government. I am simply representing the people of the Westbury district that overwhelmingly are appalled by the exclusion they received in this process.

Ms ARCHER - Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I take offence to the member saying that I am trying to intimidate her. I am not. In the cut and thrust of this place I am not trying to intimidate her and I take great offence at that. I ask that she withdraw that statement.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - I ask the member to please retract her comments.

Ms BUTLER - I am not exactly sure what part I am meant to be retracting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - I ask the member to please retract her comments.

Ms ARCHER - You said I was trying to intimidate you. It is completely false and I take personal offence.

Ms BUTLER - I do apologise if you feel intimidated.

I have approached the Government's announcement of Westbury being the preferred site of the northern prison with an open mind. I also note that I have been left four minutes of a half an hour debate to have this conversation which I think you have played very, very well. You spoke for 45 minutes.

I have approached this with a very open mind. I went door knocking in Westbury with a very open mind. Ms Archer and Mr Tucker made the announcement in Westbury on Monday 30 September. I remember this date well as I was with the minister, Guy Barnett, at the opening of the new sports precinct in Campbell Town. When I watched the announcement that evening I considered it odd that neither Mr Barnett nor Mr Shelton attended the announcement in Westbury. Mr Barnett was with me 100 kilometres away in Campbell Town. It is interesting that a \$240 million announcement, a so-called investment in northern Lyons, and the two frontbench senior ministers were not there.

I also note that Westbury residents have barely seen Mr Barnett or Mr Shelton in Westbury since. In fact, most of the people who have tried to contact their offices get put through directly to your office in the south. No information has been provided. Why have neither of the members spoken publicly about this? Where are they right now? This is northern Lyons. This is their heartland and they are not here. If the project is so good for the community why are they both not here now to champion this? Why not?

I also attended the Meander Valley Council meeting where the Mayor of Meander Valley advised the meeting that he and three other council employees were forced into a compromising position by the Government. He stated he was not allowed into the room unless he signed a confidentiality agreement. I know it is not illegal but it is unethical. Why would a Government with a community's best interests at heart gag a mayor from talking to his community about a potential project with such huge social consequences for that community?

Of note was another comment made by the mayor at that meeting that he had asked the Government during that meeting to consult with the neighbouring property owners and owners and leaseholders at the industrial estate next door to the proposed site before the announcement. We were then advised that the business owners at the industrial site had not been advised either.

This is not just a normal industrial site. This site has Tasmanian Alkaloids, a very professional business operation, which supplies over 50 per cent of the American medicinal opiate market. It is a very strict licence that they adhere to. It is a multi-million-dollar business. Why would you put a maximum-security prison next to that multi-million-dollar business?

I began door knocking on Wednesday 2 October, the same day as this expensive glossy brochure came out into people's letter boxes. Let us just run through the time frame. The brochure has a time line. It cites:

1. Expressions of interest July 2018.
2. Review of preferred sites March 2019.
3. Community consultation commences September 2019.

There is a lovely bid star in the box. This brochure did not get into people's letter boxes until 2 October. It is stated in here your community consultation was in September 2019. It is sloppy and it is not professional and no wonder the community feel like they are being deceived.

Time expired.

Question - That the amendment be agreed to -

The House divided -

AYES 12

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Ms Courtney
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Ms Hickey
Mr Hodgman
Mr Jaensch
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff (Teller)
Mr Shelton
Mr Tucker

NOES 10

Dr Broad
Ms Butler (Teller)
Ms Haddad
Ms Houston
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms O'Connor
Ms Standen
Ms White
Dr Woodruff

PAIR

Mrs Petrusma

Ms Dow

Amendment agreed to.

Question - That the motion, as amended, be agreed to -

The House divided -

AYES 12

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Ms Courtney
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Ms Hickey
Mr Hodgman
Mr Jaensch
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff (Teller)
Mr Shelton
Mr Tucker

NOES 10

Dr Broad
Ms Butler (Teller)
Ms Haddad
Ms Houston
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms O'Connor
Ms Standen
Ms White
Dr Woodruff

PAIR

Mrs Petrusma

Ms Dow

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION

Tasmanian Economy

[5.11 p.m.]

Mrs RYLAH (Braddon - Motion) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Acknowledges that the Hodgman majority Liberal Government has a long-term plan to keep our economy strong, carefully manage the Budget, help create jobs, and invest even more in essential services.
- (2) Notes that, at the state election in March 2018, Tasmanians saw the progress that had been made in delivering our plan, across our State, in four years under a majority Liberal Government, and they supported it again.
- (3) Recognises that a vital part of the plan was to first and foremost restore business confidence and strengthen our economy.
- (4) Further notes that Tasmania's businesses are now measured as the most confident in the nation, that Tasmania has the best business conditions in the nation and that Tasmanian small businesses are the powerhouse of our economy.
- (5) Further acknowledges the Shadow Treasurer, Hon. David O'Byrne MP's public admission this week that, after five and a half years in Opposition, Labor still has no vision or plan.
- (6) Endorses the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's plan to continue to grow the economy and help create jobs, by supporting Tasmanian businesses and unlocking investment opportunities in Tasmania.

The Hodgman majority Liberal Government is delivering our long-term plan to build a stronger economy and create jobs, and the evidence shows that our plan is working. In 2014, after 16 years of Labor, the last four with a Labor-Greens government after a backroom deal breaking Labor's no-deal promises, Tasmanians and our state need a change. We had a long-term plan in 2014 which we took to the Tasmanian people, they elected us in majority and we took that plan into government. Tasmanians saw the progress that had been made in delivering our plan across our state in the four years under a majority Liberal government and they supported it again last year.

A vital part of our plan was to first and foremost restore business confidence and strengthen our economy, and we have unashamedly used every mechanism available to ensure business

remains confident and growing. We will keep doing that because it is businesses that create employment opportunities. Tasmanian businesses want certainty and a government that supports them and they trust this majority Liberal Government to deliver this.

The majority of Tasmanians voted for our plan for change back in March 2014, because under the Labor-Greens government Tasmania had bottomed out. The state was a basket case, people were leaving in droves, young people in particular, very sadly. We were at the bottom of the barrel on all major indicators and they were calling us the mendicant state. Business confidence had plummeted and two out of three businesses felt the Labor-Greens government's policies actually worked against them.

With a range of targeted policies to support businesses as part of our plan, we have helped create an environment where businesses now have the confidence to invest, to employ, to seek new export markets and to think bigger and more innovatively than they have ever done before, and the results are clear. Today, Tasmania's small business sector has grown by almost 1600 new businesses which now employ more than 110 000 people across our state. Our businesses are measured as the most confident in the country and more than 90 per cent of government work is now won by Tasmanian businesses compared to shamefully just 63 per cent under the Labor-Greens government.

Private investment is growing at the fastest rate in Australia and today it is an incredible 66 per cent higher than in March 2014. Tasmania is leading the nation in trade apprenticeship starts, up 10.4 per cent in the past year, while the rest of Australia decreased over the same time. Our payroll tax rebate scheme for apprentices is now supporting more than 150 employers, more than 2000 apprentices and trainees and over 200 youth employees. In addition, our small business grant scheme is supporting over 700 employers and more than 1000 apprentices and trainees. These are examples of strong policies from this majority Liberal Government to support businesses with skilled employees, and to help support young people into jobs in our regions of the state. This contrasts to apprenticeships actually declining by 40 per cent under the four years of the Labor Green government and with young people leaving in droves. Businesses small, medium, large, our dairy farmers like those in my electorate of Braddon, our forest companies, our manufacturers, our defence industries, our exporters, our transport operators, our job creators in all industry sectors are creating more opportunities for more Tasmanians.

In 2014, we took an ambitious plan to government to grow the value of Tasmania's agricultural sector to \$10 billion by 2050, to drive investment in regional areas and create jobs, so important in my electorate of Braddon. Just recently we were proud to announce an annual 10.6 per cent growth rate to an annual value of \$2.67 billion with record overseas food exports of \$740 million. It is a long-term plan that is working. We are on track with our plan and we are backing our farmers with the ongoing rollout of irrigation schemes across the state, reducing our on farm energy costs, boosted biosecurity, and together with our trade strategy, new market developments and export markets.

I note at this point in time that it was the Tasmanian Liberals under Robin Gray who built the first irrigation dam - the Craighourne Dam. The faux claims of irrigation by Labor are exactly that, faux. We are delivering more and we will continue to deliver more with tranche three schemes.

Today our export sector is booming, worth over \$3.71 billion in total, 34.1 per cent higher than when we came to office in 2014.

We support our farmers in their tough times too, with this Government recently delivering \$400 000 in targeted drought support to drought-affected farmers in our state, on top of the federal government's \$100 million to drought hit communities across the nation.

Five-and-a-half years ago our building and construction and housing sectors were flat, to say the least. Today we are leading the nation with dwelling approvals and we are the only state to see growth in Australia during the past financial year. There are now 21 200 Tasmanians employed in construction, up 21.2 per cent since 2014. Master Builders confirmed 2936 new dwellings were built in the past year, and more than \$2.3 billion in commercial and engineering construction work completed, making Tasmania, as they say, the hottest construction market in the country.

The HIA housing scorecard shows 701 housing starts in the March quarter alone this year, securing, as they say, the state's strongest performance in 25 years. This is the direct result of the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's strong economic management policies and plans, investing \$200 million into affordable housing, the biggest in the state's history, reforming the state's building legislation, delivering a suite of incentives from first home builders' grants to stamp duty relief, to new home share products to help young Tasmanians own their first home.

Now, thanks to the federal Morrison Liberal Government, which has generously wiped Tasmania's housing related debt to the Commonwealth, Tasmania will save over \$230 million in principal and interest repayments, \$15 million this year alone. That is funding that will go straight back into even more affordable housing options our growing state needs. It is a long-term plan which is working.

It is important to note that the new shadow treasurer has only this week taken a new approach and finally admitted that Labor still has not 'done the hard work needed', as he put it himself in his puff piece in the paper. No hard work done on an alternative budget, or a long-term plan for Tasmania. Well, he has owned the problem. Mr O'Byrne, good for you. That is a start. You have set the record straight but still no vision and no plan after five-and-a-half years in opposition.

Labor continues to undermine confidence and stability by attacking our budget with scaremongering and stunts. After supporting our budget earlier this year and voting for it in this place and the modest savings measures that form part of it, they have now decided to play politics and scare Tasmanians. When they were last in government with the Greens, Labor's record on the budget was atrocious. Listen to what the CPSU said then, that premier Lara Giddings and the 2011 Labor-Greens budget at the time:

Unfortunately, the Premier's state-of-the-state speech amounted to little more than a plan to cut jobs, cut services and plunge Tasmania into recession.

The union was absolutely right. Labor and the Greens do not get it. They do not understand what we have been telling them for years that a strong economy means more opportunity, more jobs, more industry and a better future for all Tasmanians. They do not understand that a strong economy means a stronger budget to invest in hospitals, schools, police and housing.

Labor was once the party for working people. Now they have drifted so far to the left and are so aligned to the Greens they prefer to spend their time on fringe issues like removing gender from birth certificates. Before former Labor senior figures took their recent unprecedented public intervention telling Labor they were out of touch and too focused on peripheral issues, Rebecca White had hardly asked a question about the economy since becoming Leader more than two years

ago. Paul Lennon told Ms White that the best way to help working people is to have a very strong economy. Actually, what he was saying was that the Liberal plan and our focus is the right one for our state. Former Labor minister, Julian Amos, in the latest newsletter admits that:

The ALP at present is struggling to find any sort of substantive policy footing and the ALP will need to come up with a meaningful and achievable vision along with their policy agenda to support it.

He says:

They still have a long way to go if they are to capture the vision thing starting with 'what do they stand for'.

The federal Labor shadow treasurer has jumped on the bandwagon too, telling the party faithful recently they must focus on jobs, growth and opportunity. Sound familiar? Jim Chalmers said Labor must understand the importance of business and creating jobs and growth, must think about the tax and spend manifesto and dump the class war rhetoric. Labor can aspire to be Liberal-like all they like but the fact is they do not understand business, the economy, the budget and never will. There is not an economic or jobs plan between them. A shocking record. As a former failed economic development minister, Mr O'Byrne released his economic development plan for Tasmania and the state slumped into a recession. A complete disaster. Under the last Labor-Greens government state final demand shrank, 10 000 jobs disappeared and people left the state in droves.

Why on earth would Tasmanians trust the state's finances with Labor and Mr O'Byrne again? Labor failed to present an alternative budget again this year for the fifth year in a row, proving they have no long-term plan. If Mr O'Byrne's promise of a plan is serious, then let us see the alternative budget now. The Greens policy prescription in their alternative budget would be more credible if it started with words like 'dear Santa', but at least they have got one, unlike Labor.

Remember the Labor-Greens forestry peace deal? It cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars, locked up our best production forests and cost over 4000 forestry industry jobs. Two out of every three jobs in the sector. Tasmanians should never go back to the Labor-Greens deal.

Meanwhile, we are getting on with the job here delivering as Tasmanians expect us to, and after five and a half years of hard work, disciplined focus and working to deliver our plan, we have proven that even the smallest state at the bottom of our nation can be the top of the league. In contrast to the Labor-Greens horror budget record, this Government is carefully managing Tasmania's taxpayers' money because that is what they expect us to do. After all, it is their money. We know Labor still has no long-term plan or vision - the new shadow treasurer admitted it this week.

Tasmanians can rely on this majority Liberal Government to have a long-term plan to keep our economy strong, carefully manage the budget, support our business and help create more jobs. That is exactly what we have been doing since we came to government five and a half years ago, and it is what we will keep doing.

[5.26 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I am delighted to follow Mrs Rylah and that she has decided that this particular petulant little stunt, this particular little game, is not having a vote, because we are going to get this week after week, and week after week we will be able to indicate

and show the public the absolute lie that is this Government's statement about its credibility on the economy. This really is the most self-aggrandising, congratulatory piece of rubbish I have ever seen come to this House. It is basically one of worst motions I have ever seen which is saying, 'We are wonderful and everybody should agree', but most of it is not true, and that is what we need to talk about.

This Government talks about its wonderful budget in surplus, but if you have a budget in surplus, you do not cut \$15 million from elective surgery, do you? You do not do that when your budget is in surplus. You do not turn \$200 million in savings into a \$1.1 billion debt in your budget - that is not having a surplus. This motion is built on an absolute fallacy. The Budget is not in surplus. The net operating balance - how this Government actually measures its surplus deficit - counts payments from the federal government for infrastructure projects as revenue. That does not count as spending of them as expenditure. If you are a bit worried about that and want to get some knowledge, head to your own budget papers - go to page 8 in budget paper No 1 and it explains it to you, Mrs Rylah:

It should be noted that the receipt of the Australian Government funding for capital programs, particularly one-off major projects, has the effect of improving the Net Operating Balance outcome. Given the nature of the Net Operating Balance measure, it reflects the receipt of revenue from the Australian Government for infrastructure purposes but does not factor in the expenditure of those funds on infrastructure projects.

It does not factor that in and that is why we are going to have a \$1.1 billion debt by the end of the forward Estimates from a government that promised no debt. The Fiscal Sustainability Report is a terrifying document that you should all read. In fact, every member of the Government should stand up and explain their interpretation of it, because not one of them read the mid-year economic forecast before the last budget, none of them seemed to know that existed, so you should read this piece of work because that is going to bring you essentially to \$29 billion in debt. That is not a government that is doing its job right. That is not a strong economy. That is not a good piece of work.

The last debt held by this Government was held under a Liberal government and it took Labor to pay it off. When this Government comes in and talks about the difficult circumstances they had when they came into government, we left \$200 million of savings in 2014, and where are we now? A total \$450 million cuts to Health, Education and essential services is the only response they have.

I have been a minister. I have had to make savings. There is no way you can cut \$450 million without impacting on frontline services. Every person in the Government who stands up and says that you can should go home and have a really hard look at themselves because they are not telling the truth. If they believe they are telling the truth then they really need to educate themselves, and if they know they are not telling the truth they should not be in this House. You should not be in this House if you are prepared to tell such untruths to the parliament and to the community because it is outrageous.

The member who spoke previously wanted to talk about jobs, so let us talk about jobs. Let us talk about 5600 full-time jobs lost in Tasmania in the last 12 months. Do they have any commentary on that? That is 5600 full-time jobs in the last 12 months. Crickets and frogs. Our unemployment rate is 6.6 per cent, the second highest in Australia. Our long-term unemployment rate is the highest in Australia at 50 per cent above the national average. Tasmania has the highest underemployment

rate, and I will talk a little bit more about what that means because I am going to have plenty of time, as are other members. Because Mrs Rylah has decided we are not voting on this, we are going to talk about it for weeks. Every time you have private members' time you had better bring this one on and be prepared to defend your financial position because, my word, there is a storm coming for you that you have no capacity to deal with.

Youth unemployment is well above the national average. There are 5900 young Tasmanians who are unemployed.

Mrs Rylah - Better than when you were in government.

Ms O'BYRNE - You are happy to interject on really large global fears. Tell me what you think about 5600 people losing their jobs in the last 12 months. Tell me what you think about that, Mrs Rylah. Is that something to be proud of? Is that something that you want to staple to your signs out in the community? 'We have overseen the loss of 5600 jobs in the last 12 months and we're sorry and we've got a plan to deal with it'? No, because you will not talk about the last 12 months. You will not do it.

We are stagnating or going backwards against a range of economic measures - business investment, international merchandise exports, building activity, building approvals, construction work done, housing finance and mineral exploration. I am happy to speak to each of those things. I will tell what I will also talk about. When you talk about confidence, NAB released a report yesterday around consumer confidence. You talk about people being so confident but what it actually showed was that Tasmanian consumers are more anxious than in any other state. Go to page 4 of the report. That is where you will find it. Against job security, 49.3 points; health, 61.1 points; the ability to fund retirement, 62.3 points; the cost of living, 67.6 points; and government policy, 65.1 points.

Tasmanians are more worried about the state of the economy than any other state. Seventy per cent of Tasmanians say the cost of groceries is adding to the cost of living and 42 per cent of Tasmanians say health care costs are adding to the cost of living. This is what Tasmanians are saying. These are the sorts of things the Government needs to be talking about. It is no good to come in and say everything is fine because it is not.

Before we go into some of those economic indicators I talked about, let us focus more on what the unemployment picture means for people in Tasmania. There are 8000 people out of work. That is up over 1000 since the last election and, as I said, the unemployment rate is rising. People are giving up looking for work, and that is in the Hobart area alone. In Launceston and the north-east we lost 700 jobs in the last year, while 1800 women lost their jobs in the past year. A total of 4500 people are now unemployed. The unemployment rate is rising to 6.2 per cent and participation rates for women are in freefall as women give up looking all together. In the south-east the unemployment rate for women is up from 4.9 per cent to 7 per cent in just the past year, so 600 more women are now unemployed. In the west and north-west 300 jobs were lost in the past 12 months, 200 lost in the past month and there are big declines in workforce participation rates as people drop out altogether.

You can look at a couple of areas just to get the idea of what is happening with youth unemployment. There are some headline figures. I will pick the best one so that people do not say I am cherry-picking. We have 7.1 per cent in both the Flinders Island Council area and Glamorgan Spring Bay Council. Let us look at some of the other figures. Break O'Day Council, 15.2 per cent;

Brighton, 18.9 per cent; Burnie City, 15.9 per cent; Central Coast Council area, 14.4 per cent; Central Highlands Council area, 17 per cent; Circular Head Council area, 8.9 per cent; City of Clarence, 13.7 per cent; Derwent Valley Council area, 15 per cent; Devonport City area, 18.7 per cent; Dorset Council, 7.6 per cent.

In the George Town Council area, youth unemployment is 28.8 per cent, and yet we have had to drag this Government kicking and screaming to conversations about the future of the economy of that community. Glamorgan Spring Bay, as I said, is 7.1 per cent; Glenorchy City, 16.8 per cent; Hobart City, 16.7 per cent; Huon Valley Council area, 15 per cent; Kentish Council area, 12.9 per cent; King Island, 10.3 per cent; Kingborough Council, 13.5 per cent; Latrobe Council area, 12.4 per cent; Launceston, 18.1 per cent; Meander Valley, 13.7 per cent; Northern Midlands, 12.8 per cent; Sorell area, 15.2 per cent; Southern Midlands, 10.8 per cent; Tasman Council, 9.1 per cent; Waratah-Wynyard, 13.8 per cent; West Council area, 18.4 per cent; West Tamar, 15.9 per cent; Northern Tasmania, 16.6 per cent; North-West Tasmania, 15 per cent; South Tasmania, 15.4 per cent; Tasmania broadly, 15.7 per cent.

Do not come in here and tell us that everything is rosy in jobs. Do not come in here and tell us that when this is the picture that young people aged between 15 and 24 are facing. These are the kind of unemployment figures they are facing.

I want to talk a little bit about that issue of under employment that I touched on. Total hours worked is an interesting and important economic indicator for the health of an economic community. It shows how healthy the labour market is without marking the soft overall results and total employment which is the headline unemployment rate. As you know, you do not have to work very much to be considered to have been working. The 12-month average of this measure is trending down and despite the steady population growth the Government was bragging about just weeks ago, there is a familiar shape of solid growth. In 2017-18, both followed by nine months of poor results. What we are seeing is a sharp divergence from what is happening in the national economy.

Try to understand what it is like when you are under-employed, when you do not have a consistent, full-time position. It is pretty impossible to get a mortgage if you are a part-time worker or a casual. When Premier Will Hodgman talks big on jobs, these figures actually prove that virtually all of Tasmania's new jobs are part time. It is really hard to cast your future on a part-time job. Our under-employment rate is the highest in the country so our part-time premier has started to turn Tasmania into a part-time economy.

When this Government and this Premier brag about strong population growth, you need to understand what is also happening. The figures show that they are not creating more job hours for more people; so extra people but no consequent full-time employment that actually drives an economy that grows through population growth. An increasing number of workers are then left to fight over a smaller slice of the pie: more people, but not enough work that is commensurate with the population growth. That leads us to the highest under-employment rate in the nation. That is not something to be proud of or to gloat about.

As the population keeps growing, there are a number of things we are supposed to do. We are supposed to do them but quite clearly, we are not managing the need in the housing market. It is quite clear that we are not managing the traffic congestion issues. We are not seeing the things that come with population growth that are supposed to grow a better economy. We are not seeing full-time jobs, nor investment in housing, nor the commensurate work that needs to be done in

infrastructure. The end result is that people end up getting fewer hours: 5600 full-time jobs have been lost from our economy over the past 12 months. They are the jobs you need to get a mortgage. They are the jobs you need to do afford to do things for your family. Those things are important; they are not things we can just gloss over. When we use headline figures, we need to be really careful.

I talked about some of the data that shows that we are stagnating. I will come to that later.

Mrs Rylah commented on how irrigation was started under this Government. Fine, let us not even try to unpick the madness of that statement. This Government came in at the end of the global financial crisis. I know the Government does not want to talk about the GFC anymore. They like to pretend that there have never been international forces that have affected our economy. They do not want to talk about the value of the dollar or the shrinking of the economy nationally and internationally.

They came to government at a time which coincided with that changing. It gave them a false level of comfort. They thought that because things got better when they were there, that they were the architects of things getting better. I think they genuinely thought that. Whereas what happened is, things got better and they failed to take proper steps to ensure that we would be prepared for when the economy eventually does its work. We will see another dip. These things happen. We are not shock-proofed against that. This Government has not done anything. I cannot point to anything in the first term of this Government that was about setting up the economy for the future. You could not say that about any government, whether you like them or dislike them - Labor, Liberal, whatever. You cannot ever point to an entire term of government where somebody has not used an economic lever to set the state up for future investment and development. You cannot find that. If it is the case, it would be interesting to see.

We have had to trade out of debt from Liberal governments before but I do not think you will find that. Even during the global financial crisis, we rolled out that significant work in irrigation. That was a significant commitment and it did set us up. This Government came in and was able to get the benefit of that. That is fine. Governments are supposed to handover some kind of legacy to future communities. That is our job.

What I think has happened is that they have come in, things have got better and they have convinced themselves that they are particularly good at managing the economy. The mid-year economic forecast released in November-December last year showed the Government was heading into trouble. The Budget identified \$1.1 million of net debt coming down the line. The report from the Treasurer was a desperate cry for help from Treasury, a desperate cry for help for someone to start recognising that there are some significant problems. We have a government that, as Saul Eslake said, is minding the store.

That is what happened. We have had a government come in say, 'We have this bit of money and we will just spend it'; rather than, 'We have this bit of money, we have these economic parameters in which we are operating and future issues that we need to resolve. What will we do to make sure that we are building the economy and future proofing us against those kinds of shocks?' This is the first government that has not done that. That is where it has failed.

The Premier and the Treasurer get very upset because they have stood in here and said, 'It is not that we were lucky'. A bit of it was luck in timing, it really was. The Government then had an

opportunity to make decisions about what it would do, how it would spend, what to prioritise and what it would invest in to set the economy up for the future. That really concerns me.

I want to go to some of those ABS figures that I mentioned before. I have 23 minutes to go. Ms O'Connor I know you want to speak but I understand this will be coming on again and again because they are not calling for a vote today.

Ms O'Connor - I think Ms Ogilvie wants to speak too.

Ms O'BYRNE - I do not want to take time, but because we are not having a vote today, we are obviously going to be coming back to this. We are all going to enjoy coming back to this particular debate.

Let us look at the ABS figures from August which were released on 3 October. Let us go to the international merchandise exports. The estimated nominal value of overseas merchandise exports from Tasmania decreased by 0.3 per cent, compared to \$3.71 billion in the previous year. A 0.3 per cent decrease might not sound like much, but nationally the nominal value of overseas merchandise exports was estimated to have increased by 17.7 per cent in the same period. There is a significant difference in how Tasmania is performing to how we are performing nationally. There are more stats than that but I will not take you all the way through.

The private new capital expenditure is another ABS report that was released for the June quarter 2019. It was released on 29 August. It will be interesting to see what happens in November when we get the next one. It says the real value of the Tasmanian private new capital expenditure was estimated to have decreased by 2.5 per cent in trend terms to the June quarter compared to the previous quarter. Nationally there was also a decrease but only by 0.7 per cent. Once again we are not doing as well as the national standards. This Government says we are punching above our weight.

I am all for singing the praises of Tasmanian businesses. We have some amazing businesses. It is not okay to pretend that there are not problems. Lending to households and businesses from the August 2019 report released on 10 October: this talked about the trend number of owner-occupied finance commitments and that includes refinancing. Whilst there was an increase of 0.3 per cent, three commitments in August 2019 compared to the previous month, it was 6.5 per cent lower than one year earlier. Yet at the same time nationally the estimated trend number increased by 1 per cent. Whilst we have seen an increase in home buyers in the past, the rate of growth has steadied or potentially we are seeing a dip. We are seeing stagnating in that area.

Mineral explorations: this was also released June quarter 2019, release date 2 September. The ABS estimated that the nominal value of mineral exploration spent in Tasmania was \$5.1 million in the June quarter in trend terms. That was an increase against the previous quarter but 13.6 per cent lower than the value recorded in the June quarter 2018. In the year to June quarter 2019, Tasmania's mineral exploration expenditure decreased by 24.8 per cent compared to the previous year and nationally there was an increase in the same period of 18.6 per cent.

Do have a look; even things like the building activity. It was fun because a couple of members laughed when I mentioned building activity. Go to the ABS. It is ABS pack number 8752.0 for anyone wanting to see it. There are some interesting charts in here that show that what we are seeing is either flatlining or stagnating, that we have seen improvement but that improvement is not continuing to grow.

In the best of worlds where there was no other issue coming down the line, then maybe that might not be the end of the world. The reality is that there are issues coming down the line. Even in the limited work that was done by Treasury, they are very clear that there are bits that it did not include. There are challenges coming down that it did not include, but there are significant economic impacts coming our way.

We all know about the growing costs of service provision and for the Government, the answer to that is simply to cut the amount that we spend on services. The answer that it has to be is to more efficiently provide that service. This Government has this simplistic view, it is okay, all we have to do is cut the back room and then everything will be fine. It is a fundamental understanding about how service delivery works.

When you cut an administrative position in a hospital, the admin work does not disappear. It gets done by somebody who is on the frontline who has to provide care. That is the way that it works. If you do not have a ward clerk, the nurse fills it in. If you do not have somebody doing the backroom work that the Government likes to say is not important, somebody else still has to do it. If you have fewer people doing it, without a proper conversation around how you do these things efficiently, then things do not get better.

This notice of motion talks about how wonderful you have been, how you have kept the economy strong and please make sure everyone knows that. I am quoting because I would not say these words: Carefully manage the budget, help to create jobs and invested more in essential services. It is not the picture that Tasmanians are seeing. Tasmanians are seeing ambulances ramped and EDs swamped. These are not simple isolated problems. These are about a trajectory of care that we are not funding at every level. It is about being able to leave, to be appropriately safely discharged. It is about being able to see your GP in the first place and being able to get the primary care needs that you want. It is about being socially connected enough because you are involved in community programs. It is about having family support. All these things are impacted on when the Government makes its other decisions and this is not okay.

We are not in the golden age that the Premier likes to tell people we were in and it is dishonest to say that to people. If on one hand the Treasurer is out there saying 'lots more jobs, we are going to invest in more people, lots more jobs, isn't it wonderful?', while at the same time hospitals are being told to have vacancy control, what kind of message is being sent to people who work in the public service? The Treasurer says everything is fine so we should be able to fill all those vacant positions but the reality is we do not even know what our budget is. We certainly cannot live on what we have had before. We are so chronically underfunded that we cannot fill those positions.

The story of Health is one that touches everyone so it is a matter that everybody feels they have a great knowledge about. Everyone can tell the story of the person who has had amazing care from staff but in terribly frightening circumstances, where people are so stressed, where people have done too many shifts and where people have been overworked. That is what is going on.

The report has shown that we have had a 60 per cent increase in adverse outcomes. That does not always mean that a person who did not need to die, died. What it does mean is that each one of those people had a worse outcome - an unexpected outcome. They did not get better in the way that they should have. That is not something to be proud about. If you are investing in essential services, if you are doing all of the things that this report says then you would not be having that circumstance. You would not be cutting elective surgery if the economy was as good as you claim.

You would not have ambulance ramping if the economy was as good as you claim. You would not have the under-staffing in hospitals if the economy was good as you claim, and that is just in health.

What we are seeing across government is this mad grab for cash and it took so long to drag out of the Government any kind of understanding of what that would mean for agencies.

Mr Shelton can shake his head but I have been a minister during the GFC -

Mr Shelton - I am shaking my head because you should not be the one talking about this. I was at meetings -

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'BYRNE - I know what you are supposed to know but the reason that I can, Mr Shelton, is because I understand it better than you do. There is a difference in a health situation. Ward 4D in Launceston did close, it was going to close temporarily anyway while we did the emergency department and the ICU changes but what it meant was, we did not sneakily close beds all the way through the hospital where people would not see it. When you do that it actually becomes harder to provide the model of care so when we sat down with Health and said, this is the economic position we are in, what can we do they said, whatever you do, do not just sneakily close beds all over the hospital or understaff them because that will compromise patient care. We will be better at delivering our service if we can manage that. That is what they said. That is what we did.

But if you go to the hospital now and you go into 4D, you tell me how many of those beds are staffed? Pop up there when you go home on the weekend and find out how many of them are staffed. Staff in those hospitals are telling us that it is harder because demand is high but the way that the Government has decided to run this government via press release and good news stories, means that it has become harder for hospitals to do what they need to do.

Staff will talk about interference that they have had at ministerial levels. I am not sure what the new minister is like but the previous minister clearly would interfere in clinical care when it suited him and not when it did not.

Mr Shelton, do not say that I would not know because the reality is that I do know. I know better than most how hard it is to make those decisions but I also know how much harm you can do if you care more about a good press release than you do about patient care. Do not ever say that I do not understand that.

Going to other areas, we talked about TAFE a bit earlier on today and the Government can say, yes, there is more money going to TAFE right now but not to the core services. There has been a 3 per cent increase in the fees charged to students. There have been courses that actually have a community service obligation which are not supposed to have significant fees which have been charged fees. Then everyone has realised that they are not allowed to do that and it has been revoked but the uptake for those courses was reduced because cost is a barrier to participation.

The IT course was cancelled. The Premier, the minister and the CEO can say as much as they like that the course was not cancelled but you tell me - if you sign up for a four-year course, a couple of semesters, and you have paid for the entire year that it is going to run throughout 2019 and you get to the end of the first semester and then they say, sorry we are not running the second semester, how is that not cancelled? For the media reports from this Government to indicate that that was

somehow because the students were not up to it is outrageous, absolutely outrageous. There are enough students to justify the continuation of that course. There were resourcing problems with the course because the TAFE was not resourcing the course as well as it should but it should have been able to be managed so that those students who had signed up for a 12-month course, who had put their lives on hold in order to better their career opportunities, should have been able to finish that work.

They were told by TAFE, not in writing - nothing in writing, which is interesting - that they could get a refund for their second semester or they could wait and see how the course went next year and maybe they could do semester 2 next year. Well, that is pretty difficult if you put your life on hold. I certainly have correspondence from one student who has a young family - this made a significant impact. This was a big decision to study and these kinds of decisions by TAFE made an impact. The young apprentice that we talked about a little while ago, the plumber, did not get his first year block of training in the first year, so in second year he has to do first and second year, but because of the way that will play out it actually adds time to the time of his apprenticeship, so as a result of TAFE mismanagement he is further away from completion.

Nearly every trade I talk to says there is a significant problem with accessing training at TAFE. There are not enough staff in those skilled areas or enough opportunities for students. Courses are delayed and are cut short. Things are not being done the way they used to be. Even the staff-student ratio has blown out substantially against what it used to be. These are real problems. My colleague, Ms Houston, mentioned the Certificate II course this morning, which 100 young people applied to do in trades. That is the course you do when you want to get an apprenticeship. It is a really valuable piece of work to get an apprenticeship. I think 57 kids were interviewed and only 12 could take up the course because there were not enough teachers. You know what they did to these construction kids, the rest of the 100? They wrote them a letter saying, 'It's okay you haven't been able to get a placement, but why don't you apply for electro-tech or plumbing?' What a great idea, except TAFE is not running those either.

We do not know what is happening with the enrolled nursing course. We know that there were significant issues with their accreditation and that the accreditation body was really concerned about what was going on. We know that TAFE seems to have a view that if there is a curriculum here and a teacher there that it does not matter who teaches the course work, and yet we know that is not the way TAFE operates. TAFE operates by having people who are skilled in those areas teaching those courses. We still do not know what has happened with that. You used to be able to go to the TAFE website and see when the next course was coming up. It now says 'contact us for information'. I am hoping that the Government has resolved that because that is a very significant workforce shortage.

I have had conversations with the ceiling and wall institute about their concerns regarding plasterers and they have something like 120 students, but with staff losses there was only one person to train all these people. This is not an indicator of a government that is in a good financial position. If you are in a good financial position you fund TAFE to do the job it needs to do. You fund services to be able to meet the needs of community. If your economy is as good as this motion would have us believe, we would not have that experience. The only answer we get time and time again from the Government is, 'Oh look, we'd love to employ more people'. Why do you reckon you cannot employ more people in TAFE? It is because the culture is toxic and the staff are overworked.

Those nursing students I mentioned before, the ones who did get through the course, did not get most of their results because the Government has had to pay people to come in because marking

was some five to six months behind. If you have not been marked on a piece of work early in your course and you are continuing to go through the rest of the course, what do you reckon the impact of that is if you do not know how well you did on your first couple of assignments? How do you know if you are doing the right thing later on? The students talk about the amount of stuff they do; really complex bits of work that they just have to work through themselves online. That is not the way that training is supposed to be provided. That is health and that is TAFE.

Where else can we go? We can go back to the jobless figures if you want, Mrs Rylah, but you do not tend to engage with me when I mention those. Let us talk about other issues. This Government says that everything is going to be resolved because it suddenly has an infrastructure budget. What in the infrastructure pipeline has not been sitting there for a long time to be done? What has not been sitting there for a long time? Anything brand-new? Hang on, I do know a brand-new thing - the underground bus mall. How is that going? Got an underground bus mall in Hobart yet? No, because it will be at ground level. How are you going with your Metro bus ferry across the river? That is another infrastructure thing you are supposed to have done, a new initiative. Where is that? What do you reckon the response to that is going to be? Is it going to be to put more buses on? I reckon that is what it is going to be, don't you, Mrs Rylah? Let us just see how that one goes.

We have road duplications that we have seen nothing of. I only have a minute left but Mr Jaensch has come in. Let us not even talk about how many houses have not been built. The figure and the target for housing access and the amount of housing being built by this Government changes and changes, but my most favourite was when we decided that we did not need houses, we needed houses or lots.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Tasmania Fire Service - Women Recruits

[6.00 p.m.]

Mrs RYLAH (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to recognise the female firefighters from my region of Braddon. Last week, 15 new firefighters graduated into the ranks of our Tasmania Fire Service. Four of these graduates will take up positions in the north-west - three young men and one young woman.

Tasmania Fire Service's first graduating class in 2019 was held last Friday. Thirty-three-year-old Elyse Hatchard has been cutting my hair for a number of years and has spent the last 16 years as a hairdresser in Burnie.

Ms O'Connor - She's been doing a very good job, Mrs Rylah; you have lovely hair.

Mrs RYLAH - Thank you. Her new career is as different from her old career as it is possible to get. A few years ago, Elyse wanted a more challenging career and also wanted to contribute back to her community, which is something she likes to do. She has worked in the school and done all sorts of things.

Ms Hatchard described the initial interview and evaluation process which took about five months and then the further 15 weeks training as really intense, with a great deal of theory and a lot of pushing herself to become both mentally and physically capable. She also remarked on how her

fellow recruits became like a family and commented on how they came to rely on each other to help get through the 15 weeks of training, much as it will be when they are on the job, I am told.

Adam Doran, the trainee firefighter development program manager, said his first graduating class of 2019 had demonstrated high standards as a strong and cohesive team with characteristics of a team during their 15 weeks of training.

Madam Speaker, I want to speak of another situation involving female firefighters this week when Tasmania's first career firefighting crew comprised entirely of women completed their first shift. They responded to their first job on Wednesday last week. Historically, firefighting is a male-dominated environment, so it is great that the Tasmania Fire Service is supportive of women taking up this career.

I congratulate Elyse and wish her well in her future on completing her 15-week training, a great effort. I also congratulate the Tasmania Fire Service on recognising the ability of women to take on the significant role of firefighting in our Tasmanian communities.

Seniors Week - Connections

[6.03 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Disability Services and Community Development) - Madam Speaker, this is Seniors Week and its theme this year is connections. The Hodgman majority Liberal Government's vision is for a strong, confident, connected and inclusive society where all Tasmanians are treated fairly with respect, without discrimination and with equal opportunity to engage in the life of our great state.

It is supported by our Government's Ageing Action Plan 2017-22 which is aimed at helping Tasmanians maintain their health, increase their participation and feel secure as they age. It is a comprehensive plan informed by the voices of older Tasmanians and encouraging them to continue to feel they belong, be involved, learn and live well as valued members of our society.

We are also committed to participation in the national plan to support older Australians and to delivering our own Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy, Respect and Protect Older Tasmanians. Our strategy aims to make connections with our communities and service systems and to help people understand and recognise elder abuse. As a government we respect our older Tasmanians and encourage everyone to do the same.

We are working with both sector and community to build a best-practice service system that responds to incidents of abuse. We have worked with our statewide Elder Abuse Prevention Advisory Committee, government agencies and the broader community to build a strategy that commits all of us to recognise, respond to and prevent the abuse of older Tasmanians so that they feel respected, protected and cared for.

We are investing in work along these themes so that Tasmanian people are aware of the signs of elder abuse, understand that it is not okay and are empowered to make decisions in their own lives. We are streamlining our service systems to take a coordinated and collaborative action to respond to elder abuse and provide integrated support to people in times of need and safeguard the rights of older people.

I acknowledge the National Council on the Ageing campaign, Every Age Counts, which addresses the idea of ageism and dignity. Ageism is not benign or harmless. It is a big problem

that affects people's confidence, their quality of life, their job prospects, their health and their control over life decisions. It is embedded in our language, our habits and our customs but we cannot address it if we do not recognise it. When we see ageism but do not call it out, when we do not challenge the assumptions and preconceptions that underly it, we lose the chance to change attitudes and beliefs and behaviours that contribute to an ageist approach. I commend the Council on the Ageing for their work.

In Seniors Week, to all older Tasmanians, I say thank you for your wisdom, for the contributions you have made and continue to make to our great state. I encourage you to stay involved in your community and to also take the time to be proud of the things you have achieved, the families you have raised and the community you have helped build that we are all lucky to be part of.

I also recognise today the inaugural Housing Ends Homelessness Expo held at Hobart's City Hall last Sunday, 13 October. The expo was set up to provide an opportunity to raise awareness about the range of services available for Tasmanians who need help, who know someone who needs help or who themselves want to help others who are in housing stress. It was held in collaboration with the not-for-profit and local government sectors and housing and community sectors. It addressed the full spectrum of housing needs and services from crisis accommodation to affordable home ownership. Over 1000 people attended throughout the day, receiving important information from more than 40 service providers, speakers and exhibitors. Pleasingly, we had over 100 responses to the feedback form that was provided and of those the average rating was more than eight out of 10 and almost 95 per cent of participants wanted to see the event run again another time.

I thank our fantastic Housing Tasmania team and the people from my office who pulled the event together. I thank Hobart City Council for the use of City Hall and their partnership in putting on the expo. I thank the Premier and his family for coming along, and I thank you, Madam Speaker, the member for Clark, Ms Hickey, for being part of the event. I thank Ms Standen as well as Ms Webb from the upper House, who was there as well, for attending and lending their support. No Greens, sadly.

I thank the more than 40 service providers and exhibitors who made the effort to set up and be there for the whole of Sunday and the work that they do every day with people in need of housing services and support. I thank Podmatrix and Royal Wolf for bringing examples of the backyard units and the pods that are to be installed at Bethlehem House and at the Hobart Women's Shelter so that Tasmanians from Hobart who are contributing to them can see the product for themselves and the benefits that they will bring for people. I thank The Lions Club of Glenorchy who fed us very well and the 1000 Tasmanians who came to find out more, to provide a home for their families and to help others in housing stress.

Northern Region Prison - Concerns

[6.09 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, I rise to use this time to finish off a speech which I did not get to make this afternoon. I was planning to read accounts provided to me from the people of Westbury. I will continue to do this. It is very important that their concerns are noted, listened to and a record is made of them. That way there will not be a bulldozer effect with this prison.

I will not use people's names out of concern of repercussions. This one says -

I do not think that a prison in the north is a good idea as I have travelled to Hobart for a couple of years to visit a friend in the minimum security at Risdon. The thing about this prison is why so close to a town like Westbury? Is it central to families in Smithton, Queenstown or Wynyard?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, I need to interrupt you because you must only refer to the accounts you have been sent. You cannot enter the debate on a motion that has been finished.

Ms BUTLER - That is fine.

We need to change the name of Westbury to Westbury Prison Town, because Westbury's social structure will change.

If you have a copy of October's *Meander Valley Gazette* there is an article on page 2 written by Chris Donaldson, which I think will be proven to be correct.

Also, these councillors and politicians who say that the prison will be good for Westbury do not even live here. They would not know or care what Westbury is made of, so talk is cheap. I challenge anybody who says these things to come and live here and put these words into action.

Lastly, I do have a compassion for the prison, however why I oppose this prison in Westbury is because this Government is all spin and I am quite concerned as to what will happen to this town in 10 years' time. I also believe that the Government cannot look after the prison properly; therefore, you have to question the prison being so close to Westbury town or any other towns in Tasmania.

I am saddened on all levels of government as to how much spin and untruths are told to the community.

This is from another resident who keeps being referred to Ms Archer's office without any response from the Liberal Lyons members. This is not me, this is their words -

Hello Guy and Mark,

I have tried on several occasions since 30 September to make a time to speak with both of you about the proposed northern prison site. John Tucker has been to visit Westbury and I had a brief conversation with him and I have heard that Guy has been doorknocking the area. That is great, I would like to speak to Guy too.

There you go. The community member then goes on to say:

Yesterday an email was sent from the Northern Prison project team and stated this: 'these community drop-in sessions are an opportunity for the community to learn about the proposed northern regional prison, ask questions and have their concerns heard.'

I am terribly concerned that these drop-in sessions are for the purposes of persuading Westbury residents to thinking that the prison is a good idea. They

appear to be fact-finding sessions for the planning document. I do not want to have my concerns heard; I would like them addressed.

The Meander Valley Council, according to the October meeting minutes, put in an EOI to the Tasmanian state Government for a site next to Ashley. They didn't suggest or endorse the current site that sits right in the town boundary of Westbury.

I am horrified that the state Government is dictating to our little town that we have a maximum-security prison. I have already heard of two people cancelling appointments to view property in our area due to the prison. I met a lady from Western Creek this week who told me that she and her husband were negotiating to purchase a block in Westbury on which to build to retire. They have withdrawn from the negotiations due to the prison.

I would never have moved to Westbury if I knew that a prison was going to be on the cards. I would like to speak to you both. You are my Liberal Lyons members. I am not a shout-y person or going to abuse you; I would simply like to voice my deep distress in person or over the phone.

Then this message was also sent to the Liberals -

It's Seniors Week. Many Westbury seniors are really hurting due to this prison proposal. They are frightened about having a prison in our town. So far no one has been able to tell us about lockdowns and what happens when, not if, a prisoner escapes. I would like to know about compensation if I am locked in at home. What happens to the cows that need to be milked? The produce in the café fridges that spoil, the flights that get missed? So many questions and no answers.

We do not want a prison in Westbury. We want to be more than heard. We want the politicians to admit that Westbury isn't the right fit and that even at a consultation stage the proposal is hurting our community and damaging our town.

Another resident wrote to me:

We are emailing you because we are very disturbed and upset about the proposed prison in the tiny historic town of Westbury. We feel lied to, bulldozed and bamboozled by the Liberal Government. We were lucky enough to attend the unadvertised consultation event at the Fitzpatrick Inn last weekend. We are sure you must know that hardly anyone attended this event because it was not announced to the residents of Westbury at all.

We would like to share with you the questions we had and what was discussed:

Escape from prisons - the Northern Regional Prison Flyer Information Sheet begins with a comment that is extremely unlikely that prisoners will escape and threaten Westbury.

The first paragraph in the Addressing Your Concerns flyer goes on to say that since 2006 no prisoner has escaped Risdon Prison but this is completely untrue.

Two prisoners have escaped in 2019, one of them escaped three times and when Graham John Enniss was caught, he had a number of weapons on him including a serrated knife. Luckily, he was walking through the bush and not through Westbury when he was apprehended.

A third prisoner escaped from Burnie Prison in December 2010. He shot a police officer with a sawn-off shotgun. So, the initial untruths in the literature left a very bad taste in our mouths as we could immediately assume that other statements were also likely to be false.

In fact, we looked up the claims and there were too many fictitious statements made in the document. We raised the issue of a police department having to manage with severe budget cuts for 2020.

Recently, Launceston police department had been faced with an increase in crime and the department has stated publicly they do not have enough policemen to look after the public. We asked about this problem and received no answer.

The police commissioner has stated that police numbers are not adequate. We wish to know if this is the case in Launceston? How on earth can we feel safe in Westbury when the police force is already overstretched?

Further, the police union reports high levels of fatigue and mental health problems.

Time expired.

Student Wellbeing Strategy 2019 - Safe, Well and Positive Learners

[6.16 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Education and Training) - Madam Speaker, today I joined the principal of Rosetta Primary School, Deidre Arendt, and students, and the Commissioner for Children and Young People to talk about their wellbeing and release the Tasmanian government schools report on Student Wellbeing Strategy 2019, Safe, Well and Positive Learners. It is a survey of all Tasmanian Government school students held around August this year.

As we would all appreciate, our children's wellbeing is critical to ensuring Tasmanian children and young people are successful learners to enable Tasmania to lead the nation in education. Evidence demonstrates that students who have greater wellbeing are more likely to have better educational outcomes and are likely to have positive wellbeing throughout their lives and be more productive.

In Term 3 this year, 28 600 students in years 4 to 12 in all Tasmanian government schools were surveyed on their wellbeing. This data provides a deeper insight into the range of factors that influence a young person's learning and engagement. The survey data will be used to plan and implement programs and professional learning to directly support the wellbeing of all students.

Key to improving student wellbeing is listening to students and understanding their needs. This is the point of the survey: this is the student voice, and their views on how they view their wellbeing. That is why we are committed to the development of a valid and reliable measure of student wellbeing and the data will provide insight into a student's sense of belonging at school, their feeling

of connection to peers and teachers, their understanding of resilience, and their optimism for the future.

At a state level, highlights from the 2019 Student Wellbeing Survey include that 89 per cent of students expressed a degree of confidence in their learning ability; 90 per cent felt connected to adults at school; 92 per cent felt connected to adults in their home; 80 per cent reported being generally optimistic; 95 per cent had good relationships and support from their teachers and 88 per cent felt they had good quality social support from peers and 86 per cent felt safe at school most of the time.

There were other areas of note and highlighted from the data, clearly demonstrates that we can support our students in better nutrition, breakfast at school. Also it would appear that not enough students are getting enough sleep. There is more that we can do in supporting students to become more resilient, as well, particularly as they go through the years 4 to 12.

One of the interesting statistics, from my point of view, was that 8 per cent of students felt that they had been bullied, or there had been an occurrence of bullying. There has been a lot of discussion around bullying in the last 12 to 24 months, and 8 per cent, at face value, does not seem that high. But we are committed to a bully-free state. If you are part of the 8 per cent, then that is not good, so we need to continue with our combating of bully initiatives and add value to that to ensure that 8 per cent becomes zero.

It is very well presented and interesting data and data that we can use to improve the engagement of our students at school.

The student survey will take place annually and provide schools and the department with critical data on the wellbeing of its students. The wellbeing of Tasmania's children is a shared responsibility and requires a collective effort. While the Department of Education takes responsibility for and is addressing a number of the areas within the survey, it also points to other areas across the whole of government that we can do better in; certain areas to support our young people in Tasmania. That is where it becomes a shared responsibility.

Schools will work closely with families in the broader school community to understand the wellbeing data and use it to positively impact students' wellbeing and learning. Many of our students face significant challenges and barriers to learning and the wellbeing strategy will go a long way to helping remove these hurdles.

Improving mental wellbeing is the first focus area under the strategy with an action plan to be released by the end of March 2019. This plan will address some key issues experienced by our children and students such as resilience, depression, anxiety and cyber safety.

Action plans will also be released in 2020 and 2021 addressing physical wellbeing and the environment and focusing on wellbeing in the eyes of a young person. The strategy dovetails with the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework released last year as part of a coordinated whole-of-government effort to support the wellbeing of all young Tasmanians.

I commend the survey to the House. It is a very honest account of a point in time for 28 600 students and that is a lot to survey.

Ms O'Connor - It is a great data set.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a great data set of every year. We often have 1000 people surveyed at polling time, at certain times in Tasmania, and we get excited about that -

Ms O'Connor - Or not.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Or not. This is a really large survey which I hope and believe will benefit out students in breaking down any barriers that they can to engage in learning.

I take my hat off to and thank very much the hardworking team in the Department of Education, in particular the Child and Student Wellbeing Unit. They have done a wonderful job in presenting this, getting the schools together and it was great to go to Rosetta Primary School today, which is a wonderful example of a school that has a great sense of wellbeing and happiness. I commend the leadership of the school and all the teachers.

Commissioner for Children and Young People - Ambassador Program

[6.23 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, following on from what the minister for Education was talking about then, I take the opportunity to talk about the Commissioner for Children and Young People's outstanding Ambassador Program.

On 4 October I went to the Ambassador Program interactive panel discussion, which was at the Launceston Conference Centre. I was on a panel with Mr Jaensch, member for Braddon and also Rebecca White, Leader of the Opposition. We faced more than 100 of the most astute, engaged, young Tasmanians I have ever had the privilege to spend time with. These are the ambassadors of the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Leanne McLean.

When you were talking about the survey before, minister, I happened to be looking at one of the ambassador's regular updates. I do not know how many members in this place receive a regular update on the Ambassador Program from a young man called Joe Samuel Birch. I met Joe Birch at the Launceston panel discussion and his level of interest in the rights of children and young people and his determination to make a really strong contribution as an ambassador is truly impressive.

This afternoon Joe Birch has sent through an overview of report two. He has prepared a very professional report that includes a survey of young people that he took the initiative to do. He says:

For this survey I changed the program for the survey to be platformed from using Microsoft Office forms and this feature made it so much easier to use because I could track the responses easier.

I was pleased to see 20 people undertake the survey. In this report most parts of what people said will be included.

He also says:

Before going into reporting I acknowledge and pay respects to the traditional landowners of Australia, past, present and emerging, in which I commenced my ambassadorship.

I hope you enjoy reading this report. Please note that any feedback is welcome.
To submit your feedback email Joe Birch. Thanks in advance and yours truly.

Joe asked other young people questions such as whether children should have access to free education services, no-cost levies, et cetera. Fifteen people answered yes to this question and overwhelmingly the response from young people was 83 per cent in favour.

Question two was should children be treated fairly, no matter what? The response was 94 per cent yes and 6 per cent no. I thought that was an interesting response from the 6 per cent. What Joe says as a qualifier is what I believe, that all children should be treated fairly, but there are some exceptions to this question that parents may not want to treat their children fairly.

Question three was should children have a say about decisions affecting them? Joe's response overwhelmingly to that survey was 89 per cent yes, children should have a say, and we know that to be true. We have to engage with young people, find safe spaces where they feel free to talk about issues that concern them or interest them, and we need to not only listen to what they say but they need to see us acting on what they have talked to us about.

Question four was why are the rights of children so important to you? Do you think children do not have enough access to rights? There was a number of responses and I will just read out a couple of them. Opinion one said:

I believe there are some grey areas between what is good for children and what is best for children and that there are issues of access and equity that have become more significant than they were a few decades ago.

Ambassador Joe replied to that:

I believe that access and equity are a big issue and we need to think about how not to make them a big issue.

Another opinion said:

Young people have valuable opinions. Sometimes they are dismissed because they are young and do not know everything.

Ambassador Joe replied:

Young people certainly have open mindsets and are always wanting to be listened to and the thing is, the biggest problem is that schools do not listen to the student's voice enough.

This is the voice of young people. We have all been in school and been frustrated when we thought we were not heard or harshly judged, but this is an authentic response to a survey and some very considered responses.

As members of that panel we were asked a series, a barrage actually, of difficult questions. I think we all were very much on our toes responding to those young people's questions. Overwhelmingly, the issues that came up for them were concerns about climate and concerns about coalmining because that was when coalmining was topical in the news. There was a really

interesting response to a question about the so-called religious freedoms bill. I described it as the 'right to be a bigot bill' and some very bright young man in the front went, 'You know, you're so right to call it the 'right to be bigot bill'. I just don't understand how any government could introduce legislation like that'.

It was just a delightful day and a privilege. One of the other exercises that they undertook through the Commissioner for Children - who is a great Commissioner for Children and well done to Leanne McLean - was working with artists in creating protest messages on umbrellas which echoes a bit the umbrella movement from Hong Kong, but again the depth of understanding, the intelligence and sense of connection and purpose amongst those young people as they decorated those umbrellas was truly inspiring. Every person I met that day - and they came from schools all over Tasmania, mostly grades 6, 7, 8 and 9 - was impressive, engaged and proud young Tasmanians who want to make a contribution to their state.

Madam Speaker, when we were asked what steps we could take to make sure young people were given a greater voice and had the capacity to influence decisions, I talked about the Greens policy to lower the voting age to 16 for young people who want to vote, and of course that was met very warmly by the ambassadors of the Commissioner for Children and Young People. These young Tasmanians want to have a say in their future, they have the capacity to give and contribute, and we need to listen to them and act on their behalf every day in this place.

In closing, I want to thank Joe Birch for updating members in this place on the important work he is doing as an ambassador. I have no doubt whatsoever that long after we have left this place and I am sitting in my rocking chair watching the clouds go by, young Joe Birch will be a member of parliament.

Time expired.

Lark Distillery

[6.30 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about Lark Distillery. I recently had the pleasure of meeting Bill Lark, founder of Lark Distillery.

Ms O'Connor - Do you remember the meeting?

Mr TUCKER - I do. Tasmania is ideally situated for making malt whisky and it took a whisky lover to realise the environment was perfect. Bill Lark realised that everything he needed for a world-class whisky was in Tasmania - rich fields of barley, an abundance of wonderfully pure soft water, highland peat bogs and a perfect climate.

The vision of producing Tasmanian malt whisky was born on a trout fishing trip in the highlands of Tasmania. Bill's father-in-law, Max, produced a wonderful bottle of single malt, and as they enjoyed a drink in the park at Bothwell surrounded by Georgian buildings and barley fields and the gentle flowing of the Clyde River, Bill remarked to Max, 'I wonder why there isn't anyone making malt whisky in Tasmania'?

The first modern licensed distillery in Tasmania was at Bill Lark's house, hence Lark Distillery was established in 1992 by Bill Lark as a family affair. Bill's wife and daughter have played an

integral part growing the business. When his daughter joined the team as head distiller, she was one of the world's youngest female distillers. Women are known for their ability to distinguish flavours, and this superior talent in Bill's wife and daughter has given Lark products a notable edge.

Today the Lark Distillery is one of Australia's leading distilleries, producing high-quality premium spirits using traditional methods. The distillery runs an 1800-litre copper pot still with a 500-litre spirit still. The range of distilled products includes the flagship Lark Single Malt Whisky and Forty-Spotted Rare Tasmanian Gin.

Tasmania's whisky industry has certainly grown since 1992 when Bill Lark produced the first barrel. Today, Lark Distillery is winning world whisky awards. In addition, Bill Lark was inducted into the Whisky Hall of Fame for his services to the industry. For anyone looking to get me a Christmas present, Lark's rum whisky goes down very easily.

The House adjourned at 6.33 p.m.