



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

TRANSCRIPT

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESSES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tasmanian Ports Corporation Pty Ltd

Wednesday 26 November 2025

MEMBERS

Ms Burnet (Chair)
Mr Rob Fairs (Deputy Chair)
Mr Vica Bayley
Ms Kristie Johnston
Mr Marcus Vermey
Mr Dean Winter

OTHER PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Prof George Razay
Mr Roger Jaensz
Ms Anita Dow

WITNESSES IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. Kerry Vincent MP, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport

TasPorts

Greg McCann
Chair

Anthony Donald
CEO

Mick Wall
Harbour Master

Julie Garth
Group Executive People, Culture & Safety

(In support)

Michel de Vos
Group Executive Major Projects, Assets & Technical Services

Dominic Townsend
Chief Financial Officer

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THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE HOBART ON WEDNESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2025.

Tasmanian Ports Corporation Pty Ltd

The committee met at 9.00 a.m.

CHAIR (Ms Burnet) - I welcome the minister, Chair and CEO to the committee today in rather trying times, and I also welcome the other members of this committee.

The time scheduled for the scrutiny of Tasmanian Ports Corporations is three hours. As is the practice of the committee, the time taken for any breaks will not be added to the time for scrutiny, so I do not intend to take a dedicated break, unless you request that for five minutes or so. Members and witnesses are welcome to help themselves to tea and coffee throughout the day and take any other appropriate breaks as necessary.

Members would be familiar with the practice of seeking additional information which must be agreed to, to be taken by the minister or the Chair of the Board, and the questions handed in writing to the secretary.

I invite the minister to introduce any other persons at the table, including names and positions. I also invite the minister to make an opening statement. Thanks, Minister Vincent.

Mr VINCENT - Thank you, Chair. To my right, I have my Chief of Staff, Tim Lovibond; on my left, working down from immediate left is Greg McCann, the Chair of the Board of TasPorts; and next to him is Anthony Donald, the CEO of TasPorts; next is Julie Garth, who is manager of people and culture -

Ms GARTH - And safety.

Mr VINCENT - And safety, thank you, that's the key one. Then closest to the Chair is Captain Michael Wall, who's our harbour master.

CHAIR - Would you like to make a statement?

Mr VINCENT - Yes, I would, thank you. TasPorts plays an essential role in the Tasmanian economy and way of life. It is an organisation which keeps our island connected safely, efficiently and reliably 365 days of the year. Our state depends on sea transfer for almost all its freight, including fuel, essential supplies and exports. Our ports are the lifeline of our island economy.

I want to begin by acknowledging the professionalism of the Board, led by Chair, Greg McCann and the leadership of Chief Executive Officer, Anthony Donald, who together with the Board of Directors and experience management team continue to strengthen TasPorts' performance and culture.

The past year has seen a renewal of TasPorts' governance, with a refreshed and expanded board bringing additional skills in infrastructure delivery, finance and sustainability. TasPorts is undertaking significant investment and planning to modernise its port infrastructure and

build capacity for current and future operations. The company achieved a net profit after tax of \$11.9 million, balancing the need for continued investment in crucial infrastructure with disciplined cost control and operational efficiency. In recognition of this strong performance, TasPorts declared a dividend of \$10.1 million to the Tasmanian government, contributing directly to the delivery of essential public services across the state.

Across the state, 14.3 million tonnes of freight move through TasPorts network during the year, reinforcing its role as a crucial link in Tasmania's supply chain and export economy.

Tasmania's cruise sector continues to grow to go from strength to strength. Hobart and Burnie together welcomed 131 ship visits and more than 354,000 passengers and crew, reaffirming their importance as gateways to our island's unique culture and attractions.

TasPorts subsidiary, Bass Island Line, completed 124 sailings to King Island, transporting nearly 69,000 tonnes of freight. That service remains vital for King Island's producers and residents.

At Devonport Airport, TasPorts continues to deliver for the north-west, handling more than 3500 flights and nearly 136,000 passengers, an 11 per cent increase on the previous year, while maintaining one of the highest on-time performance rankings in Australia.

TasPorts continues to invest in renewing and modernising its infrastructure, much of which is ageing and requires careful management to remain safe and serviceable. The company has invested more than \$269 million across its network over the past five years. This includes wharf renewals, dredging, asset-protection works and planning for major projects which will support Tasmania's future trade.

In Hobart, the Macquarie Point redevelopment will support both cruise tourism and Antarctic gateway, with work underway in partnership with the Tasmanian and Australian governments to deliver the next generation of port facilities for the south of the state. These are complex multi-year projects, but they represent the kind of forward planning and delivery discipline that TasPorts has been steadily building over the past five years.

The company also continues to demonstrate leadership in community engagement, providing more than \$600,000 in community support and awarding \$100,000 in community grants to local organisations across Tasmania.

In recent years, the organisation has faced modernising aging infrastructure, managing the demands of a growing freight task and strengthening its internal systems and culture. Throughout this, TasPorts has continued to deliver. It has remained focused on safety, on service and on meeting the needs of the communities and industries that rely on it every day.

It comes down to its people, the tugboat crews, the marine pilots, the operational teams, the engineers and those in regional office and corporate roles, all take enormous pride in keeping Tasmanian ports and our economy running.

TasPorts is in a strong position, and it is financially stable, operationally capable, and led by a refreshed board and experience management team focused on long-term success.

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Ms DOW - Thank you, minister, and thank you to the board. My first question is why did it take so long for TasPorts to act on the safety issues and remediation issues that were required at berth 4 and 5 at the Burnie port?

Mr DONALD - I think it's important to recognise that berth 4 in Burnie was constructed in late 1880s, early 1890s. It's a complex structure and in order to understand what has been going on there, we conducted immediate investigations and took advice from a number of engineering consultants immediately. We've worked hand-in-hand with our customer, Strait Link, to ensure ongoing operations can continue at the wharf.

We've been incredibly cautious and risk-averse in our approach. We've implemented measuring devices from measuring depths of the water, the changes to the water table to vibration monitoring, to surveys, none of which over the last 12 to 14 months have identified any movements of the wharf.

We've been progressively working through investigations now on-site. We're 90 per cent of the way through the design process; we're expecting to be able to present that with a more permanent solution to our board prior to Christmas. Pleasingly, we've been able to do that in a really complex environment without disrupting the operations of our really important customer, Strait Link, noting the importance of Strait Link and their freight movements to the State of Tasmania. It's an absolute focus and priority and I think we've managed it incredibly well in a very complex environment.

Some of the other things that we undertook was some modifications to berth 5, which is adjacent to berth 4. Why did we do that? Well, again, we were seeking to understand with investigation and design advice what we could do to berth 4 to reinstate some structural integrity to enable us to have confidence in its long-term stability. In doing so we wanted to make sure that we had a contingency plan in place for if it was to fail.

Ms DOW - That's right. If that failed, you would need berth 5. Yes.

Mr DONALD - That's why we've conducted a number of improvements and upgrades to berth 5 and we did that prior to commencement of works on berth 4.

Ms DOW - My understanding is, though, that those safety audits were done back in 2023. Is that correct, that you received that advice?

Mr DONALD - I wouldn't say safety audits. We conducted - and I'm happy to take advice on the specific date - but we conduct condition assessments on all our wharf infrastructure across the state. We conducted, as part of our normal program of inspections, a condition assessment on berth 4. We identified that there was some scouring of concern and then that prompted us to conduct further investigations.

Ms DOW - If you could provide that date, that would be good. My understanding was that it was 2023.

Mr DONALD - I certainly can.

Ms DOW - Could you provide me with a breakdown of the amount that's been spent to date on consultancy and contractors on the work that's being done on berth 4, please?

Mr DONALD - Very happy to do so.

Ms DOW - Okay, so put that on notice.

Mr DONALD - Yes.

Ms DOW - Just on that, do you have the skills and capacity within your internal teams to undertake that work? What is the rationale for going out to get so many consultants and contractors on that job? Do you have those skills internally?

Mr DONALD - It's a very complex engineering design requirement and then construction methodology. We're matching the conglomerate of a structure that was originally constructed in the 1880s with current-day Australian standards. When you think about that, what has happened to the structure over its life? Originally it was - from what I understand; I've seen the original drawing - it's a timber trestle bridge structure. We anticipate - I personally anticipate - that that structure is still there, it's just buried beneath evolutionary change of that structure over its life. Concrete blocks have been assembled; they've been positioned in place.

Ms DOW - It might have rotted by now.

Mr DONALD - Perhaps not. Some of the timber trestle structures that were built back in the 1800s remain incredibly well intact from a structural perspective. I suspect that there's an old timber trestle structure underneath. Then there's a structure made up of large concrete blocks that are pinned together. It's like a staggered brick wall with dowels, if you like. If I could provide an agricultural description, dowels between the blocks joining them together, carved into the concrete blocks. Then we have a more contemporary - 1970s - concrete beam structure and wharf deck across the top.

When we identified some localised scouring that was in the location of one of the vessel's thrusters, what did we do? We wanted to make sure that we could conduct repair activities to reinstate that area that was being scoured. We also wanted to then -

Ms DOW - The question was about your capacity internally to do that work rather than contractors.

Mr DONALD - Okay, I'm sorry. I drifted off on a tangent. We've essentially brought in expertise to complement our existing team. We do have team members who are very experienced in managing and overseeing design and conducting these in themselves, but these are important activities. We don't self-perform design activities. We always outsource design, ensuring that we conducted externally-managed design activities that could then be used with a contractor to conduct a trial, which is what we're nearing completion on, to then finalise a design. It is a complex structure. Would we outsource again? Absolutely, every day of the week.

CHAIR - Last question and we will move on.

Ms DOW - When was the last time that there was maintenance undertaken on berth 4, major maintenance prior to this point in time?

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Mr DONALD - I would have to take that on notice and provide that. I wouldn't imagine it would have been too long ago. I do know that there was significant maintenance activities conducted at the time where the Strait Link vessels changed. We know that they are five to six years old now. There was a major upgrade at that point in anticipation of the new vessels coming.

CHAIR - I will be asking questions from the chair. Minister, Moody's rating agency last night downgraded Tasmania's credit rating from Aa2 to Aa3. With the impacts of trying to fund a stadium and bailing out TT-Line, how much money is there for other portfolios you cover, such as TasPorts, and how would that impact their project delivery?

Mr VINCENT - Thank you, Chair. TasPorts' borrowings are very much a matter for the TasPorts board, which is a separate issue. The rest of the matter on that change - I haven't been updated on it fully - but TASCORP will be working through that, I'm sure, as a matter of urgency to come back to us with more information.

CHAIR - I suppose the question really is about borrowings that TasPorts might have, and that guarantee from the government?

Mr VINCENT - I will have to refer that to the chair who would be monitoring that in regard to TasPorts.

Mr McCANN - At the moment, Chair, we're well within our limits. We have undrawn facilities and we're developing a program of works. In the first instance, we're trying to get a line of sight over a 20-year program and then we're bringing that back to a five-year focus. We're in the midst of doing that so I can't provide any numbers because all we've got is high-level, like-for-like replacement costs. We won't be replacing like-for-like, and there will be certain decisions we'll have to make around whether we can do things more efficiently - can we just change the way we operate? That's part of the process we're going through.

When we do get to a clear five-year view we will look at our existing debt levels. We will look at our ability to service debt. We will then look at how much of this is, for example, a community service asset that the government would normally fund because we are responsible for maintaining community service assets, but we're not responsible for funding them. There could be other assets that could be funded in a different way, whether we can fund it out of working capital - and I made the point yesterday that whilst we have reasonably low retained earnings because we do pay tax to the federal government, we do pay 90 per cent of our after-profit tax as a dividend, which we're very comfortable with because that's a fair return to the shareholder on the funds they've got invested. The way we account for major capital works is that they are paid for upfront and they might have a say a 20 or 30-year useful life.

From an accounting point of view, we amortise that cost over the useful life of the asset. So, that amortisation cost is an expense in our financial statements, but it's a non-cash item. It does provide us with working capital that we can put back into assets, whether it's upgrading an existing asset, building a new asset or a major maintenance program. To answer the question, how does it affect us? That would depend on whether we can't find an alternative way other than coming back to the shareholders and asking for funds, in the form of equity normally. It might be a loan; it might be equity.

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CHAIR - To go back to you, minister, because - I mean that's TasPorts' answer and I understand that, but this is a serious downgrade in rating. We haven't had the Standard & Poor's rating, but chances are that might reduce as well. How, as the minister responsible, are you going to influence policy-making in relation to protecting your shareholder interests?

Mr VINCENT - The way to answer that at the moment is sensibly that we will take advice from Treasury and through the Treasurer in relation to all forward Estimates to start with and that will be coming forward in the next few days, I should imagine.

CHAIR - We have significant choices to be making on significant amounts of money and investment as a government.

Mr VINCENT - Correct.

Mr GEORGE - I'm not sure whether perhaps this has already been answered. Your concern at TasPorts is aging infrastructure. I suspect looking back, probably lack of investment over the past years. With the major projects that you have in your annual report, I would assume that you have a view of the borrowings that you would need to fund the infrastructure over the next five or 10 years. Are you saying that you haven't got to a position where you can't project what sort of borrowings you're going to need out over the next five or 10 years at least, especially since you're looking at a program that works over a 20-year period?

Mr McCANN - That's a good question, and that's a question that's facing the board at the moment. We're only just seeing this five-year focus and what's included. The board will look at considering this, if not this coming meeting or the meeting after that. A key question the board will be asking is, how do we fund it? As I said, there are various ways to fund these things. If we can improve our efficiencies and if we can start generating better returns then that does increase our capacity to service debt, but we would not be taking on any debt that we simply cannot service. It's too early. If this was in January/February, I'd have more information for you, Mr George. I don't at this stage.

Mr VINCENT - I would like to expand a little on this from ministry's point of view. Last year it was - when we were talking and viewing berth 4 and Burnie and the work needed to be done on berth 6 and even looking at over on the redoing of the motel on Elizabeth Street Pier, I had a very sharp, quick lesson in some of the infrastructure underneath and the difference between concrete and timber pylons and casings. TasPorts could be full-time casing pylons or piles all time and still not keep up with the changes in that. We started to look at what was necessary going forward because, as the CEO touched on, a lot of the old infrastructure has been built over two or three times and so you don't know until you have a problem.

It was interesting talking with the people from Strait Link about the size of the ships to what they were 20 or 30 years ago when the wharves' last major construction period went on, and the effect of side thrusters on the scouring and all these little things that added up. I sat down with the previous chair and the CEO and said, 'I'd rather be looking at least a 20-year list of infrastructure as best you can because you can only work through it.' They've done a little bit of work on it, but they were working mainly to the government timelines of four to five years. That is the body of work that the chair was just talking about.

They've now started identifying, which they had, but not with enough detail. My thought pattern, a 30-year infrastructure list, obviously five you can be pretty accurate on, 10 can be

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liquid and changing as it comes close to the date, but you keep your eye on it in case you have to bring one of them forward or back. That's the information that the board is working fairly hard and in depth on at the moment and not quite finalised yet. That will give us projections or a better understanding. It won't be perfect, of course, but it will be a much better idea of the long-term funding requirements/necessities for TasPorts going forward.

Mr GEORGE - That will be the time you're going to have to start looking at what is liable to be hundreds of millions of dollars of debt.

Prof RAZAY - Thank you very much. My daughter, last month, was looking forward to going on the new *Spirit of Tasmania* and she was so disappointed. How is it progressing, the upgrade in Devonport berth, and do we have firm dates about the arrival of our new *Spirit of Tasmania*?

Mr McCANN - That's really a matter for TT-Line, not TasPorts. I think that's been reasonably well documented in previous scrutiny and Public Accounts Committee. Anthony, you might know - I think October next year is their planned delivery date, or going into service

Mr DONALD - I might take the opportunity to add that that we're working very closely with TT-Line. I'm exceptionally proud to say that the relationship is brilliant with TT-Line. I'm personally in regular contact with the CEO, and my management team is having daily or weekly contact, including with coordination of the completion of their terminal works and, of course, the construction of the ramp. I think everyone who visits Devonport can see the ramp absolutely coming out of the ground and start to appreciate the size and complexity of the structure that TT-Line and their contractors are building.

Prof RAZAY - So, the infrastructure is progressing well and to be on time and within the budget? The infrastructure, the berth.

Mr DONALD - Our project is Project QuayLink, and we are absolutely within budget. The works that we completed around berth 3 were completed on time and within budget. The wharf was completed in June of last year, with fenders, with the completion of the dredging activities in the berth pocket and the channel, and the swing basin that enables the arrival of the new vessel.

We continue to work closely with TT-Line on the coordination of their interface works. We've got some really important other interface works that will be commencing early in the new year with SeaRoad works. These are some important movements that will take place between TT-Line and SeaRoad.

Mr JAENSCH - To the chair, Mr McCann. Good morning, my name's Roger Jaensch. I'm a Liberal member for Braddon, so, a couple of Braddon questions for you. Could you please provide us with some more detail on the new agreement with Strait Link at the Port of Burnie and its significance for the industries that depend on that port?

Mr McCANN - Thank you, Mr Jaensch. Our CEO is very close to that matter, so I will defer.

Mr DONALD - Thank you for the question. Really pleasingly, we have agreed a new 30-year arrangement with our key customer Strait Link. I think it's in the public domain that

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TasPorts was challenged previously by legacy commercial contracts that predated the formation of the TasPorts business. The Port of Devonport, the Port of Burnie, as an example, were competitors in the attraction and securing of those customers in TT-Line, SeaRoad and Strait Link, and the commercial agreements that TasPorts inherited were uncommercial.

We are in the fortunate position now, not without a lot of hard work and some testament to some great relationships, that we now have commercial agreements in place with all three customers, and they are in an even-handed approach. What does that mean? We're treating all our customers fairly and the same, with that regard. That's a really important point.

Mr JAENSCH - Thirty years is a long time. Is that intended to create certainty and stability so that investment can happen with confidence?

Mr DONALD - It certainly is. The other point that I will add is that we were able to reach agreement with Strait Link four years ahead of the expiry of their prior agreement, which again I think is a really good achievement for our business and for Tasmania and for them.

Mr JAENSCH - Has Strait Link foreshadowed, within that timeframe and those agreements, its own investments in this link?

Mr DONALD - They're now working through a review of their terminal in the operation and efficiency of their terminal. There's a number of elements of the configuration which are perhaps not as ideal as they could be, and we will continue to work through some planning with them around how they may augment or redesign the configuration of their terminal over time.

Ms DOW - I want to continue with the Burnie port. You've talked a bit about the fact that you've got your designs in process for the work that's required. When do you expect that work to be completed by and what's the approximate cost of that?

Mr DONALD - I will have to take that one on notice, but it's probably likely that we can't answer that specific question and I will explain why. We are, as we sit here today, I think, 90 per cent to 95 per cent complete on the design. As I said earlier, we're planning to present to our board at our December meeting the completion of our design which will include cost estimates for the forecast's completion of the construction elements and also the duration.

Once we get through board consideration of that, we will be able to make that public. It's fair to say we're working through that with both the designer and the construction contractors that are on site and have been working through with us the trial. The trial is essentially important to validate some of the assumptions that our design team are making with respect to the structure. They're drilling through that old structure - and I'm sure I'm oversimplifying the description - but drilling through the old structure and then filling it up with structural grout to provide greater structural integrity. When they're doing that, they're identifying the material that is in the structure and making some assumptions around it regarding its structural integrity and strength.

Some of the things, as an example, that they found is the remnants of an old meatworks. So those activities are incredibly important to validate the assumptions of what's there and what's not, so that when we do implement the works, we are absolutely confident that it's going to be durable and last for a very lengthy period of time.

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Ms DOW - Yes, but through the work that you've done, what would you expect the life of that asset to be after the work's been completed?

Mr DONALD - It will exceed the lease.

Ms DOW - You've talked a bit, obviously, about the requirement for capital investment across infrastructure. There's been a number of questions asked by the committee about that.

You said, yesterday, that you were reviewing each of the master plans that you have for your ports across the state. That process was completed quite a while ago. It was back in 2018 and there are a number of things that were outlined for the Burnie Export Gateway Project.

I want you to provide an update to the committee on the dredging that's taken place as part of that master plan and update us on whether that's completed or whether there's more work to do regarding dredging at the Burnie port?

Mr DONALD - Sure. There has been maintenance dredging undertaken at the Port of Burnie. There will absolutely always be a dredging program at the Port of Burnie. So the committee and the community should expect every two to three years, every perhaps four to five years at the maximum, that there will be a dredging campaign at the Port of Burnie and equally with the Port of Devonport.

Ms DOW - Thank you. The other thing that's outlined in that plan is around the reclamation of land in and around the Burnie port to enable a multi-modality terminal and other things to be established. Is that still the plan?

Mr DONALD - It will still feature in our long-term master plan. What we've been able to understand is essentially the commercial reality of the forecast volumes from our customers don't support investment in the short term.

A number of years ago, there was perhaps more buoyancy and optimism from the mineral sector in particular regarding export opportunities moving through the Port of Burnie. In response to that, we've developed some plans. Of course, we were very eager to support those investments and to support those export volumes.

Unfortunately, they are not coming through as quickly as we would like, and certainly we're not in a position to invest ahead of the volumes being there in place. We would put in place with those customers as an example, minimum volume guarantees or commitments over a 12-month period in order to enable us to talk through investment decisions with our board and then the shareholder, because we would all want to make sure that we are seeing a return on investment. The plans that we've been working through for the Port of Burnie are quite significant. It would potentially see expansion of the port further out into deep water - out into 18 metres of water. It could see significantly larger vessels coming. It may or may not prompt us to relocate or reorientate the Burnie chip export terminal and how that works.

Those familiar with the Port of Burnie also might understand that berth 6 and berth 7 were designed in a way that the end of the wharf structures are closer together than the beginning of them; that was done for really good engineering rationale by the Port of Burnie 60, 70, 80 years ago, through understanding the wave movements and modelling. What they

didn't anticipate at that point in time was the significant increase in vessel sizes that we would see over time, and we are now -

Ms DOW - Through you, minister, just to get back to the point of the question, which was around the master planning process: you said that you're reviewing that, and you've talked a little bit about what you want to see in that. When can we expect that to be a public document and for there to be some funding and staging and timeframes across when that investment will be made?

Mr DONALD - We will be commencing our process for a review of our port master plans in the new year, and at that point in time we will be able to provide some indications of how long it will take.

Ms DOW - Through you, minister, in an answer to a prior question the chair indicated that the work would be done in the finalisation of your capex going forward, and your plan for the next five years I think you said - will that be a public document, or is there an opportunity for members of parliament, given the significance of that, to be briefed on that when it's formalised?

Mr McCANN - I'm not sure what the right process would be. Normally, that would be a decision for the board and any expenditure - any capex over, I think it's \$5 million - we need to submit a business case to the shareholder ministers. It would all happen in stages of course, but I will need to take that on notice as to what the process is for us to make that a public document for input, but I'm happy to do that.

Ms DOW - Just one final question, Chair.

CHAIR - Yes, but don't forget there are others of us here at the table. Thank you.

Ms DOW - Yes, I know. This will be my last one. We've talked a bit about the safety issues and remediation at Burnie port; are there any other significant issues across your infrastructure across the state that you are aware of, that you want to update the committee on today?

Mr DONALD - Not as significant as Burnie berth 4. I will take the opportunity to say though, that again, we do have ageing infrastructure. We have -

Ms DOW - That's why I'm asking the question, through you, minister.

Mr DONALD - the oldest port infrastructure in the country, with the lowest asset utilisation. We've put in some really big effort over the last couple of years to advance our strategic asset management approach. We are targeting March 2026 for ISO certification, that will arguably put us in a position - we will be the third port business in the country to achieve asset ISO certification, which will be a great effort.

We've been investing in our asset management system, so we now have an asset modelling tool. We routinely conduct inspections on all our assets, that goes into digital asset management plans, so live updates. We have a GIS that's being actively managed. We're undertaking inspections using drones, both with underwater drones and also air-based drones. We are leaving no stone left unturned to ensure that we are responsibly managing our assets,

as the chair indicated, making sure that, hand-in-glove, the financial sustainability of TasPorts is an absolute focus.

The other really important element is that we maintain service levels for our customers, because our primary role is to facilitate trade. The movement of freight and the movement of people is front of mind in every decision that we make. So making sure that we are making responsible decisions around the management of our assets and the financial management of the business, but working closely with customers about their needs now, and into the future. Of course, there will be some opportunities, I would imagine, where there's some likely rationalisation of assets; again, having 30 per cent berth utilisation is a challenge we need to start looking at, you know, what wharves we may be able to make some more efficient decisions with.

CHAIR - Minister, and it might be a question for the chair or CEO, but, following on from what Ms Dow is talking about, I'm interested in the \$188 million project, which is berth 6. This time last year when we had Estimates you talked about being 100 per cent - confidence level of 10 out of 10 in relation to delivering that project on time and on budget. I'm curious to know where we stand with that currently.

Mr DONALD - Eleven out of 10.

CHAIR - With all the moving parts, you're over what is a normal range of confidence that you're going to deliver that project?

Mr DONALD - We are absolutely committed to delivering success with that project. We have a laser focus. We have a brilliant team on board for that project. We are at the final stages of our tendering process for the work. We will be presenting to our board in the coming weeks a recommendation to award a construction contract, and we will be looking forward to a possible announcement before the end of this calendar year around who that contractor is.

CHAIR - Okay, so you haven't quite got there with the tenderers yet?

Mr DONALD - We have finalised our tender evaluation and we're moving through our internal governance process.

CHAIR - Right, okay. Are there other structural issues with other berths in the Hobart port?

Mr DONALD - In terms of condition, of course there's the condition of 4 and 5. That structure is reaching its end of life, perhaps four to five years. Some of the Hobart waterfront was constructed, again, in the 1800s. So it's an ongoing task.

CHAIR - And wharves 2 and 3: what condition are they in?

Mr DONALD - From what I understand, and I'm sure I will be corrected otherwise, but I understand those to be in very good condition.

CHAIR - What ships can use wharves 2 and 3?

Mr DONALD - I might ask our harbourmaster to answer.

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Mr WALL - Berths 2 and 3 in Hobart are open for everything, to be quite honest. The cruise ships, that is their favourite berth with the terminal adjacent to the berth. *Nuyina* uses it for cargo work as well. We've had naval vessels alongside; we've had smaller barges. There's a barge doing some work for the Bridgewater Bridge alongside yesterday, so all vessels can use the berth.

CHAIR - Okay. Is there concrete cancer in those wharves?

Mr DONALD - Every concrete structure commences deterioration from the day it was built. It not of great concern to us, the condition of MAC2 and MAC3, but we continue to monitor it.

Mr GEORGE - Minister, through you, if I may: 30 per cent utilisation of port facilities. That sounds like that's a real issue that does need a pretty rapid addressing. Can the board explain what it's doing to address that issue?

Mr VINCENT - Certainly the CEO has had concerns about port utilisation for quite some time, and they come from the history of Tasmanian ports all being individuals and competing against one another. Now it's all combined in, and I don't know whether the chair or the CEO would like to take that.

Mr McCANN - I will pass to the CEO, but TasPorts is a very complex business. We have 11 ports. Four of them are what we term commercial ports: that's obviously Hobart, Devonport, Burnie, Bell Bay. Then there are a lot of other ports that are either non-commercial or just community service. Added to that is we own Devonport Airport and we run Bass Island Line. So it is complex and spread across a population of what, 550-something-thousand, it's not surprising that we've got low utilisation. I think I will pass over to the CEO to sort of answer how do we deal with the utilisation issue?

Mr DONALD - Because of the way the ports have developed over time, a lot of the wharves are unique to a particular customer. So they have bespoke design elements that are suitable for the particular customer that is exporting or importing their freight through that port. The opportunities to say to customer A, 'Can you share a wharf with customer B,' are few and far between without looking at some significant upgrades in itself.

As part of our port master plan, previously we did identify some opportunities when we've had some conversations with some customers in that regard. Fair to say, our focus has been initially on asset management and now, as we move into our port master plan's review next year, we'll be starting to target those a little bit more consciously. The challenge will be the commerciality of investments required to augment wharves that are common user, some of them are not common user, but that are common user, to accommodate more than the bespoke elements for one customer.

Mr GEORGE - Are you looking at the potential of decommissioning various infrastructure?

Mr DONALD - Yes, we wouldn't rule that out, absolutely.

Mr GEORGE - Have you got particular areas where you need to focus?

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Mr DONALD - Not at this stage. I would say that that wouldn't be Hobart. There's probably some opportunities in the north of the state, but everyone will have a different view and opinion on that. To be fair to our customers, I don't want to portray my personal view without going through a structured process with them. Our relationship with customers is incredibly important and their perspective counts. So yes, that will be part of the process.

Mr GEORGE - Which you referred to for next year, in March?

Mr DONALD - I will also add, the port master plan process that we announced in August 2018 was a significant one because TasPorts had never undertaken a port master planning process prior to that. So it took us two-and-a-half years to do it. It was a significant activity. We're not anticipating that it's going to take two-and-a-half years to do this time, because a lot of the work that we've done previously will require a simple update and a check and a review, but there are some additional challenges and questions that we'll be looking at like rationalisation of assets. I just want the community to understand it's not going to be a three or six-month exercise; it's certainly not going to be a two-and-a-half year exercise either. It will be somewhere in between.

Ms DOW - Will the community be consulted?

Mr DONALD - Absolutely.

Prof RAZAY - With the new restructuring of the berth in Devonport, what's the maximum capacity it can take on? Is it, was it like 190 metres, because sometimes I wonder whether you can take even bigger ships. You know, some cruises - they're 300 metres sometimes. Can we take that into the future?

Mr DONALD - In Devonport?

Prof RAZAY - Yes.

Mr DONALD - No, not in Devonport. If you're referring to the wharf that we constructed for TT-Line, I think the maximum length - correct me if I'm wrong, Captain, is 212 meters.

Mr WALL - That's right.

Mr DONALD - There will be no extension to the wharf or the ability for us to service larger vessels than that in the Devonport river. Happy for Captain to make a comment.

Mr WALL - The swinging circle, the actual physical size of the harbour in itself where the vessels are turned, that is the limitation. So 300 metres will not work.

Mr JAENSCH - Through you minister, to the chair and CEO: you mentioned the Devonport Airport in answer to a recent question. Can you please speak to the recent new agreement with Qantas for that airport and its significance for capacity, load factor and flight scheduling for the north-west from that port?

Mr DONALD - Thank you for the question. Pleasingly, we recently announced a three-year aeronautical services agreement with Qantas at Devonport Airport. We are relatively well connected in the aviation industry as well as ports because of our ownership of Devonport

Airport. We equally understand that there are quite a number of airports around the country that don't have agreements with their airlines. We're very proud of the fact that we were able to achieve that with Qantas, in a very prompt and efficient manner.

That enables us to work through with Qantas what I believe is more important, which is: how are we going to work together to attract higher passenger numbers in and out of our airport? How are we going to do that? We're going to work through relationships that we have with tourism bodies, both the regional ones and also through Tourism Tasmania, and of course, some of the reach that the airline, Qantas, has itself, and seek to increase numbers.

Mr JAENSCH - Has the move to the large-capacity aircraft changed the flight scheduling?

Mr DONALD - Yes, it has slightly. I think there's a reduction in flight numbers, but overall passenger numbers are higher.

Mr JAENSCH - In terms of the markets that move through the airport, which is more important?

Mr DONALD - Having the larger - probably different people would have a different answer to that question. As the CEO, I would say the QF400 provides us with additional capacity and a path for growth, whereas the smaller aircraft - and some passengers loved the smaller aircraft, it's a unique experience - but some really enjoy the larger aircraft, the newer, more contemporary aircraft. As the CEO of the airport, I would say the larger one is better because we can continue to build capacity into the future.

Ms DOW - Thank you, Chair. Minister, in December 2024 TasPorts announced a vision for a renewable energy hub and an offshore wind servicing facility at Bell Bay Port. My understanding was that there was to be a business case undertaken and completed by mid-2025. The performance agreement that TasPorts signs with you as part of your corporate statement of intent outlines that as well. Where is that at? This is obviously an opportunity for growth for TasPorts and to create more revenue and do something really great for the north that will drive economic activity. It seems to have fallen away and gone very quiet. Can you give us an update?

Mr VINCENT - I certainly can. I will ask the CEO to give a more definite update. It's a fairly large area there that needs some work to take advantage of the large area there at Bell Bay. I have been up to have a look across that area. Anthony, would you like to expand on where you are with that now?

Mr DONALD - I certainly can, and thank you for the question. We refer to it as the BRET project - the Bell Bay Renewable Energy Terminal project. We've been in discussion with possible wind farm proponents for around three years now, and initially we were tracking and liaising with about 14. I think the number is probably reduced somewhat; however, the value of the interactions is increasing. What do I mean by that? The input we're getting from proponents around the landside infrastructure required to support their processes continues to evolve. When we made the statement last December, of course we would have loved to have been in a position to finalise a business case and start reclaiming land, but of course we're only going to do that after we can solidify investment and demonstrate that there is a positive return on investment. We need to move at the same pace of the wind farm proponents, so we are moving at the same pace of the wind farm proponents. I'm incredibly optimistic that this will

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happen for Tasmania and for southern Australia, and it will be a phenomenal outcome for TasPorts and Tasmania more generally.

Ms DOW - Thank you. I guess the question is when, and what needs to line up now for you, particularly from a financial point of view? What sort of level of investment is required for TasPorts to fill this space?

Mr DONALD - It's a little bit like the chicken or the egg and we need some, if I can use the term, 'concrete' commitments from some of the proponents around licence areas where they're committing. They've got their own investment funding decisions to make; when we get clarity around that we will be moving very quickly.

Ms DOW - You haven't set yourself a timeframe then that you won't pursue that project? Is it just going to be left open? Is there someone dedicated within your team that's working on that and progressing that?

Mr DONALD - We have a dedicated team working through that at the moment. We've scoped out all the elements that we need to progress as part of a business case; it's quite an involved process. As an example, it will require a detailed geotechnical investigation to be undertaken. That, of course, is going to be quite expensive in itself and we need to make sure that we have a really strong path of either funding injection, or the ability for us to self-fund. We're certainly not looking at that at this point in time and we're optimistic about funding opportunities from government.

Ms DOW - So, you have sought funding from the government?

Mr DONALD - No, I didn't say that.

Ms DOW - Just clarifying.

Mr DONALD - We are aware of a number of opportunities within federal government. There are federal government opportunities for renewable energy investments and we know that there are at least two other ports around the country that have been successful in getting funding injections for port infrastructure upgrades to -

Ms DOW - Minister, can you tell the committee which ports they are?

Mr DONALD - I might take that on notice and just double check before I announce it, just to be fair to my colleague CEOs on the Ports Australia Board. But we are supremely confident and optimistic that we will have a very good opportunity for investment which will enable us to commence our business case.

Mr VINCENT - Some of those discussions are also around decommissioning of fossil fuel things in Bass Strait as well, so there are ongoing discussions right through at the moment.

CHAIR - Minister, there's quite a lead-in to this so just bear with me. In parliament, the Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal twice referenced the Macquarie Point site as twice the size of the MCG to dismiss concerns regarding a stadium fitting on it and to highlight development potential.

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Under questioning in Estimates, a senior public servant responsible for writing that claim for the minister, admitted it included the TasPorts Macquarie Point site in its calculations. Meanwhile, the government's response to the Tasmanian Planning Commission's recommendation that the stadium is not built identifies a significant portion of TasPorts land as the port commercial zone earmarked for redevelopment. I'm coming to the question.

Parallel, the government's intention for the Macquarie Point Development Commission to borrow at least \$490.7 million to build the stadium and to pay down the debt through development of the broader precinct. The government's response document says:

The government's intention is for the debt to be paid down by MPDC over time as commercial opportunities are realised across the broader precinct.

In this context, does TasPorts consider itself to be part of the Macquarie Point site? Would you be content to see earnings generated from development on TasPorts land to be used to pay down Macquarie Point stadium debt?

Mr VINCENT - I'd certainly asked for the Chair or the CEO to expand on this. We did touch on a bit of this yesterday during discussions and do you want to, Chair?

Mr McCANN - Our charter requires us to operate a commercial enterprise, but we are 100 per cent owned by the state and our attitude is the state should come first as long as we can satisfy our own commercial objectives. I will let the CEO answer this in more detail, but there have been ongoing meetings between Ports and the stadium around operational matters, which you'd expect now we're butting up against each other's boundaries. You would expect there would be operational issues.

More recently, we've had very high-level - one discussion between chairs and CEOs about working together to create a precinct. We're very interested in those discussions, because not only would it be good for the precinct, it'd be good for the state, it would be good for TasPorts - because we've got land that is basically unused, and if there was a stadium, then there could be other facilities that wouldn't be necessarily appropriate on stadium land, but it would on TasPorts.

That's the spirit of cooperation that exists. Where you end up in terms of the proceeds and the profits from any of those sorts of facilities hasn't yet been discussed. If it's our land, obviously we would like to generate a return, but we will always take directions from the ministers, at the end of the day, as to what the shareholders would prefer.

I can pass now to the CEO, if you've got anything more to add to that?

Mr DONALD - Thank you, Chair. We've been working very closely with Macquarie Point Development Corporation for some time. I'm sure the committee would be aware that Mac Point has released a whole-of-precinct master plan, which we had absolute input into. The references to the port commercial zone within that precinct plan directly inputs from us. The references that the Chair has made to underutilised land really are around opportunities for road and pedestrian connectivity back through the stadium area, through the port commercial zone, connecting up into the Hobart waterfront.

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The lines on drawings that reflect building opportunities in that port commercial zone have been influenced by the planning expectations and certainly some of the heritage input from Hobart City Council and advisors, and we expect that it reflects what would be an opportunity for us to continue to work together to achieve the best possible outcome for the state.

Our interface meetings with Mac Point will continue through the various design process but also construction. As we build Macquarie 6 and should they be building a stadium, there will be interface meetings around arrival and storage of construction materials. I'm sure there will be opportunities for us to support the landing of particular components for construction of the stadium on our wharf, as an example. And, of course, the operational interface between the working stadium and the working port needs to be considered and managed appropriately, particularly when we have cruise ships and any large campaigns of forestry exports, as an example.

CHAIR - I suppose the question, really, coming from the Chair's response - if the stadium is built then it would open up land, but you need a stadium to be built to open that land up to access the land. You said if a stadium were built - the Chair, rather than the CEO, but - I mean, you don't need a stadium - I will put it to you that you don't need a stadium to be built to access or mobilise unused land.

Mr DONALD - That's correct. Our precinct planning, again, that's reflected in Macquarie Point's precinct plan, reflects how we would seek to develop the land. It is cognizant of the designs of the stadium and hasn't been done - we haven't gone about looking at what the design looks like without the stadium. However, I would say that our plans for the port commercial zone started well before the stadium design did -

CHAIR - I would hope so.

Mr DONALD - And so, would I anticipate modifications to those lines on drawings? Maybe, maybe not.

CHAIR - I will go to Prof Razay in a moment, but I suppose the question is: do you have concerns around TasPorts having any responsibility with the debt incurred, or any sort of transfer of debt to TasPorts if it's considered as part of that overall zone and plan?

Mr DONALD - I would say that there's been no discussions with me on that topic.

Prof RAZAY - Cruise ships have become a major boost for tourism around the world; it brings hundreds of thousands of people to our major cities, desperately needing the tourists. Can you update us about how many cruise ships we are expecting this summer? We know that they stop in Burnie and Hobart. Do they stop in other places like King Island and Port Arthur sometimes? What is TasPorts doing to attract even more cruise ships to our island?

Mr VINCENT - I will start off on that, just from the period that we've just reported on is the 2024-25, which was a fantastic year with 131. It was interesting to see a bit of split on that. There were 84 into Hobart; there were 16 for Burnie; even Port Arthur had 18 call in there; Coles Bay is classed as scenic cruising, I think, and I've done that myself, being a much smaller craft; a couple called into Bell Bay; one at Stanley; and there were a couple at King Island as well. I will let the CEO explain - we are seeing a slight decline this year because of pressures

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from the conflict in the Red Sea. With that, I might just hand over to Anthony to explain that a little bit more. I believe it's a temporary readjusting of the some of the cruise ship owners and hopefully that will revert back in years to come.

Mr DONALD - We are seeing a reduction this season. We had a cruise ship visit Hobart overnight last night, and it would have departed this morning. I think we're down to 103 cruise ships for this season and that is absolutely influenced by the conflict in the Red Sea, and the need for the cruise ships to take a longer path to come down into the Southern Hemisphere.

We anticipate, in any discussions with our cruise customers that that will continue for a couple of years. They may elect to make a decision to more permanently relocate some of their vessels into the Southern Hemisphere, so they don't need to make the long path around.

We also know that there are more than 60 brand new cruise vessels currently in construction, which again, gives us confidence that globally the market is strong, that the industry continues to see growth. Our forecast numbers from our cruise line customers indicate that for the next two-to-three years we will see the reduction continue, but then it will bounce back.

Prof RAZAY - Some of the cruise ships are enormous that they are building now - are our ports actually capable of taking on even bigger ones?

Mr DONALD - The Port of Hobart having a long continuous wharf and quite a deep berth pocket is capable of hosting very large cruise ships. However, the largest cruise vessels currently being constructed are Oasis Max-class vessels - we're talking about 400 metres long. If everyone understands that the deck of the MCG is I think 220 metres long, that gives you an indication to the size of these vessels. I don't anticipate that they will be calling into Hobart - it would be wonderful to see, of course. We would work with looking at the configuration of cruise vessels that call, obviously the availability and capability of our wharf infrastructure, the safety of the movements from a safe navigation perspective is incredibly important for us to understand and consider.

We know our cruise lines really enjoy Tasmania because we have multiple points of entry. We get regular positive feedback on the passenger experience, and I know the Port of Burnie features prominently in feedback, and a reflection on a former mayor who I think commenced the tradition of welcoming -

Ms DOW - No, it wasn't me, it was Alwyn. I can't take the credit; I'm not like that.

Mr DONALD - Okay. You certainly continued to welcome cruise passengers in Burnie at visit, and that is continuing today. The current Burnie mayor is continuing with that tradition, and that receives exceptional feedback from international visitors, which is awesome.

CHAIR - Professor Razay, do you have a second question?

Prof RAZAY - Just let me know when they come to Bell Bay.

Mr FAIRS - To the chair, if I may. I'd like to talk about my electorate and find out a bit about my electorate of Bass and the Flinders Island community and the support that you're giving Flinders, if you can?

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Mr McCANN - I will let the CEO answer that.

Mr DONALD - We've recently upgraded the cattle yard loading ramps. I was on the island last week and had a look at that firsthand. Feedback from customers is extremely positive. The safety, the welfare of the animals, but just the efficiency is incredibly important.

We continue to strengthen our relationship on the island with our customers and have a close working relationship with the council. Flinders Island - you know, we're not talking about large freight volumes, but it's an incredibly vital connection that we facilitate, again, with our shipping line customers. The teamwork and the coordination that goes into managing that is vital for the island, both from a livability perspective but also promoting and supporting tourism opportunities.

Flinders Island is unique in some ways, because you can use one of the shipping lines to take your vehicle over as opposed to using just aviation as on King Island. That is, I think, positively received by the island, and we will continue to support that with our customers.

Mr FAIRS - Great to hear, thank you.

Mr McCANN - If I could clarify, too: the Port of Launceston is not our responsibility. I think it falls under Department of State Growth, is that right?

Mr DONALD - Well, the river.

Mr McCANN - The river itself, yes.

Ms DOW - I will continue on around Macquarie Point. The CEO spoke a little bit before about the operations of the site, and how you're confident that you can work with all parties to achieve that in the instance of, obviously, during the construction of a stadium, but ongoing. Will there be a joint operational plan between entities, for example, if there are major events on at the stadium, and how that will impact on the operations of the port?

Mr DONALD - There certainly will.

Ms DOW - Has any thought been put into that yet, or you're obviously waiting for confirmation around the building of the stadium?

Mr DONALD - I suppose we're at the early phase. We have weekly coordination meetings at a senior management level. They have been really around planning and coordination meetings. The reference that the Chair made to the meeting between the CEOs and the chairs - we started, of course, to talk about the management of construction and the management of the ongoing operation, and the need for us to establish forums like we have in place for the planning. That will continue, because we need to continue to work together.

Ms DOW - Do you have any concerns about the construction of the Northern Access Road and progress being made on that? Obviously it's been around for a while, the concept, through the City Deal I believe, but are you confident that things are progressing and that you will have good adequate input into that project?

Mr DONALD - I certainly am. Yes, very confident.

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Ms DOW - There's been a lot said about the cost that it would be maintained for the new *Spirit* vessels to be berthed here in Tasmania. You spoke before about the fact that you wanted to see materials or components stored at the Hobart wharf. Would you be charging the Macquarie Point Corporation for that storage, or would that be gratis?

Mr DONALD - We will absolutely be charging, as we did with the Bridgewater Bridge project.

Ms DOW - Do you see that as a revenue?

Mr DONALD - Yes.

Ms DOW - I want to take you now to King Island. Minister, there's been a study that's been undertaken around the Grassy port. It was committed at the 2024 election. My understanding is that feasibility report has been completed. Will you table that report today during GBE hearings?

Mr VINCENT - We've still got to work through that report. We've just received it and haven't worked through the full content of it yet, so unable to table it at this stage.

I've just been told by the CEO we can table the report. We haven't worked through the various options in the report yet, but it is available for being tabled. Thank you.

Ms DOW - Great. When do you expect work to commence on those recommendations and some timeframes?

Mr VINCENT - Part of what I've seen so far, and I'm still working through it, is some work that has already been undertaken, or is in progress in thought with TasPorts. There are a few other things. It gives various options, so we will work our way through that. There's some financial considerations that I need to take to Cabinet for due consideration before that. We will be doing that as quickly as we can, though, so anything that does need to be brought forward into the budget in May, I personally like to think we can work through that with TasPorts to have a sensible way forward with some of those programs. I'm just not sure which options at this stage until we look at it a bit more closely.

CHAIR - Minister, I return to Macquarie Point, and I want to ask the CEO if there are agreements between TasPorts and MPDC or the Tasmanian government for the transfer of land or the transfer of financial returns from the development? Has there been anything that has been put in place as yet?

Mr DONALD - No correspondence. I don't believe so.

CHAIR - So, you haven't had any correspondence, but has there been any discussion around transfer of land?

Mr DONALD - I mentioned in the hearing yesterday that I'm aware of a 200 square metre area of land where there's a modification of land ownership, that is, the property boundary. Of course, there's some documentation associated with that. There's certainly no correspondence that I'm aware of about proceeds or revenue.

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CHAIR - That's a significant amount of land. What does it entail? Is it -

Mr DONALD - I would describe it as a slither of land. My understanding is that it's a corner that has been - and I might be corrected if I get this wrong - but our land ownership is quite staggered. It's almost like a sawtooth and we've cut off a corner so that pedestrian movements can be accommodated more broadly.

CHAIR - In relation -

Mr DONALD - Sorry, I should also say that that land, because it was irregular in nature provided no benefit to TasPorts.

CHAIR - Can that information be tabled?

Mr DONALD - Yes, more than happy to provide that.

CHAIR - Thank you. In relation to the Northern Access Road, it's a critical piece for TasPorts, but I don't think it's mentioned in your annual report. How can such an essential piece of infrastructure not be mentioned for the future development of that site for you?

Mr DONALD - That infrastructure is being provided by the government, by the Department of State Growth.

CHAIR - I think it's part of their urban congestion fund.

Mr DONALD - Yes, and was announced, I think, in the Budget recently. Yes.

CHAIR - But, no reference in the report?

Mr DONALD - No.

CHAIR - It seems like a big thing to miss out really. I know you're not funding it, but surely, it's something which is critical as part of your infrastructure delivery?

Mr DONALD - I suppose we haven't taken a position to note all the interface infrastructure connections in our annual report with others. I take your point and completely agree it's a really important interface connection and it's vital to the ongoing operation and management of the port and our customers are incredibly positive of the government's announcement.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Prof RAZAY - I would like to ask about Flinders Island and it also applies to King Island. Sometimes during drought our farmers really struggle and that means we need more shipping, water, more trailers, more feeding. As a state-owned organisation, do you give special treatment to our farmers when they are feeling it tough during a drought?

Mr VINCENT - I will ask the CEO to answer this because we have a recent example in which that work was done.

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Mr DONALD - We certainly have. We've worked with the state to provide discounted charges associated with the movement of hay, as an example, during challenging periods. We conducted that with our vessel, the *John Duigan*, through our Bass Island Line service to King Island. We would absolutely support the same with the ship movements that we don't directly manage - it's [inaudible] to Flinders Island. We're very sympathetic to the plight of our farmers when they're experiencing some of those challenging periods.

Mr JAENSCH - Chair, through the minister, again. I will drag you back up to the north-west, to Devonport. We understand that recently TasPorts has received environmental approval for a major dredging operation in the Mersey. Could you please tell us when this is likely to be underway and how long it will take? Is this part of a routine maintenance process or is it a major one-off episode of dredging?

Mr DONALD - We're planning to commence dredging in February. It's slightly later than we were anticipating. Our contractor had a fault with one of their vessels - I think a breakdown - that they're currently repairing. We're expecting it to commence in February. It is part of a longer-term dredging program. We're pleased to be able to announce that we achieved a 10-year Commonwealth permit, which a number of ports around the country struggle to achieve. It's a testament to the way that we've engaged with the community, with environmental groups, with regulators to conduct the appropriate planning, investigations, and then implementation of the dredging. We are custodians of our ports around the state, and we take that responsibility not lightly. Making sure that we're being responsible is second to none. Having the support of a technical advisory committee has been exceptional.

Mr JAENSCH - Does this replace a previous approval for an earlier program of work?

Mr DONALD - It does, but we've never had a 10-year approval. Every time we went to dredge, we would have to get an approval for the campaign. We know Devonport's river will silt up. We have the historical records; we know how often the Port of Devonport used to dredge. We know how often TasPorts has dredged. We know that we monitor it regularly, so having a 10-year permit is brilliant because it gives us the ability to not have to continue to invest and undertake all the repeated investigations. We can continue to implement it as required.

Mr JAENSCH - Is this related in anyway to the new *Spirit* vessels and the new SeaRoad vessels, which are larger?

Mr DONALD - No. The dredging that was completed last year enables the arrival of the new vessels. The dredging that we're planning to do is in addition to that and it's part of our normal maintenance.

Ms DOW - There has been a lot said recently, minister, about the - another stuff-up, frankly - about the fenders for the new *Spirit* vessels. The new board of TT-Line has indicated that the previous board of TT-Line didn't take on the advice that TasPorts provided to them back in 2023 about the specs for the new ships and then disregarded that. I wanted you to confirm today that that is correct, and if you could table any correspondence that was exchanged between the two parties to substantiate that.

Mr McCANN - I'm not sure if I would explain it or characterise it as advice we gave. I think it was questions we raised. Is that fairer to say?

Mr DONALD - Yes.

Mr McCANN - If you could pick it up from there, please.

Mr DONALD - As part of our design of the original wharf, we have a functional user requirements document, which is essentially the agreed specifications to which we will design and build our infrastructure to. During the development of that document, we questioned TT-Line about some of the numbers that they were providing us, in relation to the maximum allowable hull and sponson pressure of the vessel. Now, that's important for us to understand as we design the fenders.

The fenders are big rubber stoppers essentially, which work hand-in-hand with the design of the vessel, to make sure that the vessel can berth safely without damaging either the wharf or the vessel. We challenged, we questioned some of those numbers. We provided a lot of information through the Public Accounts Committee - I'm very happy to provide additional and numerous emails and correspondence back and forth. Ultimately, TT-Line refused our request for us to meet directly with the shipping line to validate either our concerns or otherwise. I should say, there are operational considerations that TT-Line could have made and/or risk decisions they could have made to accommodate some of the numbers that they were telling us - we just thought that we should ask the questions.

Moving forward, we built to the specifications that were advised. Beyond that, the committee might recall that the government provided us with a ministerial direction to work through contingency berth options for berth 1, and during that process, again we worked through with TT-Line the functional user requirements for fenders required to support the *Spirit of Tasmania*, spot 4 at berth 1. Again, we found that the numbers that were being provided were perhaps different again and caused us some concerns. We again asked TT-Line to validate and we asked again for access to the shipyard and that was refused.

Ms DOW - Through you, minister. Did you report that to the responsible shareholder minister at the time?

Mr DONALD - At that point in time, there was a series of governance coordination meetings in place: one being a steering committee chaired by the Department of State Growth and another one which is a Cabinet subcommittee. Both forums had those issues identified.

Ms DOW - So, you would say, through you, minister, that the government was aware of that at the time?

Mr DONALD - Our concerns, yes.

Ms DOW - Through you, minister, what was their response?

Mr DONALD - TT-Line's response -

Ms DOW - No, the government's response. Sorry, through you, minister.

Mr DONALD - I think the other government was - from my perspective, the government was appropriately concerned and encouraged TT-Line to investigate and confirm their requirements.

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Ms DOW - Through you, minister, did they do that?

CHAIR - Last one.

Mr DONALD - That was validated through a part of the steering committee, and parts of the steering committee that the Department of State Growth chair, TasPorts was not present at. Some of the discussions within that coordination forum were around TT-Line commerciality and so I wasn't privy to all the discussions in that forum, but I know that the action was closed out.

We then moved forward, and we had a new CEO in TT-Line commence, and those concerns again were raised with him. He's conducted his own investigations within the organisation and advised and requested that we provide support in augmenting the fender design at berth 3. So, essentially, you may say he has agreed with us.

We are now working through the final stages of a design of some modifications to the fenders. So we're not saying we're going to rip out the brand-new ones that we had installed by June last year. We're going to supplement them with some additional ones - I believe is the design solution. We will be placing orders shortly and absolutely commit that these will be well and truly in place ahead of any arrival of vessel.

Ms DOW - Just to close this off -

CHAIR - Close it, okay.

Ms DOW - The additional funds that have been wasted as part of this sheer incompetence again could have been avoided if the government had listened to your advice at the time.

Mr DONALD - I wouldn't describe it that way. TT-Line had options, and they were aware of our feedback and concerns. We respected their decisions. We are not the owner and operator of the vessel. However, there are ways that they could have accommodated it from a berthing perspective. It wouldn't have been ideal, but it wasn't impossible.

Where the new CEO has landed is the right outcome from a Port CEO's perspective. Whilst we own and operate shipping line in Bass Island, I don't profess to understand all the considerations that TT-Line would need to undertake. However, I would say that is not an ideal circumstance and I'm sure when you read through the correspondence, you'll form your view.

Mr JAENSCH - Chair, could I, on a point of order, Ms Dow asked questions and requested correspondence between TasPorts and TT-Line on the matter of fenders and technical specifications, then later characterised it as government decision-making.

Ms DOW - I am just trying to understand the chain of events.

CHAIR - Your point, Mr Jaensch?

Mr JAENSCH - I think that she's asking for information about decisions made by TT-Line then characterising that as government decision-making.

CHAIR - You've made your point. We'll continue.

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Through you, minister, I'm still trying to get to the nub of the Northern Access Road. I know it's not your project, but it's considerably important in the functioning of the Hobart Wharf. I'm curious to know if TasPorts has had any input into proposed design of the Northern Access Road.

Mr DONALD - I will have to take that one on notice, but my understanding is the answer is, yes.

CHAIR - You seriously don't know the answer?

Mr DONALD - I know there's been a number of established meetings. I'm not sure exactly what stage the design is at. We have had preliminary input into the design, but, as I sit here today, I'm not across the current status of the design, given the project has only recently been announced.

CHAIR - Given the road - there's problems getting under the bridge, as I understand, for some of the freight likely to come in and vehicles coming into the port. How are you working around that as part of that design work?

Mr DONALD - That's a matter for the Department of State Growth. There's a range of different options that they have available for that.

CHAIR - It would be terrible to spend a lot of money on a road and not get the appropriate use out of that.

Mr DONALD - No, we agree and I'm absolutely supremely confident that the department is fully aware of the need for heavy vehicles to enter the port.

CHAIR - This will be my last question on this. In relation to the timeline, given you have significant projects like berth 6, what is your understanding of the timeline for delivery of that project, with or without a stadium?

Mr DONALD - I would anticipate that - I actually don't know the specific timeframe associated with the delivery, given the announcement really has only just been made.

CHAIR - To be fair, the Northern Access Road was considered as part of the City Deal, and we keep hearing in parliament this is referred to. I don't understand, and maybe it's to you, minister, why is this important piece of infrastructure taking so long?

Mr VINCENT - Yes, I think we've heard through budget Estimates from Ben Moloney about the complications of the design and making sure that it fitted with people like TasPorts for the future use. It's an important piece of work and that design work is still working, close to finalisation but that will be available as soon as it's been finished by DSG.

CHAIR - Okay. You will take on notice the information if there's correspondence in relation to the Northern Access Road? Thank you, very much.

Prof Razay, do you have a question?

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Prof RAZAY - Thank you. We heard this morning that you had a really detailed inspection of your wharf infrastructure, which is so important considering it's so old. Has there been in the past - you identified the issue in which it led to the restriction of your activity, for example, like a restriction on the load for the ships?

Mr DONALD - Yes, absolutely. The example I'd use is Macquarie 6 in Hobart. So, a structure that approached and reached its end of life, and we implemented a 5 kPa, which is essentially a load limit on the wharf deck, and that's why we implemented an arrangement with the Australian Antarctic Division for a layout berth. At Macquarie 6, when they use that wharf, they are unable to use it for loading and unloading - it's pedestrian access only, essentially. Again, that's why we're going to be building a brand new wharf.

Prof RAZAY - Do we have strategic planning for the next few years about what we might expect and what we might need to be updated and upgraded?

Mr DONALD - Yes. So, every asset, including all our wharfs, are broken down into their various components, and every component has an attached condition rating. The condition assessment tool is governed by a document called WSCAM - it's an acronym; that's a Ports Australia document supported by PIANC, which is an international body for maritime structures. Every component is given a rating between one and seven - one being brand new; so the wharf at Devonport 3 would be rated as number one, the wharf at Macquarie 6 would be rated as number seven. Every component is assigned a rating, and then the structure is modelled and, through our asset management plans, we look at what are the interventions, what are the maintenance activities we can implement to either reinstate condition or slow down deterioration, as an example. It's a lot of what you think about the component - so a pile or a fender beam, and there are hundreds and hundreds of components in every structure. We're talking about thousands of line items.

Prof RAZAY - It's nice to hear you have such a detailed assessment because safety is so essential in shipping.

Mr DONALD - Yes, and it could be one bolt, on one fender that becomes the issue.

Mr VINCENT - I think the other interesting fact is the technology - how it's changed in recent years for monitoring some of these things. I'm noticing it even with our bridge structures that the devices and the technology is changing enormously from vibration metres to drones for underwater and above to all sorts of density testing that wasn't available some years ago. It is making the reports a lot more accurate, or if you identify an issue a lot more accurately, you're able to do that extra body of work.

Prof RAZAY - That way we can prevent problems in the future too.

Mr DONALD - Yes, and while we will continue to investigate and invest in concrete rehabilitation, just to extend the life of our assets.

Mr FAIRS - Thank you, Chair. TasPorts recently announced an MOU with hydrogen developer H2U. What does it mean for the northern region in layman's terms?

Mr DONALD - Thank you for the question. That's in relation to an opportunity to work together and examine export opportunities for that customer, which will also benefit the Port

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of Burnie. It's part of our renewable energy program of work. We'd like to think that it will be the first of many different opportunities for Tasmania and for TasPorts to support a really interesting program of work. I think it will also continue to evolve, not just around Burnie, but Bell Bay.

Mr FAIRS - Thank you.

Ms DOW - Are you confident that there are no issues with the sea trials that have been conducted around the berthing of the new *Spirits*?

Mr DONALD - If I may, I might ask our harbour master, Captain Mick Wall, to answer that question.

Mr WALL - Thank you for the question. The sea trials for the new *Spirits* that were conducted in Finland, are those the ones you're referring to?

Ms DOW - Yes, their ability to berth in Devonport.

Mr WALL - With the sea trials data, which was received after the actual physical trials were done in Finland, that data was fed back into the marine simulator in Legana that we're using for the testing. The ship model data was the most modern and the most up to date that we could use. That update has been done and in conjunction with *Spirit of Tasmania* and TT-Line, we'll be conducting some more simulation training. I am confident at the moment we've done enough. I personally observed the ship when it's been in and out of Hobart. I was fortunate enough to go to Geelong onboard it as well and the vessel handles fantastically. It is brilliant. So I'm totally confident that the vessel will handle well. I'm also confident that the ship model we're using in the simulator for the masters and the deck officers' training and marine pilots' training is world class.

Ms DOW - TasPorts hasn't raised any concerns about this aspect of the project with TT-Line or with the respective shareholder ministers?

Mr DONALD - No.

Ms DOW - And there are no issues with tide levels or the sewer line that runs through the Mersey or anything like that?

Mr WALL - The sewer line, as we know, has been there for a long time and there are no issues with that with a navigable depth above the same and the dredging program that Anthony was talking about previously. That will maintain the safe operational depth into and out of Devonport for the new ships.

Ms DOW - There are no issues with clearance?

Mr WALL - No, I'm satisfied.

Ms DOW - I might take you now then to the building of the gantry and ask TasPorts if you've had input into the gantry aspect of the development. Can you confirm that that's correct?

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Mr DONALD - We've had input into, I think, the methodology associated with erection of the gantry and our harbour master, in coordination with TT-Line's contractor, around safe navigation, placement of barges and the timing of such.

Ms DOW - Do you have any concerns or issues about that?

Mr WALL - No, I don't. The specialist vessel bringing in those components is one which we've worked with before. The placement of that vessel onto the berth to allow the components to be lifted off into place, I don't have any issues with. It's being planned very thoroughly and diligently. The placement of the existing barges which are being used to support the gantry project and the ramp project, we can safely place them in other parts, in other berths in Devonport while that vessel's in place, and that work, I believe, is on track for early next year. We've assessed that and just any ongoing updates with ETA's of the vessels, estimated times of when it's going to come in, that's all in hand.

Ms DOW - You won't need to bring any additional skills or expertise on site to help assist with that or manage that process?

Mr DONALD - No, not that I'm aware of, and the heavy lift vessels themselves, their ships' crews are very well practised with what they do, so from purely a marine safety point of view, I have no other issues with it.

CHAIR - Minister, I have a question through you possibly. The Tasmanian Planning Commission in its report on the stadium expressed the view that the traffic and vehicle parking facilities connected with wharfs 2 and 3 used for cruise ships would be limited or unavailable during peak times. I am wondering how that is likely - it's a scenario presently - but how would that impact on how you plan to operate the area during those times?

Mr DONALD - Certainly car parking, road traffic movements, pedestrian movements, all will form part of our planning and then construction. Then operational coordination meetings, particularly when we take into account not just construction but operation; we need to make sure that we will have available space and car parking, as an example, to operate our ports and make sure that whether or not there's part of our parking that remains secured, I'm sure we will be able to accommodate those.

CHAIR - I'm curious to know the discussions you might have had with MPDC or the government in relation to safe pedestrian movements. I know that there have been some modifications already for cruise ships, but particularly around the Evans Street side and coming off Mac wharf.

Mr DONALD - I haven't been privy to all the coordination meetings. What I would say is that that's something that I would expect will continue to evolve over the coming time. There's been some modelling undertaken by Macquarie Point Development Corporation around their precinct. We need to expand on that and take that through what I would describe as the pedestrian journey through the precinct, and then through ours, into the Hobart waterfront.

We will then model that against some of the other known events that we host and support, such as the Taste Festival, or the Wooden Boat Festival, or cruise ships to make sure that we're planning appropriately for our infrastructure, whether that be through adopting consistent

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naming conventions, style guides for way-finding signage, operational controls that we might put in place, such as we do today for the sort of arrival and management of cruise passengers walking through the Hobart waterfront. We will do that in coordination with the Macquarie Point Development Corporation, the Department of State Growth, and of course Hobart City Council.

CHAIR - I believe that part of the \$188 million for the Antarctic berth upgrades, there was an agreement with funding attached between the state and federal government for urban renewal of the Macquarie Point area, including wharf 6. What's your current understanding of how this will affect the redevelopment of wharf 6 and those principles of good access or whatever?

Mr DONALD - I'm not anticipating that they will influence wharf 6 at all. We have a port secure zone today; largely other than the 200-metre sort of square metre sliver that I described earlier, the port secure zone will remain intact. The urban renewal opportunities are for Macquarie Point Development Corporation to work through.

CHAIR - There's not any obligation with that federal funding to -

Mr DONALD - Not to TasPorts.

CHAIR - Not to TasPorts? Thank you.

Mr VINCENT - In relation to Ms Dow's question earlier on, I would like to table the Burbury report into the Grassy infrastructure and operational review as well as the stakeholder and community consultation summary.

Prof RAZAY - Through you, minister, to the CEO: there has been major advancement in the technology dealing with movement of containers in port. How are you advancing with that? That's very relevant, especially most of our ports are also near our city centre and bringing so many trucks, so any way that can facilitate the movement of trucks and movement of containers is the most economic one.

Mr DONALD - Certainly. Thank you for the question. There are four locations around the state where containers move in and out of Tasmania. Three of those are what we would describe as roll-on-roll-off operations. Strait Link, SeaRoad and TT-Line have a roll-on-roll-off operation where the containers are essentially on trailers and move on and off on a ramp, thus the roll on, roll off. Then we have an international operation out of the port of Bell Bay, and we continue to see growing numbers in the port of Bell Bay. You're referencing some of the automation and the technology that globally is becoming absolutely phenomenal. You know the concept of smart ports and driverless technology.

As an example, I was very much a part of the automation project that was implemented at Webb Dock for the Port of Melbourne. I am acutely aware of those opportunities. The challenge for Tasmania becomes the volume of containers to warrant that type of investment. Pleasingly, and I thank you so much for the question, a number of months ago the World Bank released its container port efficiency list for the year, and the Port of Bell Bay was Australia's most efficient container port.

Prof RAZAY - Isn't that great?

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Mr DONALD - So a credit to the cooperation and teamwork of our stevedoring partner in Cube, but also the shipping lines. Our awesome port team has been, without the automation, as assessed by the World Bank, the most efficient port in the country.

CHAIR - We'll hear from Mr Jaensch and then we'll take a short break, like a two or three minute break.

Mr JAENSCH - Through you, minister: could I enquire what TasPorts is doing to support major public events and festivals like the Taste of Summer and the Australian Wooden Boat Festival in those waterfront precincts?

Mr VINCENT - I will certainly let the CEO answer this. I was quite staggered when I took on the ministry at the extent of their involvement with the Wooden Boat Festival, a lot of it quietly, but there is a number of those projects.

Mr DONALD - Some of those events, like the Australian Wooden Boat Festival that occurs every two years, the Taste of Summer that occurs every summer, and the Sydney to Hobart have become a real key feature of Tasmanian events and where we continue to be proud to support them. They generate visitation from not just Tasmanians, but from more abroad - and not limited, but particularly the Australian Wooden Boat Festival where vessels and people come from all over the world every second year and absolutely rave about it.

Our team in Hobart spend a lot of time and effort, so a lot of the support we provide is in-kind and we do, of course, provide some financial support to some of those events, but the more significant contribution is the in-kind one that we provide to support those events.

Mr JAENSCH - Can you give us examples of what the in-kind contributions are?

Mr DONALD - It might be that our management and oversight of the implementation of road closures as an example, or support in erecting structures on our land such as marquees and the use of cranes as an example. There is a number of activities that, as the port owner and operator, that we don't relinquish to others, and so there is always time and effort required from our staff to support those events.

Mr JAENSCH - And maintaining port security and normal port operations at the same time?

Mr DONALD - Yes, absolutely, and we could have 50,000 people across the Hobart waterfront on a big day, which is significant.

The Committee suspended from 10.53 a.m. to 10.58 a.m.

CHAIR - Ms Dow.

Ms DOW - Thank you, Chair. Through you, minister: earlier on we spoke about rationalisation of assets, and I believe you said community service assets. I wanted to ask you a question about the Stanley port. I understand there has been some decommissioning of assets there and removal of some of the asset. What are your future plans for the Stanley port?

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Mr DONALD - We've recently, I think, demolished one of the old sheds, to answer one of your questions, and we're currently working through with government decisions around our investment in the Port of Stanley, which will be quite significant. It's fair to say the Port of Stanley was developed with infrastructure at a time where industry was slightly different. We do have a really important freight customer using a ramp at the moment and we're very mindful of that. There was previously export of other products out of the Port of Stanley that's not continuing today, so there could well be opportunities to rationalise some of the infrastructure, improve amenity and, of course, safety for the community in Stanley. We're working through that at the moment with the Department of State Growth.

Ms DOW - And through you, minister: when do you expect to have that work completed?

Mr DONALD - In terms of the assessment? I would say in the next three to six months.

Ms DOW - And through you, minister: will there be good community consultation around that? It's an important community asset.

Mr DONALD - Absolutely. We are a regular attendee of the chamber at Stanley and so we've got quite a passionate group of people who like attending that forum, which is awesome. We get some great feedback and input. There will be consultation, absolutely without doubt, not just at Stanley but all our community infrastructure.

Mr VINCENT - I might add, I've been down for a meeting and was corralled by a group of very passionate local businesspeople who put forward several ideas and thoughts on it, which was fascinating for me, it being a few years since I was in that area. I might say I immediately contacted TasPorts before I drove out of town, actually, and there was a meeting facilitated on top of other meetings to discuss a few of those things. The feedback from those same people over recent months has been positive towards the communications.

Ms DOW - Minister, did they brief you on their proposal for a marina?

Mr VINCENT - Yes, they certainly did, about the deep ocean marina there. Marinas are something that, quite often, there's private funding around and I think as a whole, my personal opinion is that Tassie's got a great future in being able to take some of those larger yachts that float around, enjoying the different sorts of coastlines. Not that I am an expert in that area, but it seemed to be a very sensible suggestion to understand and have a look at.

Ms DOW - Through you, minister: is that something that's being considered as part of that planning process for the future use of the Stanley port?

Mr DONALD - That would form part of a consideration of the master plan. The current considerations are around the current assets, not future ones.

Ms DOW - Through you, minister: would you expect that will be a part of your master planning process early next year?

Mr DONALD - Yes. So early next year we will be able to provide transparent advice on the timing of the work that we will do in Stanley and any particular timing around consultation with our users and broader community.

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Ms DOW - As part of this process, minister, overall are you looking at an offloading of assets to, for example, local government? I know that was tried by TasPorts at the Port of Strahan, which wasn't successful, and arguably - I'm not speaking on behalf of local government, but they've already got a lot of assets that they need to maintain and depreciate and account for, is that something that's being looked at by the board -

Mr VINCENT - No.

Ms DOW - or have you learned some lessons from the experience at Strahan?

Mr VINCENT - We've certainly learned from lessons there and so has local government in volunteering to put up the hand, I suppose. It's more the rationalisation from what we said, from legacy, from having so many different port agreements in place and, as they come up for renewal, whether we can utilise assets in a certain area of that facility better for the local community, and with decaying assets, whether we have to replace it or how it can be utilised.

To use Stanley as an example, it's only from my very limited knowledge there, the isolation between port activities, fishing activities and then the quarantine and the security around having a marina there would be in separate locations, but still using the same foreshore and area, of course. However, there's different things to be taken into consideration, and that's with quite a few areas around the state. It is quite complex when you get into it, depending on what is presently used for, what it's needed for, the state of the pylons now, the state of possible decay, and whether you need that full facility or not.

CHAIR - Last question.

Ms DOW - On the Stanley wharf, it's been used for years by the community for fishing and there's been some restrictions around that due to safety considerations. As part of your master planning process and the review of your assets there, is that something that you're looking to accommodate again in the future?

Mr VINCENT - TasPorts has been very fair. I haven't seen the details of that master plan yet, but they've been open about all the community assets, having the community involved with utilising those assets, because it's an important part of what they do on a daily basis. You only have to see that interaction, how important the whole waterfront is to Hobart. That's the same in smaller communities. You move around the state, and Strahan was a good example, Stanley's another one, Beauty Point's another one.

CHAIR - Minister, I wanted to turn the discussion to the proposed merger. Clearly, we have moved away from merging TasPorts, TasRail and TT-Line, although I think the CEO did think that that might have been a good idea at the time. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I thought we'd heard last year that you thought that there could be some benefits there. In relation to governance and governance changes that have been brought in, can you talk us through some of those governance changes that have occurred which have been positive or otherwise to the business?

Mr VINCENT - Yes, I could let the chair explain from his point of view, but certainly from mine, GBEs and SOCs have been formed at various points of time for various reasons. So the necessary body of work to align some of the letters of expectation to more modern times than when they were probably formed was an important body of work to do, and is something

that should be examined on a regular basis, like a constitution where things change and that's what we've seen with a lot.

My thought pattern towards the whole GBE process was also about how we go about interaction from a shareholder minister's point of view. Also, on the way that boards are selected and the fact that we've proven in recent years the importance of having the right blend of people, the right skills matrix on boards. That's an important body of work to take in every time that you're recruiting for rotation of boards. That's been a positive change in the fact that we are a lot more detailed. Boards are now understanding that some people might come on to do a specific job at a certain period of time on that board. It doesn't mean they're there for a full two rotations or whatever the rotation might be for that board. That's something under constant review.

The letters of expectation and the constitutions and other documents that the various GBEs work under at any one time are important to always stay focused on, because they form the basis of what they should be performing to, and we know Tasmania First's ideas around that, but directors also have their training that they need to stay as professional as possible, focused on the company.

To understand that balance between those things is very important and it's been a great opportunity for a refocus to happen and realisation that things have changed from when some of these entities were formed, and that we keep reviewing these on a regular basis. I will ask Greg from a chairman's point of view if he has a different idea.

CHAIR - Before we do that, were you surprised to see the lack of governance when you stepped into your ministerial role?

Mr VINCENT - No. I can honestly say that when I was approached to run for government, it was something that I'd had dealt with through my various roles in local government. I'd been involved with quite a few boards, including TasWater, that were going through similar processes of maturing in their journey. So it was something that I felt from day one that I would have liked to have been involved with and needed to do.

Certainly, when I became a minister, I was able to work a lot closer with both CEOs and chairs - don't have a real lot to do with individual members of the board, but certainly through a lot of communication with the chairs of the ministries that I look after. That's just been a normal process for me. The fact that the government was already looking through those letter expectations and similar documentation was a bonus for me.

Mr McCANN - From a governance point of view within TasPorts, I said yesterday, and I don't say it lightly, I was absolutely thrilled to see the calibre of the rest of the board. Not me, but the rest of the board.

First of all, there are four women and three men. We have people with engineering background, with risk-management, and I'm talking deep, deep risk-management. I won't name names, but the individual is recognised beyond Australia as being one of the best on risk-management.

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We've got Treasury expertise. We've got safety, sustainability expertise. Like the head of sustainable - well the director, who has sustainability expertise, was head of state sustainability for Telstra. I mean, these are seriously qualified people.

We've got financial, we've got technology, major projects, safety. It's a wonderful board to sit across a very complex organisation that is spending a lot of government money and has huge responsibilities in managing risk and safety, et cetera. I didn't realise just how complex the business was.

The first couple of months, there were two directors appointed back in December, another five or four I think, in May. So we took a couple of months to really understand what we have and make an assessment of where things are and where we want to go. We then put in place a process: we work very closely with management, because management has deep corporate knowledge and deep subject matter expertise. We've been working a strategic plan and reviewing it and revising it for the future and everything that underpins that.

You need to have a people and culture and safety plan. That's why Julie Garth is here today, if you would like to ask her more questions on that.

We have Strategic Asset Management Plan. We've talked a lot about that today. Risk management. Financial position, you know, what is our position? What is that potential to service debt? What's that capacity to stay within debt-to-interest ratios? Safety and sustainability, there is a whole raft of different plans that underpin the corporate strategy that we're helping management revise. We've not quite finished that process yet. We're getting very close.

With the new board in place, it's clear that we're entering a period of stronger strategic focus, higher expectations on culture and performance. That's important because our people suffered and they were seriously damaged through all the media and the accusations, et cetera, around QuayLink. I feel deeply that they have unduly suffered. Of course, when you do your pulse surveys, et cetera, you find that morale is low, and Anthony referred to that yesterday. That's why we need to really focus on uplifting the way people feel about how they work. The phrase that we've coined is that we want it to be a safe and brilliant place to work.

There's a lot of emphasis on that and there's a lot more rigorous oversight of long-term planning. I know I'm probably taking a long time to answer this, but this is very important to the board and to the way the board, the business we want, Tasmania wants in the future, and part of that is trying to consolidate and build capability across the leadership team.

We want to see a cultural shift and we're starting to see that shift. Julie, you can talk more on this, but we measure employment engagement and 12 months ago - was it 12 months ago, Julie? - it was 42 per cent and what is it now - the latest, 59 per cent.

CHAIR - You've got a way to go, but it's a good improvement.

Mr McCANN - It's a long way to go. I know it is a government-owned organisation and we are very accountable and we've got to make sure that everything we do - we've got thick skins, but some of our people really take to heart a lot of the criticisms that are levied that in some cases aren't fair. I really wanted to make that point that let's be careful now. Let's not play the man, so to speak, play the ball. I really want to protect our people. One example I heard

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was somebody going into a supermarket with a TasPorts jacket on and being abused. It's just not on. As a group, as a process, let's be very mindful of anything we try to raise doesn't hurt innocent people.

CHAIR - It's good to see that there have been changes or improvements in that space. Where are those other areas that you feel are important to work on? For argument's sake, you've got good gender diversity at the board level, but still there is not a great lot of diversity in the rest of the business.

Mr McCANN - I would like to get Julia Garth to talk to that because that is a major issue for us.

Ms GARTH - If we start off with gender: we're looking at the ELT board general manager and heads of split is 37 per cent split. We know we've got more work to do in that space, but I wanted to provide a little bit of context upfront about where we're currently sitting. We've made a lot of progress currently and we have a really good DNI strategic plan that we commenced in 2024.

If I can talk to some of the progress that we've made because this really speaks to the work that we're doing to increase gender diversity in TasPorts. We have accreditation through Work180, and we're endorsed as an employer for women. That helps us reach a platform to reach for women through our advertising. We've delivered inclusive leadership and unconscious bias training across our business. We've established a D&I working group -

CHAIR - What's D&I?

Ms GARTH - Sorry, Diversity and Inclusion working group. This is involving our team members, now employees, in solutions for TasPorts and what are the initiatives and projects that we can work on to support those things across the business. We have also established women's talking circles so for females in our business, we have support across a number of our divisions.

We've also established a culturally and linguistically diverse employee talking circle for the same reason. Then we've introduced ally sessions. For team members, how do we actually support diverse groups across our business? We also have introduced a cultural immersion program. We are increasing visibility of female leadership; for role models right across the business, supporting others who are coming through and an informal mentoring program within TasPorts.

In terms of recruitment, because we know that's a really important way that we are going to address this over time, we've worked through unbiased shortlisting. We work with diverse panels so we have a good representation on our interview panels and we look at targeted attraction strategies. We've also boosted and looked at how we further support our flexible working practices because we know that's how we can support women in the workforce. That's working really well for us. Then we've updated our policies and procedures, just to embed inclusive language across TasPorts as well.

Speaking to some of the governance: we have strengthened reporting and measurement, so that includes baseline metrics and regular updates through the ELT and the board. It's absolutely a priority and this keeps it top-of-mind and in focus. Then, we celebrate diversity at

TasPorts, so we have cultural events such as International Women's Day and the NAIDOC week activities.

Finally, probably the other important ones: we have a really strong focus on psychological safety. That's supported through leadership capability uplift, and a care factor training program roll out helping our leaders have these really important and inclusive conversations across the business. Then our onboarding practices also have been uplifted. I know that's a long list of things, but I wanted to bring some flavour to how we are actually bringing this to life and importantly embedding it across TasPorts.

Mr DONALD - Can I possibly ask, Julie, for you to expand on the schools program and the graduate program?

Ms GARTH - Absolutely. This starts at East Devonport Primary School. We had Captain Wall, one of the people from TasPorts, talking to the East Devonport Primary School children about potential opportunities, what we do at TasPorts, 'This is in your backyard,' planting the seeds of work opportunities so our children get an understanding of the flavour of the future that they can have in Tasmania.

We also support going into the high schools and doing the same thing. We're looking at formalising a partnership with Beacon to really bring some structure to what we're doing at the moment. We have offered work-placement and internships; we've had eight of those this year across the state throughout our corporate departments and our marine and operational divisions.

That means bringing children in from whether it is the AMC, the uni or various high schools across the state, and giving them a flavour and some experience of work at TasPorts. This also includes work with Possability Burnie, which is an organisation that supports people with disabilities, helping them get a start and get some experience and confidence in the workplace. We have a number of apprentices - and I just want to call out, because this is a matter of pride for TasPorts, one of our apprentices who just completed last year was awarded Apprentice of the Year on the weekend.

Mr FAIRS - Oh wow, good.

Ms GARTH - He's a really capable young man, but it also speaks to the support that he is provided at TasPorts from his colleagues and peers.

We have apprentices across plumbing, mechanic, electrician, trades. Two on King Island, two currently being resourced in Hobart, one in Bell Bay and one in Devonport. We also have two traineeships for business administration.

This is a really important element for us, not only supporting the pipeline of people coming through and future talent, but also for the community and the children in our community. We've got a lot to offer. It's been said a number of times: we are a really diverse and complex business. It's a really exciting career opportunity for the young people of Tasmania.

Finally, we have our graduate program. That's a two-year structured program. The graduates have the opportunity to work in different divisions. Again, we have a gender focus; we are setting these people up for leadership roles in the future and they, importantly, identify

their own continuous improvement project. That's a real value add to TasPorts. One of our grads has a focus on how to build gender representation in our marine division.

CHAIR - Excellent.

Mr McCANN - Just one other program, sorry. We have an intern program. For the last eight years we've had an intern on our board for 12 months. In each case, they've been women who we've chosen. They typically come from either GBEs, large local companies or not-for-profits, and that gives a person who's got ambitions to see how a board operates. We bring them into most matters - there are some of course, which we can't, but in the majority of cases they're involved in everything. That's also a wonderful program.

CHAIR - Yes, wonderful.

Prof RAZAY - I must tell you, CEO, you don't realise how excited I am this morning - you probably noticed that - honestly, to hear this upgrading and restructuring of our port and the advancement in technology in running it. It's something we should be proud of. That's culminated through Bell Bay becoming one of the most distinguished ports internationally. I think we need more good news - I mean, you have now restructured berth 3 in Devonport for the upcoming TT-Line. Well, what about that? That deserves some comment on, if you have won any awards on that?

Mr DONALD - Thank you. More recently our construction contractor at berth 3, Hazel Brady, was awarded the Tasmanian Engineers Australia Engineering Project of the Year, for their work on that wharf. Very proud of them and a great achievement. Certainly, in cooperation with our team they delivered great results.

Prof RAZAY - That's excellent news. Thank you.

Mr McCANN - I think we are hoping to become just a good news story, for the benefit not only of TasPorts, but for the benefit of the state.

Mr VINCENT - I want to do that, too.

Mr McCANN - It's always the bad news that hits the press and hits the front page, but TasPorts is doing a lot of things really well.

Prof RAZAY - I feel by giving good news like this, you will see more of our young generations getting excited to be involved in that.

Mr JAENSCH - It has been great to hear the Chair, CEO and executive talking about the internal strategies and achievements for the organisation. Congratulations on the depth you have in diversity and inclusion, and those other areas that are a long cultural shift that you're achieving.

You mentioned sustainability in the depths that you have around your board table with sustainability. Could you speak to the environmental performance of the organisation, and your strategies there, and any certification that you achieved or pursuing in that area, as a port?

Mr DONALD - In the last year we've achieved EcoPorts Certification for all our ports. The prior year we had one port certified, and last year we completed certification achievement for all of our ports - being Burnie, Devonport, Bell Bay and Hobart. It's an internationally recognised program and a fantastic achievement. I think there's just over 100 ports around the world that have achieved that certification, and we've got four of them, which is a phenomenal effort. I'm not aware of any other port at this stage in the country that has achieved that certification.

Mr JAENSCH - Does that go to things like your response to spills in your ports, or is it to do with things like how you manage anti-fouling operations, all those sorts of things?

Mr DONALD - It's all-encompassing. It's an ISO-accredited certification and it's really around collaboration - it's fostering the environmental protection, it's the collaboration, the coordination, the interaction of all the things that we do in the ecosystem of our ports. I said yesterday on this topic, we are the custodians of our ports. We take that responsibility with the priority that it deserves and making sure that we are aware of our environment, the impact that we have and we are striving towards continuing to improve the impact that we have.

We have a sustainability strategy in place. It's aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. We have four particular pillars that we're focusing on. We're working through our processes associated with our scope 1, 2 and 3 reporting. We have some obligations coming in a number of years' time, but we're well advanced down that path. We've been capturing data associated with our carbon footprint for a number of years now. We're tracking how we're performing internally. We're seeing some positive impact through people's greater awareness of the decisions that they're making and the resultant impact. It is a real credit to a fantastic team.

Ms DOW - Through you, minister, have you undertaken an employee satisfaction survey this year? Would you be able to table the results of that for the committee, please?

Ms GARTH - Yes, we have, and we can table the results. We are also about to redo our next one. We have two pulses a year, a short one in June and a longer one in November.

Ms DOW - With the Devonport Airport, you made mention of it before as being part of your business. Will it continue to be part of TasPort's core business into the future?

Mr McCANN - There are no plans to make any changes. I know Devonport is very short of industrial land and there's a lot of land around Devonport Airport. Whilst it's not on our agenda at the moment, we would welcome any approaches to see whether we can work together with either local council or developers or whatever, if we can assist in that shortage and it would be to our benefit, too, to probably release what would be some non-core components of Devonport Airport.

Ms DOW - On your map you have, there are some future development sites earmarked and there's tourism and recreational space as well. The master plan says that you don't have any plans to develop that or invest funds in that presently. Do you intend to do that?

Mr McCANN - It's not where we would prefer to direct our money. We would be happy to play a role in that. If that wasn't land we needed for the airport or the future of the airport, if

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there were interested parties who wanted to work with us, whether it involved a sale or a joint venture of sort, we would have an open mind to that.

Ms DOW - Through you, minister, are you actively pursuing that?

Mr McCANN - No, not at the moment, as far as I'm aware. We have so much happening around strategic assets, around cultural change and it's - what do they say? - drinking water from a fountain, or is it a fire hose?

Ms DOW - I'm not sure, but it sounds like you have a lot on.

Mr McCANN - Yes, we have.

Mr DONALD - I might add that the team at Devonport Airport is incredibly passionate about the day-to-day management of the airport and the facilities. The pride that they have in how they operate that facility, even down to their storage of equipment and materials and spares in their warehousing, is superb. We have an ongoing focus to continue to improve security management at the airport and regional airports across the country. It is a focus from the regulator. I expect, as I think all airports around the country expect, that there will be ongoing requirements imposed on regional airports to continue to raise the bar and raise the standards of security.

In response to some advice from the regulator, we proactively continue to invest and augment our infrastructure and our operational procedures including we self-test performance of identifying particular things and continue to focus on the customer relationship because passengers and the movement of people is our core business for Devonport Airport. So, making sure the passenger experience is excellent.

There's been a recent investment into providing business-related, sort of hub-style desks at Devonport Airport so people can easily plug their laptops and iPads in. We continue to get great feedback from our customers in that regard.

Ms DOW - Through you, minister, do you work closely with the Burnie Airport Corporation across the coast to look at maximising opportunities, or is it purely a competitive relationship?

Mr DONALD - It is a competitive relationship.

Ms DOW - Just one more on this -

CHAIR - One more and then we will move on.

Ms DOW - Have you made any applications through the government's aviation fund to increase flights, or to make the most of that opportunity through the *Spirits*?

Mr DONALD - If I may, I will take that one on notice. I know we have received a small sum of money as a result of that program. A small sum of funding.

Ms DOW - Thank you. There wasn't that much there to start with.

Mr DONALD - We would always like more. We are passionate about growing passenger numbers on the north-west coast, absolutely.

CHAIR - To the chair or CEO, on page 65 of the annual report we have the consultancies summary. I want to ask you the capital expenditure versus the operational expenditure. I haven't seen that in other reports. I'm curious as to why you break it down that way?

Mr McCANN - This is largely an accounting policy issue. If we do preliminary work on it before we really commission a project, that work would normally not be capitalised into the project itself. Once we commission a project, we would bring in, for example, outside consultants - expertise, maybe engineering-type expertise - and that can be capitalised into the cost of the asset. If I could just check with our CFO, is that broadly correct?

Mr TOWNSEND - That's correct, yes.

Mr McCANN - Thank you. Does that answer your question?

CHAIR - Yes, well, sort of. I understand the complexities of delivering projects for sure, but I'm curious to know - I'm always concerned about consultancies and the amount that they cost. Can you describe for me the difference in the total consultancy from this financial year compared to the last financial year and the reasons behind those differences?

Mr DONALD - If I may, with our ongoing efforts and preparation around asset management in particular - it's not completely isolated to asset management, but infrastructure generally - our plans for expenditure can forecast to continue to grow. With that, we need to continue to invest in consultant spend upfront to make sure that we are appropriately planning and preparing for that spend. So, there will be a direct relationship between the value of our capital works program over time and the value of our consultant spend. We will continue to be transparent about that. Yesterday in the committee I was asked a similar question and I announced that I expect that our consultant spend over time will continue to grow. Our focus remains on making sure that we get great value for money out of our consultant spend.

As a client organisation, we recognise that, in order for our consultants and contractors to perform well, we have to perform well first. We need to understand what services we are going to buy, what we want from our providers, we run appropriate procurement practices, and we provide management interface and oversight over their performance so they can enjoy the success and we end up with a great result.

A different question was asked yesterday about why we have so many consultants and why we wouldn't look to rationalise -

CHAIR - Or bring them in-house or whatever.

Mr DONALD - and/or bring them in-house. Well, the types of capability we need varies specifically, depending on the type of project or infrastructure or operation that we're contemplating and looking at. There will always need to be a base level of resources who can manage and provide oversight over the scoping and the implementation of work. However, we don't need to develop subject matter expertise in every single element of the technical parts of our supply chain.

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We also want to make sure we have resilience and redundancy. What does that mean? We don't want to put all our eggs in the one basket, so to speak, with respect to the selection of consultants and contractors. Competition is a good thing and we want to make sure that we provide competitive opportunities for our service providers. Of course, we recognise and celebrate the success of the work they do. That in many ways informs their opportunities for selection moving forward through the background and all the experience that goes to capability assessments in evaluation criteria. However, I think it would be quite a risk to select one engineering consultant. I think at the moment we're out to market for a revision to our panel. Someone can correct me if I'm wrong, but I think we had over 100 different consultants express interest in that and we will be seeking to put in place contracts with perhaps 30-odd different consulting businesses.

CHAIR - Given there are 67 consultants with contracts less than \$50,000, would you be prepared to table those?

Mr DONALD - I'm very happy to do that. I'll take that on notice.

CHAIR - Thank you. I'm always curious to see this, because it's a significant amount of money. Presumably, minister, you're having an oversight into that level of detail?

Mr VINCENT - Not directly because it's operational, but we do discuss the various projects and the level of consultancy needed for those projects.

CHAIR - One final question: going back to that governance, what more would you like to see with governance arrangements? What other improvements would you like to see?

Mr VINCENT - My focus at the moment is very much with a lot of my GBEs around the infrastructure program that's needed to predict forward Estimates a lot better. A lot of the correspondence I'm focused on is very much in that area - that if we can get that right, the rest flows from it.

Prof RAZAY - Minister, according to the interim Budget, workers compensation claims have increased dramatically, costing hundreds of millions of dollars due to combinations - mainly physical as well as psychological injuries. I heard from your chairman that you feel sorry for how many people have suffered. That's at all levels.

I'd like to ask about what impact on TasPorts, how many compensation claims you have and the cost. We have already heard that you are doing something to address it, to improve the work environment as well.

Mr DONALD - Thanks, Professor. Julie, do you have that information at hand?

Ms GARTH - I do, Chair.

Mr DONALD - Would you like to respond?

Ms GARTH - Yes. We currently have four open claims. None of those is a psychosocial safety related claim.

Prof RAZAY - That's good to hear. That's reassuring.

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Mr McCANN - Chair, could I just correct or clarify something?

We were asked and we agreed to table the employee survey. Can I say that can we take that on notice because we would like to go through that to make sure that nobody can be identified? We'll take it on notice, if that's all right with you.

CHAIR - That's all right. Thank you.

Mr FAIRS - Chair, I have a question for the Harbour Master. Obviously we've spoken a lot and heard a lot about you upgrading facilities and also your technological advances and things like that, including your vessel traffic service system, which I understand is very sophisticated. I haven't seen it, but it operates from Launceston, which is great, in my electorate. We know navigation is obviously of paramount importance. Can you explain how it works from Launceston?

Mr WALL - Mr Fairs, thank you for the question, and an open invitation to the whole committee or anybody who wants to come along and have a look at VTS (vessel traffic service) at any time.

Mr VINCENT - It is worth having a look at. It's mind blowing.

Mr FAIRS - Yes, I do want to.

Mr WALL - I am very lucky. We have a small team which carries out the functions of the vessel traffic service. We do that in conjunction with Marine and Safety Tasmania as part of our deed of agreement. I have my deputy harbour master, my vessel traffic services manager, our wonderful executive assistant and a team of shipping schedulers and VTSOs underneath that - the officers who do the monitoring for us.

We have 11 different areas around the state which we monitor every day: the four major ports, the two islands, and other areas around the state as well. We conduct visual checks on that using CCTV; automatic identification systems, which are the radio signals from the ship; we are in direct communications with the vessels entering Tasmanian waters, coming into port, leaving port; and we also work very, very closely with the marine pilots, the tugs, the pilot vessels and all the marine services, which make our job very easy, to be quite honest, and we are monitoring that.

There were references before to responses to environmental spills as well. As part of the agreement, we monitor for environmental spills in the port. That technology is improving in that area as well, where we can see differences in the reflection of the water. Again, we're looking at AI projects which will assist us in doing that. That's also being undertaken nationally, where AI will assist in very early detection of oil spills on the water and allow us to respond in a timely manner.

We're part of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority's national working group for the Vessel Traffic Service; we attend that on a regular basis. Our certification comes through the Australian Maritime Safety Authority in Canberra, so we're nationally certified. We have a very good, strong working relationship with the Australian Maritime College. All our employees go through the AMC for both qualification training and recertification training as

required. The centre itself is fit for purpose at the moment - we're expanding the team. I'd also like to say that we took on our latest employee yesterday, so they started for us as well.

We're doing our business continuity planning. The other measure that I'd like to table is that we have one of the highest retention rates in the company. We have some employees there with over 40 years of service in the same area. We've also celebrated other members of TasPorts who have recently had 50 years of service, all in the marine side. We are very lucky.

However, as I sit before you as an old, grey-haired captain, there is time for change, so we are bringing in new members to the team. With that team there is lots of knowledge, lots of experience and I sleep comfortably at night knowing the people are there doing the job for me. Thank you very much, for the question.

Mr DONALD - Captain, not all ports around the country are AMSA certified.

Mr WALL - Not all ports are AMSA certified, and likewise, Anthony, in Tasmania, we have a coastline bigger than Queensland, but we won't remind them of that - if you include all our islands and everything.

Unknown - If you've got half an hour to spare, please come and have a look at it, it's very impressive.

Ms DOW - Minister, is there a shortage of marine pilots across the state?

Mr VINCENT - Oh, I'm not aware of that, sorry. I might pass that down the line. Is there?

Mr DONALD - We're currently training, I think, three trainee pilots at the moment. Managing that process, the training of pilots, takes considerable time and effort and we need to achieve particular standards and accreditation, and number of visits to the satisfaction of the harbour master. It's something that we manage on a day-to-day basis at the moment, while we move through the training program.

Ms DOW - Have there been delays to the employment process?

Mr DONALD - No, not that I'm aware of.

Ms DOW - That hasn't added implications for Port Latta or Hobart?

Mr DONALD - No, certainly no delays to recruitment processes.

CHAIR - I have a question, which goes to global events. We know that there is some concern with fuels imported from Russia via third countries. I wanted to clarify whether TasPorts has done the analysis of where your fuel is sourced?

Mr DONALD - No, we don't undertake that investigation. That would be something that we would leave to our customers and their decisions around the origin of fuel. Our responsibilities are around the infrastructure associated with the ports and then the transfer of fuel from the vessel to the land side.

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CHAIR - Don't you run services to King Island?

Mr DONALD - Yes, we do, and we do provide fuel to King Island.

CHAIR - Perhaps if you can take it on notice if you're unclear and, to clarify, I would imagine that that could be an issue for TasPorts if it were coming via a third country but had been sourced in Russia.

Mr DONALD - I'll take that one on notice.

CHAIR - I've got lots of questions around Bell Bay. I'm curious to know about shore power improvements and where you're up to that.

Mr DONALD - Once we announce our construction contractor for the Macquarie 6 upgrade in Hobart, the scope of works that we will be delivering for the Australian Antarctic program will incorporate shore power, which will be a fantastic next step for our port. We already have shore power in place through infrastructure that Strait Link has provided for their vessels in Burnie. There is shore power in place at Strahan, albeit currently with the West Coast Council and the addition in Hobart will be great.

We know there's a lot of interest from cruise lines, in particular, for shore power connectivity and we will continue to investigate ways that we can increase infrastructure. I fully expect that as we progress our thinking and plans as a port, but more generally as an industry and a supply chain when we start to look at beyond scope one and scope two to scope three, there will be more incentives and interest from all our customers on shore power.

CHAIR - You're looking at those major ports rather than any other?

Mr DONALD - It will absolutely be part of our port master planning review process.

Prof RAZAY - You seem to be really excited about getting clean energy. We have offshore wind, is that right, for Bell Bay? What I want, it's a major development in the future and for our port, I'd like to add to that. Do you get involved also in ocean technology or wave technology as well?

Mr DONALD - Certainly we've been privy and provided some ancillary support to some of that wave energy technology that the King Island community saw as a trial for a period of time. We've had some relatively minor, I would say, interfaces with the AMC around different technologies that they've been investigating. We continue to look at opportunities for solar power to power some of our own facilities. Of course there are wind farm and wind turbine opportunities as well. That will form part of our long-term asset management plan and master planning process.

The plans for upgrading of Bell Bay to support offshore wind farms are significant in size and nature and we would plan that they support offshore projects within Bass Strait but also onshore projects within the State of Tasmania. We describe renewable energy projects similar to fuel import business. We see it as a future commodity for our business.

Under that banner, it's infrastructure and port services to support wind farms. It's also whether or not there are any land opportunities solar. We have looked at some concepts around

tidal flow generation, particularly around the Tamar River in and around our port at Bell Bay. There are some challenges associated with the implementation of some of that infrastructure, but I'm sure technology will help us in the end.

Of course, then there are some of the cleaner fuels like ammonia, and perhaps methanol and hydrogen, that we would be happy to import and export through our ports in the future. I think Bell Bay and Burnie, whether or not it's hydrogen or ammonia or something else, we need to make sure our port infrastructure is ready.

Mr JAENSCH - Through the minister, thank you very much for sharing your processes around employee engagement and development. How is TasPorts approaching customer engagement - your external stakeholders?

Mr DONALD - Thank you. We undertake a regular customer survey. There's a current survey underway with our customers. We continue to get positive feedback. The last survey we recorded - I'm just going to look for the sheet so I can quote some stats for you. We saw a positive uplift in our feedback. It's a work in progress. We're not perfect, but we want to make sure that we have open and respectful trusting relationships with our customers.

Mr JAENSCH - While you look for that, is this a rolling process? Is this something you repeat every year or six months?

Mr DONALD - Yes, it is. More generally, our performance continues to improve, but we don't rest on our laurels. We've got a program frequency of interactions at a minimum that we maintain with our customers at various levels within the organisation. We have a CRM in place that tracks all our interactions with customers and I, of course, maintain close interactions with various CEOs, particularly some of our key important customers.

Ms DOW - I'm sorry, if we have the data on that, that would be very useful. If you could table it?

Mr DONALD - I'm very happy to table that. I might take that one on notice, given the time. We're very happy to do that.

Ms DOW - Through you, minister, in my previous round of questions, I don't think you answered the question about whether there's a shortage of marine pilots across the state? You said you were in the process of employing three additional ones, but you didn't say whether there was a shortage.

Mr DONALD - We have 16 pilots; three of them are being trained at the moment, so does that extend to operational disruptions? No, not at the moment. No, it doesn't.

Ms DOW - Has that figure decreased or increased? How does it sit across, say, the last couple of years?

Mr DONALD - We've increased the number of pilots in the last couple of years quite significantly.

Ms DOW - Do you have any data on that?

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Mr DONALD -Yes, we can provide the last five to eight years. We could show the increase in the number of pilots. Why do we have so many pilots? We need to make sure that we have resilience and redundancy, essentially. It's incredibly important.

I'd just like to take the opportunity for me to promote how proud I am of our marine pilots. I know I'm biased, but I think we've got the best marine pilots in the country. They are managing some of the most challenging waters. I'm not a mariner - I'm a civil engineer - but they are managing 3500 movements a year in arguably some of the most dangerous, treacherous, beautiful waters of the world, so they do an awesome job.

Ms DOW - I am interested in how you would characterise your relationships with the relevant unions that are across your work sites?

Mr DONALD - I'd say healthy, in short.

Ms DOW - You meet with them regularly? Through your minister.

Mr DONALD - Yes.

Ms DOW - No issues?

Mr DONALD - Not that I'm aware of. I'm sure if that changes my phone will ring.

Ms DOW - My last question is about the school lunch program that I think that you do with East Devonport Primary School. Is there a view for the organisation to do that with other schools? For example, George Town might be another one that would be a good way of working with families and students.

Mr DONALD - Yes, certainly is - and we've flagged with the provider who facilitates the school lunches that we are committed, when the opportunity arises, to provide that same level of service and interaction with George Town and other ports, including the islands.

We think it's been phenomenal. The hair stands up on my - it's it a really valuable thing that we do for that community. Devonport Primary School, the attendance rate has gone from a pretty poor attendance rate to the best attendance rate in Tasmania, as I was advised by the principal, across public and private, all because of the cooked lunches. If you have an opportunity to enjoy lunch with these primary school kids, it is phenomenal to observe and it makes me a little emotional and really proud.

CHAIR - The time for scrutiny has finished. I thank our guests and minister for attending and thank committee and staff.

The witnesses withdrew.

The committee suspended from 12.00 p.m. to 12.06 p.m.